

Briefing Note

Budget Scrutiny – Background and update on the HWRC Booking System

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Purpose

To provide Budget Scrutiny Committee an update on the booking system at the Household Waste Recycling Centres.

Background

HW Martin operate the three Household Waste Recycling Centres (“HWRCs”) at Newport Pagnell, New Bradwell and Bleak Hall. A fixed monthly management fee is paid for each site and then a variable payment for transport and disposal based on the actual waste throughput. Income from trade and reuse sales is paid to the authority on a monthly basis. The sites open for 12 hours per day in the summer (April – September) and 9 hours (October – March) and this results in seasonal changes in the variable elements e.g. transport, disposal and site liaison costs.

Milton Keynes Council has a statutory duty to arrange for places to be provided at which persons resident in its area may deposit their household waste and to arrange for the disposal of that waste. MKC provides three such Household Waste Recycling Centres (“HWRCs”) at Newport Pagnell, New Bradwell and Bleak Hall, all operated by HW Martin.

Following onset of the pandemic and government rules to stay at home, MKC closed all 3 HWRCs to the public from 24 March 2020. To assist those businesses which were still required to operate, the trade waste at Newport Pagnell remained open.

Following guidance from Defra, NAWDO (National Association of Waste Disposal Officers) and WISH (Waste Industry Safety and Health Forum), MK Council opened all three Household Waste Recycling Centres on Monday 18 May 2020. The sites were operated with modified layouts and waste streams as well as on a booking only basis to reduce transmission risks and promote social distancing. Initially all three sites were supported by a security guard (provided by ENGIE), 2 site liaison personnel (provided by Ringway) as well as traffic management and dedicated highway duty officer support.

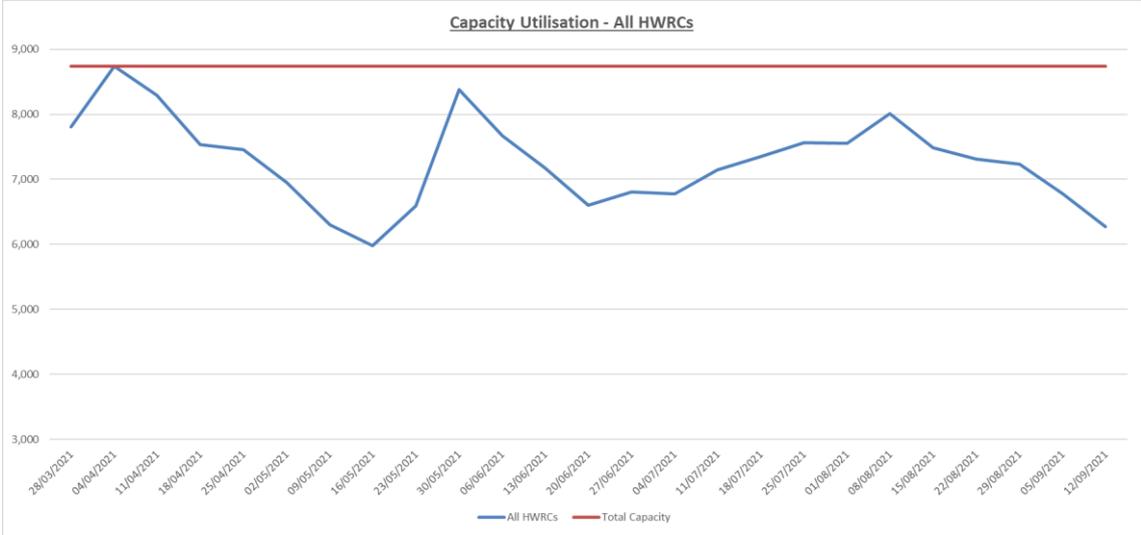
The self-service online form was introduced on Thursday 4 June and from 29 June 2020, all 3 sites have been operated with a single site liaison personnel provided by HW Martin at a cost of around £350 per day (total for all 3 sites).

Initially the capacity at the sites was set at 2,744 appointment slots per week but since the implementation there has been more demand for slots and this subsequently has been increased to 8,736 (Summer hours) reducing to 6,552 from 1 October (Winter hours). Increasing the number of slots and longer opening hours increases the throughput at the sites and the management fee (including site liaison costs).

Demand

Environment and Waste have been working with the Customer Data and Insight and Digital Teams to monitor demand across the sites. The figure below shows the demand (bookings made) across the 3 sites versus capacity (bookings available). HW Martins also monitor the number of “no shows”. This has consistently measured around 15% which means the actual demand is 15% lower than the blue line below.

Figure 1 – HWRC Capacity Utilisation



The average demand (bookings) since March 2021 is 7,200 bookings per week and this has been reducing. The actual demand (bookings less “no shows”) is 6,120. New Bradwell has the highest amount of capacity headroom with around 75% average weekly fill level.

Financial Analysis

The booking system was implemented from May 2020 and therefore there is not a direct comparison of financial years. For the comparison below the full 12 months prior to and following the implementation of the system have been used.

The average monthly cost pre-booking system was £198k per month with the annual total of £2.374M. The monthly cost in the first full 12 months following the implementation of the booking system was £178k with an annual total of £2.137M. There is inclusive of the additional annual cost of £138k to provide the site liaison at each of the three sites.

The average monthly disposal and transport cost pre-booking system was £52k per month with the annual total of £1.348M. The monthly disposal and transport cost in the first full 12 months following the implementation of the booking system was £41k per month as an average with an annual total of £982k.

An additional consequence of the booking system has come about due to the regulation of traffic and site users. Previously vehicle collisions and near misses, confrontations due to queueing, slips and trips and manual handling incidents were a common occurrence. HW Martin have reported zero health and safety incidents since the implementation of the booking system meaning the sites are probably now safer for residents, trade users and staff on site.