

## March Household Waste Recycling Centre Redevelopment

To: Environment and Green Investment Committee

Meeting Date: 28 April 2022

From: Steve Cox, Executive Director - Place and Economy

Electoral division(s): March North and Waldersey

Key decision: Yes

Forward Plan ref: 2022/041

Outcome: The Committee is being asked to consider proposals for the redevelopment of the March Household Recycling Centre. Outcome – to maintain Household Recycling Centre provision for residents in March and surrounding communities when the planning consent for the current site expires in December 2024.

Recommendation: Members are asked to:

- a) support the recommendation in paragraph 2.2 to relocate the March Household Recycling Centre to land adjacent to March Waste Transfer station located on Melbourne Av/enue.
- b) support the recommendation in paragraph 2.7 to take forward design Option 2 for further design development, public consultation (as set out in point d) below) and a planning submission (that takes account of the consultation feedback set out in point e) below),.
- c) agree to decouple the Household Recycling Centre relocation and construction project from wider considerations around the potential need to construct a canopy at the site through the Environment Agency's (EA's) permitting regime. Noting that if such a canopy is required by the EA the potential to accommodate green energy generation infrastructure, to allow energy developments can be reviewed and progressed in a separate planning application, if feasible (see paragraph 2.8).

Members are asked to delegate responsibility to the Executive Director Place and Economy in consultation with the Chair and Vice chair of Environment and Green Investment Committee to:

- d) carry out pre-application consultation with the local community on the preferred site design option, to include reference to all the

initial designs considered with an explanation of how the decision was reached to select a preferred option,

- e) agree how any significant issues that are raised during public consultation will be addressed in the final design, which can be evidenced in the planning application submission,
- f) prepare and submit a planning application to relocate the March Household Recycling Centre to land adjacent to March waste transfer station, where it can be expanded and redeveloped as a split level facility.

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# 1. Background

- 1.1. The March Household Recycling Centre (HRC) is located on the edge of the March Landfill site on Hundred Road March. The March HRC site receives approximately 122,000 visits per year with over 2,350 vehicle movements per week, which equates to 9% of all HRC vehicle movements. The March HRC handles approximately 5,500 tonnes of waste a year.
- 1.2. The March landfill site on which the current HRC is located, is owned by the County Council and was leased on 20 August 1992 to East Waste Limited (now FCC Environment) on a 99 year lease that will expire in 2091.
- 1.3. The current HRC at March does not have a separate planning consent, the planning permission for the HRC operation is included in the planning consent for the adjacent March landfill site. The current planning consent for the March landfill is due to expire in December 2024, the landfill void has been filled and the site has stopped accepting waste.
- 1.4. The County Council is the freehold owner of a site on Melbourne Avenue, March, adjacent to the Highways Depot on which the March waste transfer station is located. The March waste transfer station is used to receive waste and recyclables from Fenland District Council's kerbside collections from residents and from HRCs in the Fenland district. Waste and recyclables which are delivered to the waste transfer station are loaded onto bulk vehicles for onward transport to Waterbeach Waste Management Park and other recycling re-processors.
- 1.5. Estimates indicate that the number of households in March will increase by approximately 26% by 2031 with a potential increase in waste production of up to 6,240 tonnes. The existing recycling infrastructure and capacity will need to adapt and evolve to manage the estimated increase in population and future demand for HRC services in the catchment area of the March site.
- 1.6. Officers have commissioned external consultants with experience of gaining HRC planning permissions to assist with the development of designs, preparation and submission of a planning application, to develop the land to the east of the March waste transfer station. This would allow a continuation of service after planning consent for the current site expires, provide additional HRC capacity in line with current growth predictions and the forecast increase in demand, and construct a new site for residents of March and the surrounding communities in line with current best practice.

# 2. Technical

- 2.1. The planning conditions for the March landfill site requires the whole landfill site, including the area occupied by the HRC, to be restored to the agreed landfill Restoration Plan by December 2024. In order that the area currently occupied by the HRC can be restored, the site will need to close approximately twelve months before the landfill planning consent expires in December 2024.
- 2.2. When the County Council acquired and developed the March waste transfer station site on Melbourne Avenue, an area of land to the east of the transfer station building was left undeveloped to allow future development as an HRC when the planning for the current site expired. A proposal was submitted to the Strategic Property Asset Board on 28 January

2021 with a recommendation to develop the land adjacent to the waste transfer station building as an HRC to replace the current site when planning expires, the board supported the recommendation.

- 2.3. Supporting baseline studies have been undertaken and will be reassessed against the final facility design when completed. These include ecology, transport, noise, air quality, heritage, landscape and visual impacts. Once a preferred design option has been agreed, further detailed design work will be undertaken (e.g. to develop a detailed drainage scheme) and pre-application engagement with the Environment Agency to inform the Environmental Permit application for the new site.
- 2.4. Planning and design principles have been based on an assessment of forecast population growth, waste growth and associated HRC site demand over the next 48 years up to 2070, however the planning application is to be based on projected growth in demand up to 2030 giving an initial forecast over an 8 year period which is in line with future local plan projections.
- 2.5. The Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) best practice guidance recommends that higher tonnage sites are of a split level design to provide ground level access to deposit waste into containers and allow segregation of the public from vehicles servicing the site, to minimise disruption and improve site safety. This type of design can also enhance the experience of the public on sites of all sizes, making it easier for both users and staff to focus on recycling. WRAP guidance states that although re-use activity does not divert a significant tonnage from landfill, a formal re-use system can have a positive effect on recycling rates by reinforcing the impression that the site's primary focus is the recovery of materials. WRAP guidance points out how sites that are fully or partly covered offer users a more pleasant environment in which to recycle by offering a comfortable and weatherproof experience for residents but does not make any recommendations regarding their use.
- 2.6. A number of layouts were considered for the new site with input from our operations contractor, Amey. The design options are attached to this report at Appendix 1. Consideration was given to merging the operation of the HRC site and the adjacent waste transfer station (see design options 1 and 3), however this was not considered further as the operational benefits were minimal and significant amendments would be required to the layout and operation of the waste transfer station. Further consideration was given to providing an internal roadway to link the HRC with the transfer station to allow waste containers to be delivered without going via the public highway. Again, the operational benefits of this link were minimal and outweighed by the need to make significant amendments to the layout and operation of the transfer station. Consideration was also given to the provision of a canopy over part of the HRC. However, at this stage of the project design, there are no planning, permitting or operational reasons, nor specific design guidance measures, to require the incorporation of such a feature.
- 2.7. It is proposed that design Option 2 is the preferred option to be taken forward for further detailed design development, as it is of a split level design, it maximises the capacity for queueing vehicles off the public highway, maximises the parking spaces available, has a separate Heavy Commercial Vehicle (HCV) access off the public highway for vehicles servicing the containers, maximises the space available for waste and recycling containers, has a single operational area making it easier to service containers and maintain separation between operations and the public, and has a formal re-use facility with dedicated parking

bays. It is proposed that during the pre-application public consultation all designs are presented with an explanation of how the decision was reached to select a preferred option.

- 2.8. Once a preferred design option has been selected, consideration will be given during the next stages of detailed design development to the necessity of providing a canopy / canopies over parts of the site where the public will be depositing their waste, from a waste management and operational perspective first and foremost, as may be required by the EA permits, but also taking account of the cost and benefits in doing so. Provision of a canopy / canopies could create an opportunity for green energy generation through the addition of solar pv panels. It is proposed that a decision is taken on the need for a canopy for waste management purposes first before any considerations for green energy generation through the use of solar panels are taken forward. Due to the relatively short timescale for the design, development and construction of the relocated HRC site, it is proposed that any decisions regarding the provision of a canopy / canopies and the associated energy generation through the use of solar panels on them, are managed and delivered separately from the initial waste project. This would avoid any delay to developing the replacement HRC and reduce the risk of there being a gap between the closure of the current site and opening the replacement site, leaving March residents without a local HRC. Regardless of the provision of a canopy / canopies, officers can confirm that in the detailed design development of the preferred option, opportunities for green energy will be considered e.g. PV panels on the roofs of the site office and re-use facility and the final planning application will demonstrate how the proposal meets adopted planning policy in relation to climate change and future proofing of the site.
- 2.9. Once a preferred design option has been selected, it is proposed that a pre-application public consultation is carried out on the preferred design and the consultation also includes the other designs as discussed in paragraph 2.7 above. It is proposed that the consultation is carried out virtually over a four week period as well as providing drop in sessions in the local area to maximise the opportunity for residents to have their say. It is proposed that a dedicated telephone line is set up during the consultation to allow residents without internet access to get details of the development and have their say on the proposals.
- 2.10. Once a preferred design option has been selected and further developed it is proposed that Cambridgeshire's Design Quality Panel will be consulted for their views on the proposals.

### 3. Financial

- 3.1. A capital business case has been developed and the outline proposal for funding to design and develop a new HRC was submitted to the Capital Programme Board for consideration on 14 December 2020. The Capital Programme Board were supportive of the funding proposals.
- 3.2. The capital business case that was submitted in December 2020 was based on high level costs estimates which anticipated that the capital cost of constructing a new HRC facility would be approximately £2.7M and did not include the cost of providing a canopy. A recent update of the construction costs based on design option 2 have estimated the capital cost of construction to be £3.4M (including an estimated £600K for providing a canopy if required).
- 3.3. Once the Environment and Green Investment Committee have agreed the preferred design option, then environmental permit pre-application discussions with the Environment Agency

will take place to identify any further technical and operational issues including the potential benefits or need of a canopy / canopies over the site. Once this has happened, and the respective costs worked up in more detail, the scheme will be taken back to Capital programme Board for approval. Any changes in capital budget will require approval from Strategy and Resources Committee.

## 4. Estimated Timescales

4.1. The following are the key dates and estimated timescales to provide a new HRC facility for March before the planning permission lapses on the current site, located on March landfill site.

- Selection of preferred design option for detailed development - 28 April 2022.
- Detailed design development May to July 2022
- Public consultation on HRC preferred design prior to submission of planning amendment – June 2022
- Formal submission of planning application to Minerals and Waste Planning Authority – July 2022
- Planning determination – October 2022
- Planning condition discharge – October 2022 to January 2023
- Construction procurement - October 2022 to January 2023
- Construction of new HRC site – January 2023 to August 2023

## 5. Alignment with corporate priorities

5.1. Communities at the heart of everything we do

The report above sets out the implications for this priority in 1.5, 1.6, 2.3, 2.4, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9 and 2.10.

5.2. A good quality of life for everyone

The report above sets out the implications for this priority in 1.5, 1.6 and 2.5

5.3. Helping our children learn, develop and live life to the full

There are no significant implications for this priority.

5.4. Cambridgeshire: a well-connected, safe, clean, green environment

The report above sets out the implications for this priority in 1.5, 1.6, 2.5, 2.7 and 2.8

5.5. Protecting and caring for those who need us

There are no significant implications for this priority.

## 6. Significant Implications

### 6.1. Resource Implications

The report above sets out details of resource implications in Section 3 of the report.

### 6.2. Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

Delays to obtaining planning consent for a new site could have a negative impact on the cost of procuring materials and a contractor to construct the new HRC.

All procurement will be conducted in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and Public Contract Regulations (2015).

### 6.3. Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

Risk that planning consent for a new site is delayed or refused.

Risk of delays to the construction of a new facility.

Risk of a gap between the closure of the current March HRC site and opening a new site leaving residents in the March area without local HRC provision.

### 6.4. Equality and Diversity Implications

An equalities impact assessment will be carried out on a preferred design option once selected. Provision of a split level HRC site will improve access to recycling services for disabled residents.

### 6.5. Engagement and Communications Implications

The report above sets out details of engagement and communications implications in paragraph 2.9. Following the submission of a planning application there will be an additional consultation exercise carried out as part of the formal planning process.

### 6.6. Localism and Local Member Involvement

Local members will be consulted during the pre-application consultation detailed in 2.9.

Further local and member engagement will be carried out by Minerals and Waste Planning officers once an application has been submitted (see response to 6.5 above).

### 6.7. Public Health Implications

A health impact assessment will be carried out once a preferred design has been selected to support the formal planning application submission.

### 6.8. Environment and Climate Change Implications on Priority Areas:

#### 6.8.1. Implication 1: Energy efficient, low carbon buildings.

Neutral.

Explanation: Consideration will be given to opportunities for generating green energy on the site (see paragraph 2.8).

Further consideration will be given to reducing the carbon impact of the buildings after a preferred design option has been selected, planning approval has been obtained and a construction contractor has been procured.

#### 6.8.2. Implication 2: Low carbon transport.

Positive:

Explanation: The site proposed for the new HRC is closer to the March waste transfer station which will slightly reduce the distance travelled by the commercial vehicles servicing the containers. The preferred site option includes separate access for cyclist and pedestrians to allow to use sustainable transport.

6.8.3. Implication 3: Green spaces, peatland, afforestation, habitats and land management.

Neutral:

Explanation: The removal of the current HRC will allow that area of the landfill site to be restored and managed for biodiversity. The construction of the new facility will be on a site that is currently undeveloped. The preferred site design Option 2 includes areas of planting and screening for habitat creation.

6.8.4. Implication 4: Waste Management and Tackling Plastic Pollution.

Positive

Explanation: Providing a modern, split level HRC facility could encourage greater participation in plastic recycling and reduce the quantity of plastics in residual waste that are sent for treatment and landfill.

6.8.5. Implication 5: Water use, availability and management:

Positive:

Explanation: The preferred design, Option 2 retains an area to the north of the site to be used for sustainable drainage. Work on a detailed drainage scheme will be carried out once a preferred design option has been selected for further development.

6.8.6. Implication 6: Air Pollution.

Neutral:

Explanation: The site proposed for the new HRC is closer to the March waste transfer station which will slightly reduce the distance travelled by HCVs servicing waste containers and reduce associated vehicle emissions.

6.8.7. Implication 7: Resilience of our services and infrastructure, and supporting vulnerable

people to cope with climate change.

Positive:

Explanation: Providing an improved HRC facility will enable residents of March and the surrounding area to recycle better.

Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance? Yes

Name of Financial Officer: Sarah Heywood

Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the Head of Procurement? Yes

Name of Officer: Clare Ellis

Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by the Council's Monitoring Officer or LGSS Law? Yes

Name of Legal Officer: Fiona McMillan

Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact?



Yes

Name of Officer: Elsa Evans

Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?

Yes

Name of Officer: Sarah Silk

Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact? Yes

Name of Officer: Emma Fitch

Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health?

Yes

Name of Officer: Iain Green

If a Key decision, have any Environment and Climate Change implications been cleared by the Climate Change Officer?

Yes

Name of Officer: Emily Bolton

## 7. Source documents

### 7.1. Source documents

Project documentation is held electronically.

### 7.2. Location

Available on request from report author.