

Somerset Equality Impact Assessment

Before completing this EIA please ensure you have read the EIA guidance notes – available from your Equality Officer

Version

SWP001

Date

10th August 2018

Description of what is being impact assessed

To consider the financial worth of extending the Core Services Contract held with Viridor Ltd, for up to an additional 9 years (to 31st March 2031 from its current end date in March 2022).

Currently there are fourteen recycling sites in Somerset provided under the County Council's statutory duty (as Waste Disposal Authority) to "arrange for 'places' to be provided at which persons in their areas may deposit their household waste". The number of 'places' required is not defined in legislation (section 51 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990), case law or guidance. There are a further two non-statutory community recycling sites at Crewkerne and Dulverton, where an entrance fee is currently levied. Introducing charging at other sites is ruled out by a Government order introduced in 2015 and all entrance, exit or use charging at sites must cease by 1st April 2020.

The proposed changes to the opening hours at the Recycling Sites minimise the impact on Somerset residents from the financial savings package, whilst continuing to provide value for money through any extended term. The majority of savings realised are non-customer facing. The revised Recycling Site opening schedule attempts to better align the availability of the sites to current and future usage patterns, allowing longer operational hours in the summer, adding back Sunday afternoons at all sites all year round, moving the opening and closing times to better utilise those hours we have, to increase opening at those sites where we struggle to cope with demand and to reduce the opening at sites where we aren't currently getting value for money from the existing opening schedules.

Whilst all of the proposed opening amendments are justified in relation to present and forecast future usage patterns and it is believed will still comply with the legislation for providing such sites, the two existing Community Recycling Sites (Crewkerne & Dulverton) will see a significant reduction in availability, Dulverton reducing to a weekend only facility and Crewkerne reducing to a 3 day site. This is considered the best way to ensure their continued viability following the enforced removal of the entrance fee charging due to come in to effect from April 2020. This will reduce the public subsidy provided to these sites and thereby

question their continued viability without significantly reducing their opening pattern.

It is proposed that we monitor usage at these two sites for the period April to September 2019, to ensure the revised opening schedule remains fit for purpose, and should that be the case, the entrance fee charges could be removed from October 2019 in lieu of the substantial reduced availability for the local communities.

Evidence

What data/information have you used to assess how this policy/service might impact on protected groups? Sources such as the [Office of National Statistics](#), [Somerset Intelligence Partnership](#), [Somerset's Joint Strategic Needs Analysis \(JSNA\)](#), Staff and/ or [area profiles](#),, should be detailed here

These charges would apply to the residential population of Somerset. Those communities in and around Crewkerne & Dulverton will be most impacted by the revised Recycling Site opening schedule, however these impacts would be less than those experienced through site closures

In order to assess the current performance against our peer authorities we have considered site catchment areas, site usage patterns, site capacity compared to hours of operation, likely future population & housing growth, age demographic of potential site users and the drivers behind why our residents choose to visit and make use of our sites. We compared Somerset to Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Norfolk, North Yorkshire, Suffolk and Worcestershire (the most similar areas to Somerset).

Our current weekly opening hours, across the network of recycling sites, is broadly in line with our peer authority group (720 hours compared to the peer group average of 710 hours) the proposed amendment to opening hours to 657.5 hours per week represents only a 9% reduction in service provision. The weekly hours within our peer group range from 324 hours to 1,088 hours, meaning our revised proposal maintains its median position.

In order to try and understand why our residents choose to use the recycling sites rather than the other waste services we provide, a small sample public survey has been undertaken at six of our sites. The results suggest that two thirds of visitors use the sites to dispose of their bulky household items (63%) and garden waste (26%) and because they are local and convenient (70%). We also know that less than 5% of site visitors use more than one of our facilities, suggesting that most people use their local site exclusively.

Public consultation is not deemed necessary on the proposals contained within this report as all sites are to remain open. However, a comprehensive communications plan has been developed to ensure that site users are fully aware, in advance, of the

proposed changes in operational hours, particular focus to be given to those communities to be most impacted by the proposals. This has been confirmed with SCC's Consultation Manager. A comprehensive communications plan is necessary to inform the public and explain the changes. Many of the changes to sites (more hours in Summer, weekend opening, removal of charges, simpler opening hours pattern, alignment of opening hours to local need) are positive changes.

Who have you consulted with to assess possible impact on protected groups? If you have not consulted other people, please explain why?

The SWP Senior Management Group, the Somerset Waste Board and Partner Authority Members have been briefed on the proposed changes. The site contractor (Viridor Ltd) have also been consulted as part of the decision making process with regards to impact to potential site users and their staff.

Analysis of impact on protected groups

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires us to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations with protected groups. Consider how this policy/service will achieve these aims. In the table below, using the evidence outlined above and your own understanding, detail what considerations and potential impacts against each of the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Based on this information, make an assessment of the likely outcome, before you have implemented any mitigation.

Protected group	Summary of impact	Negative outcome	Neutral outcome	Positive outcome
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a disproportionately high number of retired people live in the most impacted communities this change may have an impact on this group. A significant amount of publicity will be required in the period before the introduction of the opening hour changes to ensure residents understand and are aware of the change. Site staff will monitor increased complaint levels. 	□	□	☒

Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No specific impacts have been identified. 	□	⊗	□
Gender reassignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No specific impacts have been identified. 	□	⊗	□
Marriage and civil partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No specific impacts have been identified. 	□	⊗	□
Pregnancy and maternity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No specific impacts have been identified. 	□	⊗	□
Race and ethnicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No specific impacts have been identified. 	□	⊗	□
Religion or belief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No specific impacts have been identified. 	□	⊗	□
Sex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No specific impacts have been identified. 	□	⊗	□

Sexual orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No specific impacts have been identified. 	□	⊗	□
Other, e.g. carers, veterans, homeless, low income, rurality/isolation, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This change may have an impact in rural areas if there is a consequent increase in fly tipping. This may have a specific impact on landowners (farmers, conservation charities etc) who would pick up the cost of clearing the waste from their land. This will be monitored through reported instances of fly tipped. Residents will be made aware of what to do with fly tipped waste and the consequences of fly tipping. 	□	⊗	□

Negative outcomes action plan

Where you have ascertained that there will potentially be negative outcomes, you are required to mitigate the impact of these. Please detail below the actions that you intend to take.

Action taken/to be taken	Date	Person responsible	How will it be monitored?	Action complete
Ensure the new opening pattern is well publicised in advance of the change to avoid confusion to potential site users and increased fly tipping events	01/04/2019	SWP	Fly tipping reports will be collated and reported by District Council Partners.	□

If negative impacts remain, please provide an explanation below.

Further publicity and communication will be implemented if the expected short term spike in the number of fly tipping incidents (whilst residents adapt to the revised opening hours) is exacerbated in any way.

Completed by:	David Oaten
Date	10th August 2018
Signed off by:	Mickey Green
Date	10th August 2018
Equality Lead/Manager sign off date:	Mickey Green
To be reviewed by: (officer name)	David Oaten
Review date:	30th September 2019