

Title of meeting: Community Safety and Environment

Date of meeting: 09 March 2022

Subject: Permanent retention of the Household Waste Recycling Centre booking system

Report by: James Hill, Director of Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services

Report author: David Emmett - Head of Waste Services

Wards affected: All

Key decision: No

Full Council decision: No

1 Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the booking system that has been in place at Portsmouth Household Waste Recycling Centre since June 2020, and to recommend the retention of the system indefinitely in recognition of the clear benefits that it has brought for operational and customer experience reasons.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Environment notes the continued operational benefits that have been demonstrated by the Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) booking system, and the level of customer satisfaction.
- 2.2 That the Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Environment approves the retention of the booking system indefinitely at Portsmouth HWRC to support the management of customer demand and operational processes.

3 Background

- 3.1 Under the terms of the Environmental Protection Act, 1990, Portsmouth City Council (the 'Council') is classed as a Waste Collection and Disposal Authority, and as such, under section 51 (1) must provide a place at which persons/resident in its

area may deposit their household waste and for the disposal, which the Council does through the provision of the Portsmouth HWRC located at Port Solent.

- 3.2 The Council is in a joint HWRC Contract with Hampshire County Council and Southampton City Council managed through a tripartite agreement, in addition to the joint Waste Disposal Contract. Currently both contracts are with Veolia Environmental Services. Through the tripartite agreement there is reciprocal arrangement so residents from all three authorities can utilise any HWRC across the cities and Hampshire. At the last user survey Portsmouth residents were using 12 sites across the network including Portsmouth HWRC.
- 3.3 Portsmouth City Council reopened Portsmouth HWRC on Monday 11 May 2020, in-line with Hampshire County Councils 24 site network following the enforced closure during the national lockdown from 24 March 2020, in response to central Government and industry desire for sites to reopen. New social distancing measures and operational procedures were introduced at all sites in Hampshire including Portsmouth HWRC to protect both the general public and contractors, who operate and service the sites, from contracting Covid-19. To manage demand and address significant congestion issues seen around the site, a booking system was implemented at Portsmouth HWRC from 01 July 2020.
- 3.4 The booking system has demonstrated that managing customer throughput is an effective means of enabling the HWRCs to operate more efficiently. Congestion has historically been commonplace at Portsmouth HWRC on busy weekends throughout the year and public holidays, which created delays on the local road network and increased vehicle emissions from idling cars queuing. Booking a slot enables residents to plan with confidence that they can deposit their waste swiftly and easily. Hampshire County Council have already taken the decision to retain their booking system permanently.

4. Performance

- 4.1 Since the booking system was introduced in June 2020, more than three million bookings have been made across Portsmouth, Hampshire and Southampton by residents. The vast majority of these (96-97%) have been booked using the online web portal which enables customers to locate a convenient time at their preferred site and book a slot quickly and easily

- 4.2 A satisfaction survey was undertaken by Hampshire County Council with all Customers across all sites in the network that had booked a slot between November and December 2021. More than 25,000 responses were received, and results indicated that 89.9% were satisfied or very satisfied with the booking experience, and 78.4% supported continued use of a booking system in the future.
- 4.3 A telephone service is also offered for those residents who are unable to book their slot online. Around 3-4% of all bookings are made by telephone. While online booking remains the quickest and simplest means of booking, ongoing provision of this service mitigates against any indirect negative impact on those residents without access to the internet.
- 4.4 A number of unsolicited compliments have been received for the booking system. Common themes cited include;
- satisfaction with how quick and easy it is to access the HWRC and deposit waste items efficiently.
 - confidence that a long queue will not be encountered to enter the site, and the associated positive impacts on reducing congestion on the local road network and less air pollution.
 - For some residents, there is an additional wellbeing aspect as they consider that the booking system has made their visit to the HWRC a more pleasant and less daunting experience than before.

5. Reasons for recommendations

- 5.1 The booking system, while initially a COVID response to facilitate a safe passage through the HWRC whilst social distancing restrictions were enforced, has proved to be operationally sound and popular with the public. It allows site staff to plan operational activities with confidence, while the public can book a slot at their nearest site at a convenient time, safe in the knowledge that they will be able to attend the site efficiently and not wait in a queue to get in.
- 5.2 It is therefore recommended that the booking system is retained indefinitely at Portsmouth HWRC to continue supporting a good standard of customer service and allowing for the swift reintroduction of restrictions should it be required in response to a further wave of the pandemic.

6. Integrated impact assessment

A preliminary IIA has been completed

7. Legal implications

There are no legal implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

8. Director of Finance's comments

- 8.1** The total cost to the Council to maintain the booking system is £4,000 per annum, this is funded from the existing cash limited Waste Disposal budget.

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Signed by:

Appendices:

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by on

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Signed by: