

Oxfordshire Recycling Centre Strategy Consultation

Oxford City Council's Communities and Partnership Scrutiny Committee comments

The following comments are offered by the Communities and Partnership Scrutiny Committee of Oxford City Council in response to the County Council's consultation on the Recycling Centre Strategy

The committee wish to thank Hugh Jones (Director for Environment and Economy) for attending their meeting to give advice and answer questions

General comments

1. The committee welcomes the new recycling centre at Kidlington as a significant investment in state of the art facilities for the County

Access and Service Levels

2. The change from the original proposals to close Redbridge to domestic waste to a facility that will take trade waste each day and domestic waste at weekends is recognised as a step in the right direction

The committee however remained unconvinced that the current proposals for Redbridge would adequately provide for Oxford's population. The committee would remind the County Council that the densely populated urban area of Oxford will be the only District within the Oxfordshire boundary without a full time trade and domestic waste recycling centre. The committee ask that the following views are considered:

- Currently 40% of the visits to Redbridge are on weekdays. It is not clear how this is split between trade and domestic customers but it seems reasonable to assume that some are domestic customers and that these are likely to choose to shift their visit to the weekend. The effect of this will be to increase traffic around the site and in turn increase waiting times to enter the facility. In essence a poorer service to Oxford residents and increased disruption to those living and driving through this busy area
- Poorer or changed access is likely to convert to increased fly tipping. This view is supported by the Waste Partnership who have factored the clear up operations of increased levels of fly tipping into their financial calculations for this strategy
- Established patterns of fly tipping are difficult to change and costly to deal with. This is evidenced in current patterns and

clear ups around the Oxford ring road. The allocating of money to counteract a behaviour potentially bought about by this strategy is a poor use of money. A better use would be to support the full opening of Redbridge to domestic waste

- It is likely that some domestic customers who would previously have taken bulky waste to Redbridge will, because of reduced access, ask the Local Authority to collect from their home. This will create pressure on these services both in terms of affordability and customer service
- Proposals presented to bridge the service gap whilst Redbridge is closed for refurbishment are not acceptable; they are likely to produce many of the difficulties outlined above. The scrutiny committee would wish to see further efforts made to find a temporary site closer to the City
- The refurbishment of Redbridge is to be supported by private sector investment. Should this investment not be forthcoming the committee wished to see all efforts made to bridge the funding gap. **The bottom line for the committee is that a position where Oxford has no recycling facility for domestic waste is insupportable**

Traffic

3. Comments on traffic issues in the south of the city have been made at 2 above, in addition the proposals assume that some of Oxford's domestic and trade waste customers will use the new facility at Kidlington. This is likely to cause increased traffic flows and therefore congestion in the north of the city. These increased traffic flows and the potential difficulties they present to residents and those passing through need to be acknowledged and planned for within the strategy

Charging

4. The scrutiny committee welcome the confirmation that the strategy had no intent either now or in the future to charge domestic waste customers. The committee would like to see consideration given to differential charging for trade waste customers in an effort to encourage recycling

Information

5. Oxford residents are to experience a significant change to service and therefore will be required to make changes to their well established habits. The committee wish to see clear information and signposting provided to all residents in a timely and plain English style

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