

**To:** City Executive Board  
**Date:** 15 December 2016  
**Report of:** Executive Director for Community Services  
**Title of Report:** Development of a Recycling Transfer Station

<b>Summary and recommendations</b>	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	Proposal to create and operate a Council managed Transfer Station for Co-mingled recyclate, green waste, street arisings and engineering works spoil.
<b>Key decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Executive Board Member:</b>	Cllr Ed Turner, Finance, Asset Management and Public Health. Cllr John Tanner, A Clean and Green Oxford
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	An Efficient and Effective Council. A clean and green Oxford.
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	None
<b>Recommendations:</b> That the City Executive Board resolves to:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Approve</b> the project to create and manage a recycling transfer station, as described in this report. Subject to approval of funding by council in the 2017/18 budget</li> <li>2. <b>Seek</b> planning approval and an environment permit for the proposed recycling transfer station. Authorise officers to incur the costs relating to the preparation of the application and permit.</li> <li>3. <b>Delegate authority</b> to the Director of Community Services, in consultation with the Council's s151 and Monitoring Officers and subject to the receipt of satisfactory planning consent, to proceed with the creation of the recycling transfer station.</li> <li>4. <b>Delegate authority</b> to the Director of Community Services to enter into a contract for the construction of the Recycling Transfer Station facility following a procurement process in accordance with the councils approved procedures</li> </ol>	

<b>Appendices</b>	
Appendix 1	Risk Register
Appendix 2	Location Plan, Redbridge Park & Ride
Appendix 3	Parking Space Analysis

## **Introduction and background**

1. Oxford City collects around 16,000 tons of dry recyclate over a year and as continued efforts to improve our recycling rate and commercial collections grow, this is expected to continue increasing.
2. A procurement process was concluded in relation to the disposal of dry recyclate under the EU Open Procedure of Tender in October 2015. One of the lots within this tender was for the provision of a local transfer station.
3. The best proposal presented for a transfer station was that operated by Biffa at Culham. The financial appraisal in this report takes the shorter distance and costs into account and compares it against the proposed new facility.
4. Oxfordshire County Council continue to leave the Waste Collection Authorities (WCA) to form their own arrangements for recycling material disposal and continue to pay a recycling credit. The County Council has in the past considered an "Oxfordshire MRF" but it is understood no current plans exist.
5. Oxford is at present hampered by not having a local in house transfer facility. This view is corroborated by a consultant's report from White Young and Green (WYG) and the latest procurement process. No other transfer facility exists that is conveniently located operated by a MRF contractor.
6. The contract for the existing transfer station, which became effective from 6 October 2015, has a clause to allow a break by giving 6 months' notice following a 12 month period. The MRF and Transport contract that was won by Viridor at Crayford, will remain in place for a 4 year period, which is extendable by agreement for a further 4 years.
7. Greater flexibility in the future will be gained by the Council operating an in-house transfer facility. Market values for recyclate at present remains depressed and is very dependent upon the World economy. It is not clear if the market has reached a low point. It is hoped that it has, or is close, and that the Council is better placed to take advantage by having a facility which effectively fixes the price of the transfer station and also provides the Council with opportunity to reduce contamination which will also benefit the price achieved. This enables the Council to more readily share in any upturn in the future market of recyclate.
8. At present RCVs make 54 journeys per week to Culham. If the facility was local this would reduce. There would be a requirement to have bulk vehicles, each taking 20 tons of material, transporting the dry recycled material away from site which would be up to 3 vehicles per day.

9. It is not intended to carry out any processing of the material on site apart from small scale activity. e.g. removing black bin bags and obvious contamination. It is also considered that green waste and street arisings would be collected on this site providing additional operational benefit. Engineering works spoil and additional sales from the site would provide additional contribution.
10. Three staff would be required to run the facility plus an additional staff member for the engineering. Equipment would be a large mechanical shovel. This cost would be offset by the saving from an RCV, driver and two loaders, already included within the Direct Services budget.

### **Transfer Facility Characteristics**

11. The requirements for a basic transfer facility would be a heavy construction surface for an access road and turning areas. The building would be a lightweight steel framed structure, complete with standard industrial style sheet cladding with an area of around 860sq. metres. The facility would have internal 4m high push walls and a weighbridge. A small permanent office and toilet buildings for staff welfare, together with external lighting and CCTV would be provided along with a hotbox facility for tarmac, which could also be provided on site to support our highways in-house and commercial operations.

### **Suitable sites within the City of Oxford**

12. A review of all available sites and options has been undertaken and the Redbridge site was selected for a detailed review because it was the most economic option (see Appendix 2). As such it was agreed that further work would be undertaken to investigate the technical constraints at Redbridge P & R.
13. Peter Brett Associates were appointed to carry out a study. Key tasks for the study were:
  - To review geotechnical and engineering issues which may result from the development of a RTS on the old landfill site;
  - To identify any abnormal geo/engineering costs and risks associated with the proposed development;
  - To identify potential and effective site layout options for the RTS upon the park & ride site;
  - To review the proposed operational requirements of the proposed RTS;
  - To identify the impact this co-location will have on the park & ride operations including design, parking space numbers and income; and,
  - To identify key risks and opportunities associated with the planning, delivery and operation of a RTS on the proposed site.
14. The PBA study finds that construction of a RTS is possible on the site using sleeved piled foundations and a suspended slab, that the proposal would not impact

negatively on human health and that the traffic impact would be immaterial. The planning position is also favourable. Further detail is provided below.

## **Redbridge Site**

### **Planning**

15. Planning policy at national and local level generally supports the provision of recycling facilities. The waste planning context for Oxfordshire is currently evolving and a new plan is emerging. The Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Core Strategy Proposed Submission Document 2015 contains the following at paragraph 5.28: *“Facilities for re-use, transfer, recycling, composting and treatment (of food waste) help move the management of waste up the waste hierarchy. These types of facilities should generally be encouraged, particularly having regard to the shortfall in recycling capacity that is expected to arise later in the plan period. Recycling and composting facilities may manage some waste from other areas at the same time as providing capacity that helps to meet Oxfordshire’s waste management needs.”*
16. Similarly policy W3 Provision for waste management capacity and facilities required contains the following: *“Provision will be made through this policy and policies W4, W5 and W6 sufficient to meet the need for management of the principal waste streams identified in policy W1 and the waste management targets in policy W2, including any provision that needs to be made for additional waste management capacity that cannot be met by existing facilities...”*
17. There is no indication that the general approach would be likely to change. Policy application to this site would require further exploration with the appropriate Local Planning Authority at the time of submission of a planning application.
18. Current development plan policies regarding the Park and Ride state that the parking provision at Redbridge P&R will be protected. Any proposal involving the loss of P&R spaces would be a clear departure from development plan policy and so an application would need to be advertised as such. This could be balanced by the increase in spaces proposed at Seacourt P & R which is located relatively close to this site. It also fits with the LTP strategy regarding far Park and Ride.

### **Ecology/Land Quality/Air Quality**

19. An Ecology Report was carried out as part of the feasibility study and reviewed by the City Council Ecologist. There are no issues that would prevent the RTS being constructed although a bat survey is recommended and the scheme should avoid loss of habitat or provide mitigation.
20. The feasibility report highlighted the proximity of the Iffley Meadows Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Whilst the proposed project is not directly proposing any changes to the ditches or drains within the SSSI, it is anticipated that Natural England will require reassurances regarding the approach to dealing with run-off/drainage from the Recycling Transfer Station to ensure that no inputs from the RTS could make their way into the ditch system associated with the Iffley Meadows.
21. The findings of the preliminary ground investigation carried out as part of a previous assessment of the site (PBA, 2012), indicate that any leachates and impacted

groundwaters arising from the landfill materials are, in general, not currently having a significant adverse effect on the quality of the water in Hinksey and Redbridge Streams.

22. The City's Land Quality Officer has reviewed the report and concurs that the RTS is feasible at this location subject to a risk assessment on the ground conditions at the specific location of the proposed development area and a detailed assessment of the impacts of the proposed development on the ground conditions. It is likely that the Environment Agency will also require a piling risk assessment to be undertaken. However, in their report PBA advise that with regard to any potential development, it is expected that construction of flexible pavement and pile foundations will not significantly affect the loading on or volume of the landfill material, and hence will not in themselves act to expel significant quantities of leachate and impacted groundwater from the landfill material that may affect the water in Hinksey and Redbridge Streams. On this basis specific measures to mitigate any potential adverse effect on Hinksey and Redbridge Streams will not be required. Leachate and gas monitoring will likely be required during and after the piling works to ensure no offsite migration.

### **Access and Egress**

23. PBA consider that creation of a new dedicated access onto the A4144 would present major challenges from a highway engineering and utilities perspective, not commensurate with the level of activity proposed. This includes vehicles utilising the access being required to cross an existing bus lane in close proximity to the park and ride layover, whilst also interfering with the newly installed fibre optics equipment in the verge.
24. The proposal is to integrate with the existing access and egress arrangements available onto Old Abingdon Road to the north of the site. This arrangement provides an established IN and OUT access and egress arrangement via two priority bell-mouths. The specification and costing of the access and services have been provided by Direct Services and are designed to accommodate any potential future development, if that proves viable. If not, the scheme cost will be reduced accordingly.

### **Location of the RTS on the site**

25. The Geotechnical Assessment shows that the previous landfill activity covers the whole park & ride area, with no particular area of the site being 'better' than others in this respect. Therefore it was not further considered as a criterion for determining the location of the RTS within the Site.
26. PBA has looked at two locations for the RTS: on the northern east part of the site where it would result in the loss of 139 spaces and on the south west where the loss would be closer to 270 albeit in a part of the site less favoured by customers.
27. The north east of the site presents opportunities for screening and easy access but is adjacent to the hotel and in a popular parking area. Location on the southern side is further from the hotel and is preferred by direct services. This location requires an HGV access route through the site which has an additional cost of construction but

would be adjacent to the area preferred for further development, if that proved feasible.

### **Loss of Parking Spaces and Impact on Revenue**

28. Surveys of spaces were last undertaken in 2012, a year which had broadly the same number of transactions as 2015/16 at 305,000. As there have been no major external factors influencing change in the type of car park users, or the balance between commuters/visitors since 2012, this suggests that the capacity studies undertaken at that time continue to be a valid representation of current space demand, this being 762 at peak, lower on weekends (524).
29. Taking into consideration space provision for a RTS, there remains capacity for an increase in the number of transactions to respond to growth in jobs and shopping driven by the new Westgate centre. No loss of revenue is expected.
30. Consideration needs to be given to the long term provision for coaches. If the RTS station is to be located at Redbridge then coach parking provision would be reduced at weekends, unless partly located at an alternative site. Alternatively, Seacourt has capacity at weekends. Please see Appendix 3 for full details. A separate study on coach parking will be commissioned looking at capacity and suitability across all park and ride sites.

### **Financial implications**

31. There is currently a budget for this project of £1.4m in the council's capital plan. This will need to be increased to £2.4m following the detailed project assessment and siting at Redbridge. It will generate revenue savings of £320k a year once fully operational plus the potential for an additional capital receipt.

### **Legal issues**

32. It is confirmed that the new contract with the current Transfer Station contractor can be terminated by giving 6 months following 12 months of operation. Planning permission will need to be obtained.

### **Level of risk**

33. See Appendix 1

### **Equalities impact**

34. The Initial Assessment is that the contents of this report do not lead to any unjustifiable differential impact on relevant groups. The project will provide an important means to deliver a new recycling facility and efficiency savings for the benefit of the residents of Oxford.

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**Background Papers:** None

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