

Briefing Note To Shropshire Councillors in South Shropshire	Second consultation on the Coder Road Amenity Skip and Recycling Centre, Ludlow
Officer responsible	Dr Larry Wolfe
Area affected	Ludlow and environs
Budget implication	Up to £100,000 annual saving
Impact on performance	Detailed in briefing note

The service under consideration

A public consultation on alternative future uses of the amenity skip and household recycling site at Coder Road Ludlow following its proposed closure was initiated on 20th September 2013. The consultation closed on 21st October 2013 for which there were 74 respondents. There was also an opportunity for respondents to state why they objected to the site closure and comment on the alternative uses proposed. In addition a small number of emails plus a letter from Ludlow Town Council, objecting to the proposed site closure were received and included in the analysis of the responses. From this analysis, 5 key themes or issues emerged which are summarised below in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of responses objecting to proposed closure

Theme	Description	Percentage of respondents
1	Just like using the service as it is don't want any change	29.7%
2	Distance to alternative HRC service is too far.	25.3%
3	Believe there will be more fly-tipping.	17.6%
4	Believe that larger market towns should have public services.	17.6%
5	Generally against cuts to any public services.	9.9%

Analysis of issues from the previous consultation

Each issue or 'theme' was examined in order of popularity, based on the information provided in the previous consultation and accompanying briefing paper in order to provide a response to the comments raised.

Issue 1

This issue is associated with a demand to maintain the status quo, however; changes to local services are unavoidable due to the Council having to reduce its budget by £80m over the next 3 years. To address this matter, a review of Council services was initiated to identify those services which could be changed, re-commissioned or stopped without compromising overall services. The proposed closure of the Coder Road amenity skip site was identified as a

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service in which savings could be achieved, service levels standardised and recycling performance optimised, with alternative use of the site to benefit the local community.

Issue 2

In response to the second issue, the nearest Household Recycling Centre (HRC) for Ludlow residents is Craven Arms which is a total round trip of approximately 18 miles. In order to consider this inconvenience factor, a comparison of travelling distances to Household Recycling Centres (HRCs) for residents of Shropshire's market towns with no HRCs was undertaken. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Distance to nearest HRC from market towns with no local HRC

TOWN	POPULATION	NEAREST HRC	DISTANCE
Wem	5,500	Whitchurch	9
Ellesmere	3,300	Oswestry	8.4
Market Drayton	12,000	Whitchurch	12.4
Bishops Castle	1,700	Craven Arms	11.3
Clun	700	Craven Arms	9.1
Much Wenlock	3,000	Bridgnorth	8
Shifnal	6,500	Bridgnorth	11.4
Albrighton	4,400	Bridgnorth	10.9
Minsterley/Pontesbury	5,000	Shrewsbury	11.2
Church Stretton	3,700	Craven Arms	7.9
Highley	3,400	Bridgnorth	7.6
Cleobury Mortimer	3,200	Bridgnorth	13.8
Ludlow	9,900	Craven Arms	8.7
AVERAGE			9.98

Based on the above information, the closure of Coder Road amenity skip site would result in residents of the Ludlow area having a similar travelling distance to the nearest HRC than residents of other similar sized market towns which have no HRC.

Issue 3

With regard to the third issue, expansion of the Coder Road amenity skip site would almost certainly create an inequality in service and counter demands for additional HRCs countywide. In the Council's view and current circumstances the costs of this are not justifiable, as to provide such an arrangement would result in a significant cost to the public purse at a time of severe austerity at approximately £0.5m and £200,000 capital and annual operating costs per additional HRC site respectively. Furthermore, the

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provision of an HRC at Coder Road would result in a 1.3% increase in HRC performance (0.2% recycling overall), which is negligible in terms of improvement on recycling & composting targets. It would almost certainly however, impact negatively on usage of the existing purpose built, modern and safer facility at Craven Arms, which accepts a wider range of waste materials for recycling than the Coder Road site.

Issue 4

In response to the fourth issue, a large proportion of fly-tipped material comprises trade waste, which is not accepted at HRC's and is normally associated with organised criminal activity. This perceived fear of increase in fly-tipping activity was a common thread of concern regarding the cessation of community skip services in North and South Shropshire in April 2010, after which there was no discernible increase in fly-tipped material of a domestic nature. In addition, the Council's Environmental Maintenance teams are actively removing fly-tipped waste across the county and recording incidents on the Government's Fly-capture data-base.

Issue 5

The fifth issue reflects general resistance to public spending reductions and a wish simply, to maintain the status quo (as raised from the first issue). The majority of the recycled material at Coder Road is from garden waste, for which the Council provides a kerbside collection service. However, the majority of material received at the site is residual black bag waste (which is landfilled), which is contrary to the Council's objective of increasing recycling and prevention of waste. In this regard, maintaining the Coder Road amenity skip site in its current form would in fact only serve in sustaining the poor recycling performance of 30% (compared with 60% from HRCs), which does not assist the Council's contractor Veolia to meet its recycling & composting targets. The financial implications of keeping the site open include loss of £100,000 in savings and, with landfill costs increasing in April 2014 by £8/tonne, this will result in an escalation of operating costs for this facility which does not provide any benefit in helping to address the financial challenges faced by Shropshire Council

Responses on alternative future use of the site following any closure

In terms of future use of the site, the most popular option selected from the previous consultation with 40% of responses, was conversion of the amenity skip site to an unmanned bring bank site. Further assessment by the Council has identified that this would not be of major benefit as the Ludlow area is already well served with bring banks and only 8% of current usage is associated with Coder Road. In addition, the site location is in an industrial area and it is likely that an unmanned site would predominantly attract waste of a commercial nature. The least favoured alternative at 18% of responses was closure of the site and sale of the land. This resonates with the current situation in that this would not be a successful venture due to its relatively small footprint and commercial value. In addition the lack of success on the sale of the neighbouring but much larger former depot site would reinforce this perception. Closure of the site and incorporation of the land occupied by the amenity skip site into the neighbouring anaerobic digestion (AD) site was favoured second at 26% of respondents. On balance, and considering the

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benefits regarding provision of a community operated AD centre of excellence, this option appears currently to present the most effective solution for future site use. However as the options were not exhaustive there will be an opportunity to explore other alternatives for future sale of the site

Summary

The Council must reduce its budget by £80m over the next 3 years of which 50% of savings is to be delivered by in the first financial year 2014/15. In this regard, a fundamental review as to which and how services are provided has been initiated. This includes commissioning and decommissioning to protect essential public services and to deliver savings of the above magnitude. The amenity skip site at Coder Road, Ludlow has been identified as a service that is proposed to be decommissioned. A business case was included as part of a public consultation process and included alternatives for future use of the site.

Having reviewed the information presented in the initial business case and considered the responses from the previous public consultation the most reasonable course of action is to recommend closure of the facility at this site. The Ludlow area is well served with recycling facilities and nearby HRCs with travelling distances no greater than other market towns without HRCs. With 5 HRCs serving the county this more than satisfies the Council's statutory requirements of provision of a site in the county for reception of local residents waste for disposal and recycling. To ensure that the decision-making process is fully informed there will be a second phase of consultation to obtain suggestions for alternative future uses of the site and to provide further information to clarify the Council's position on this matter.

A decision by the Portfolio Holder will be made following the close of this second phase of consultation. A revised timetable is set out below and a copy of the consultation questions is attached in Appendix1

Date	Activity
12 th November	Briefing Note issued to South Shropshire and Bridgnorth area Councillors
15 th November	Online public re-consultation launched
27 th December	Deadline for re-consultation responses
10 th January 2014	Final report signed off and published
Week beginning 20 th January 2014	Portfolio Holder decision

Dr Larry Wolfe
Head of Waste Management

Appendix 1: Consultation Questions

Q1. Having considered all of the information, including:

- i) the responses received to the first consultation;**
- ii) the costs and benefits of alternative future uses of the site in order to maintain a waste facility on site;**
- iii) the implications and costs of £100,000 for keeping the site open in its current form, [particularly as these costs are not expected to decrease in the future;**
- iv) existing service provision within the area and ensuring equality of service provision to Shropshire residents**

the Council believes that closing the Coder Road Amenity Skip site facility as opposed to trying to keep it open is the better option in order to assist the Council in meeting its financial challenges and deliver best practice from nearby modern facilities. Do you agree? (please tick appropriate box).

YES

NO

If your answer to Q1 is NO please give your reason why below.

Reason

Q2. Please indicate if there are other alternatives the Council should consider for the future waste service use of the site which would assist the Council in meeting its required outcomes in reducing costs, improving use of modern recycling facilities and, preventing waste

Suggested alternative