

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**HIGHWAYS & WASTE MANAGEMENT CABINET PANEL
THURSDAY, 17 MARCH 2015**

**HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING CENTRES – NEW CONTRACT
IMPLEMENTATION**

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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Members with an update on the implementation of the county council's contract with AmeyCespa ("Amey") for the operation of its 17 Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs), including information on the recent service changes that have taken place across the network.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Household Waste Recycling Service handles almost 90,000 tonnes of waste and receives approximately 2.2 million visits per annum. The service provides facilities to segregate up to 33 different materials for recycling, reuse or recovery. Historically the service has been managed using a disaggregated approach by having a number of separate contracts for the various elements of the operation. The new contract combines all of these into one contract with a single service provider.
- 2.2 Amey took over the operation of the county's 17 HWRCs on 6 October 2014 and implemented a number of significant service changes from 5 January 2015.
- 2.3 These changes included reduced opening hours at all 16 of the 17 household waste recycling centres and the closure of the sites for two days a week on two of least used weekdays (with the exception of Buntingford).
- 2.4 Amey have also introduced a van permitting scheme to deter improper usage of the sites by traders and commercial organisations and are set to complement this with a new service for the acceptance of commercial waste at a charge.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Following an extensive procurement process Amey were awarded a contract for the management of the Household Waste Recycling Service. As part of their bid Amey considered a range of available service changes to meet a financial saving target of £750,000.
- 3.2 A public consultation was held on these suggested service changes and the results were presented to the Highways and Waste Management Cabinet Panel on 18 September 2014, whose recommendations were agreed and approved by Cabinet on 22 September 2014.
- 3.3 Having considered the responses to the consultation, Cabinet decided that all seventeen HWRCs in the network should remain open. The key changes that were agreed were a reduction in the days the sites are open and in some cases changes to opening times and hours, together with the introduction of measures to deter improper use of sites by commercial vehicles. Appendix A shows the calendar of opening hours and days.

4. MOBILISATION

- 4.1 Between the award of the contract in May 2014, and its commencement on 6 October 2014, Amey produced a detailed mobilisation plan to ensure that the key elements of the contract changeover had been considered.
- 4.2 To mobilise the contract Amey and council officers established a project team, which implemented the above plan to ensure that the key points for the service changeover were addressed, a summary of which is detailed below:
- **Human Resources** – This included the transfer of 120 employees to Amey from four different companies, including two members of staff from the county council.
 - **Legal & Property** – Property and legal services worked with Amey’s solicitors to agree new leases for the occupation of the HWRCs and established a detailed asset register to record the condition of all council assets prior to handover to Amey.
 - **Communications** - a plan was produced and disseminated to members and District Council partners, which is summarised in Appendix B
 - **Customer services** - Amey established their own call centre to manage all calls relating to the HWRCs contract and the county council’s asbestos and chemical collection service.

- **Website** - Amey have also created a new website, which works in conjunction with the county council's hertsdirect.org website and all enquiries, compliments and complaints are now being managed by Amey.
- **Commercial arrangements** – Amey have worked with the county council's existing suppliers to negotiate new commercial arrangements for the sale of recyclable materials to ensure continuity of service at the sites.
- **Compliance** – Amey have implemented new enhanced environmental and safety management systems to replace existing arrangements across the network.

4.3 The mobilisation of the contract was very successful and Amey took over the operation the sites on 6 October 2014. All staff were fully inducted on the first day and provided with new uniform and the main site signage was also amended to reflect the change in operator.

4.4 The majority of the Household Waste Recycling Service's contracts were replaced by the contract with Amey on the 06 October 2014. The county council still maintains responsibility for certain recyclable materials and the haulage contract, which will be passed to Amey on the following dates:

- Green, textiles, wood and cardboard recycling – 01 April 2015
- Plasterboard recycling – 07 February 2016
- Haulage services & metal recycling – 10 June 2016

4.5 Following the contract changeover, Amey consulted with staff to implement changes to their terms and conditions to accommodate the revised opening days and hours from 5 January 2015. The contract of employment placed all employees on a standard 40 hour week and included a number of benefits, together with a bonus scheme to incentivise performance. This review resulted in no redundancies and whilst it meant some staff had their hours reduced, the overall feedback received has been positive.

4.6 The recycling and diversion performance at the HWRCs since Amey took over is currently 70%, which compares to 69% for the same period last year. This slight improvement so early in the contract is good news, as it demonstrates that Amey managed to ensure that the sites' recycling performance was not affected during the transition.

5. IMPLEMENTATION OF SERVICE CHANGES

5.1 On the 5 January 2015 Amey implemented the changes to opening days and hours, which are shown in Appendix A.

- 5.2 For a six week period Amey placed a member of staff at each facility on the days they were closed, to provide residents with information of their nearest alternative facility. This also helped to prevent fly tipping outside the sites and to explain the new arrangements to those who were not aware of the changes.
- 5.3 Fly tipping at the gates of sites on closure days has been minimal and any items were cleared by Amey before the sites reopened. The Environment Agency's Flycapture system records all fly tipping incidents, but this has not yet been updated for January, so it is too early to determine if the services changes have generated more incidents. A report on this will be presented to the Hertfordshire Waste Partnership Member group meeting in April and this will be shared with Members of the Highways & Waste Management Panel by way of an update.
- 5.4 The information in Appendix C demonstrates that Amey had to manage a significant increase in call volumes from the beginning of January. This was anticipated, but the number of complaints received regarding the opening days and times has been better than expected.
- 5.5 Implementation of the van permitting scheme, under which anyone using a van, pickup truck, commercial type vehicle or vehicle and trailer combination is required to apply for a permit, valid for 12 visits over a 12 month period has proved more contentious and Appendix C shows that the majority of complaints received were regarding this scheme. As a result, council officers have worked closely with Amey to adapt the scheme to address concerns that were raised.
- 5.6 Residents were unhappy with the restriction of 1 visit a month or being limited to 12 visits a year. Amey have addressed this by removing the monthly restriction and allowing users to reapply for a permit once they have used their 12 trips. Amey will reissue permits in these circumstances provided they are satisfied that the applicant is not a trader or commercial user.
- 5.7 Amey initially put in place a one week grace period to allow residents to apply for a permit, but it soon became apparent that a number of users were still not aware of the change, so Amey have now put in place a concession to allow anyone visiting the sites for the first time to tip and then retrospectively apply for a permit. Full details on the van permitting scheme can be found in Appendix D.
- 5.8 This adaption still allows Amey to control and better monitor commercial waste abuse at the sites, while still allowing access to van users who are residents genuinely disposing of their own household waste.

5.9 Amey have processed 4,307 van permit applications since the scheme's introduction, which is much higher than they were initially anticipating. The high numbers may also show that the communications campaign has effectively reached a wide audience.

5.10 Overall, the information in Appendix C shows that 82% of all complaints received since the 5 January 2015 were relating to the closure days, opening hours and van permitting scheme. Other complaints relating to the sites are comparable with last year, which suggests that the general service levels have not been affected.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

6.1 The changes in opening days and times and the van permitting system were a significant change to the service, which required careful planning and a comprehensive communications campaign, which is summarised in Appendix B.

6.2 The press releases were published by the majority of local newspapers and on their websites over the Christmas and New Year period. Corporate communications identified certain gaps in coverage and Amey took private adverts to ensure that all areas of the county were covered. The Horizons article and social media campaigns have attracted significant interest and have enabled the county council and Amey to provide feedback to residents on their queries.

6.3 Publicity of the van permitting system was reissued in the first week in January to reinforce the message to residents.

6.4 The communications team have prepared a new communications plan to ensure that the message of the above changes is reissued in advance of the Easter period, to ensure that the changes receive as much coverage as possible, ahead of the busiest period at the sites.

7. OTHER SERVICE CHANGES

7.1 Other than the key service changes mentioned above AmeyCespa are introducing a number of other service changes. These include:

7.2 Raising awareness and education regarding waste and recycling. Amey have employed an education officer and this has been promoted via the

Hertfordshire Waste Partnership's WasteAware group. There has already been a very enthusiastic uptake from schools across Hertfordshire. The officer has already been booked to visit 37 schools to carry out workshops and demonstrations to promote waste awareness. From the 13 visits that have already taken place the schools involved have given very encouraging feedback.

- 7.3 Following the prioritisation of the staff transfer and major service changes, Amey are now in the process of establishing new reuse arrangements, which are due to commence in March. They will set aside an area for the separate storage of good quality items so site users can leave these for reuse rather than disposal or recycling and the site staff will then manage the sale of these goods on site.
- 7.4 Amey are investigating other options for further reuse by working with third party organisations such as local charities and other volunteer groups. This is a model that has been successful elsewhere in the country, but it is a longer term project that will be implemented on suitable sites.
- 7.5 Amey and council officers have investigated options at the Cole Green site to improve the layout and traffic management. Given the construction of the site, changing the internal layout is not possible, but Amey have spoken to all staff to ensure that they actively manage the traffic and assist residents in order to speed up throughput during busy periods.
- 7.6 Council officers have investigated the feasibility of installing a new slip road into the site with initial estimates suggesting that this could cost up to £300,000. This will need further investigation as any costs would need to be measured with lack of ownership of the site and the desire to relocate the site to a more modern facility that better serves the local area.
- 7.7 Advance and reactive queuing signage is already installed on the highway to warn of queuing on the A414 from the site, but Hertfordshire Highways have been asked to look into options for additional warning systems.
- 7.8 There is currently no evidence to suggest that the queuing at the site has increased since the introduction of the service changes.
- 7.9 A commercial waste disposal service for Small and Medium sized Enterprises and independent traders will be offered by AmeyCespa starting at their St Albans depot (which is adjacent to the HWRC); the waste will be weighed and charged according to the volume and type of waste that is to be disposed of. The commercial waste service will be available Monday to Friday and will be

implemented from 5 April 2015. If it is successful, this will then be expanded to other sites where it can be practically accommodated.

7.10 Communication of these additional service changes and schemes will include press releases, social media campaigns and posters on site as a minimum.

APPENDIX A: Hertfordshire Household Waste Recycling Centres Calendar of Opening Days

	CALENDAR OF OPENING DAYS							New hours from 05 January 2015
	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	
Berkhamsted								All Year 08.30 - 16.30
Hemel Hempstead								Summer 10.00 - 18.00
								Winter 08.00 - 16.00
Rickmansworth								All Year 10.00 - 18.00
Waterdale								All Year 10.00 - 18.00
								Saturdays (Summer only) 08:00 - 18:00
St Albans								Summer 10.00 - 18.00
								Winter 08.00 - 16.00
Harpenden								All Year 10.00 - 18.00
Turnford								All Year 10.00 - 18.00
Hoddesdon								All Year 10.00 - 18.00
Ware								Summer 10.00 - 18.00
								Winter 08.00 - 16.00
Bishop's Stortford								All Year 08.00 - 16.00
Royston								All Year 08.00 - 16.00
Letchworth								All Year 10.00 - 18.00
Stevenage								All Year 10.00 - 18.00
								Saturdays (Summer only) 08:00 - 18:00

Cole Green								Summer 10.00 - 18.00
								Winter 08.00 - 16.00
Elstree								Mon - Fri 08.00 - 16.00
								Sat - Sun 09.00 - 17.00
Potters Bar								Summer 10.00 - 18.00
								Winter 08.00 - 16.00
Buntingford								Mon - Fri 17.00 - 20.00
								Sat - Sun 10.00 - 13.00
Key:		Days Closed						
		Days Open						

Appendix B – Summary of the Communications Plan

Staff briefings to all HWRC service employees	<p>Internal briefings were carried out for HWRC service employees outlining changes to the service and the impact on their employment.</p> <p>The staff briefings commenced week beginning 10 November and the staff consultation was concluded in advance of the service changes.</p>
Press releases to local media	<p>A series of press releases were distributed in weeks leading up to the implementation of the service changes.</p> <p>The first press release was issued 24 November detailing the service changes that came into effect from 5 January 2014.</p>
Council magazine articles	<p>Articles to be placed in county/district/borough council magazines.</p> <p>AmeyCespa liaised with the communications teams in the district and borough councils regarding placing articles in magazines and bulletins publicising the service changes. AmeyCespa took out adverts in local media detailing the service changes, where the press releases had not been published.</p>
AmeyCespa website	<p>The AmeyCespa website contains a page with information relating to the Hertfordshire Household Waste Recycling Service, the page details that service changes will be implemented from 5 January and links directly to the WasteAware website.</p> <p>http://www.ameycespa.com/hertfordshire</p>
WasteAware website.	<p>The new opening hours and days were made available on the WasteAware website.</p> <p>www.hertsdirect.org.uk/wasteaware</p>
Social media including Twitter/ Facebook	<p>Service changes were communicated via the county council's social media site.</p> <p>The district/borough councils were encouraged to retweet in order to increase awareness. The WasteAware group also promoted the service changes.</p>
Posters	<p>Posters were distributed and displayed in the district and borough offices, receptions and public areas, County Hall, libraries and at the HWRCs.</p>
Leaflets	<p>A5 leaflets with the closure details were distributed at all HWRCs.</p>

	<p>These leaflets included the full list of sites and the new opening hours/days.</p>
Signage	<p>New site welcome boards were erected to include the new opening hours, site open days and details of two alternative sites.</p>
Recycling Advisors at site gates	<p>Site operatives were available at the gates at centres on closure days for a period of six weeks after the service changes were implemented to direct visitors to an alternative open HWRC.</p> <p>They gave out Contact Cards with contact details, including the website, along with a leaflet detailing the changes and their alternative sites.</p>
Contact cards	<p>Contact cards were available on site since contract commencement and were provided to members of the public that have any queries or comments.</p> <p>The contact cards detailed the WasteAware website, contact telephone number and email address.</p>

Appendix C – Customer Service Information

Call Centre Statistics: 05/10/2014 – 28/02/2015

Month	Amey Call Centre Statistics	HCC Call Centre Statistics for same period last year.	Difference from last year
October	588	420	+168
November	553	438	+115
December	524	431	+ 93
January	2880	441	+ 2439
February	2105	318	+ 1787

Enquiries, Complaints and Compliments: 05/10/2014 – 28/02/2015

Month	Enquiries	Complaints	Compliments	Van permits Issued
October	588	7	1	-
November	553	15	2	-
December	745	18 ¹	5	59
January	2659	138 ²	3	2795
February	2105	51 ³	1	1453
Total	6650	229	12	4307

1 - 5 complaints relating to van permits.

2 - 70 complaints relating to vans permits, 31 regarding closure days and 14 complaining about both.

3 - 19 complaints relating to vans permits, 20 regarding closure days and 1 complaining about both.

Appendix D – Van Permitting Scheme

Van (and trailer) Permit Scheme

From Monday 5th January, if you are a Hertfordshire resident who wishes to dispose of your household waste at our Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) using a van, pickup truck, commercial type vehicle or vehicle and trailer combination, then you will need to apply for a permit to do so.

The permit is free of charge and will be valid for 12 months for 12 visits. Only one permit will be allowed per household and our [waste acceptance policies](#) will still apply.

To apply for the permit, you will need to complete a form which is available [here](#). You will then receive a letter which you must take with you each time you visit one of our sites with the vehicle, this will be signed upon entry by a member of site staff.

The permit scheme aims to reduce the misuse of our sites by traders and other commercial users. If you have any questions about the scheme, email hertshwracs@ameycespa.com or call **0300 123 4051** and press option 1.

In the event that you use all 12 visits within a 12 month period and still need to use the sites, please email the above address to re-apply for a permit to explain your situation. As part of this process you will be asked to send your permit back to Amey, who will check your usage to ensure that the request is genuine and then approve the issue of a new permit.

Hire/Borrowed Vans

If you are using a hire van, on a short term basis of a few days, for a larger clear out of your own household waste, you do not necessarily need to apply for a permit.

When you arrive at the site you will be asked for proof that it is a short term hire vehicle, so please bring your hire documentation with you and the site staff will check the details and make a record of your visit. The information will be entered on to a centrally controlled database. Borrowed vans will be recorded in a similar way to prevent abuse of the system.

Use of hired or borrowed vans will be monitored and if this is something you think you may do on a regular basis, then applying for a permit is more appropriate.