

THE COMMERCIAL VEHICLES AND TRAILERS PERMIT SCHEME FOR HOUSEHOLD WASTE SITES

Report By: Head of Environmental Health and Trading Standards

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

1. To report the current arrangements of the Commercial Vehicles and Trailers Permit Scheme for Household Waste Sites.

Financial Implications

2. The Financial Implications are detailed in the main text of the report.

Background

3. Following questions at the Environment Scrutiny Committee concerning the introduction of the Trailer and Commercial Vehicle Permit Scheme at Household Waste Sites, this report has been prepared to outline the issues that have arisen since the introduction of the scheme, with particular reference to fly-tipping.
4. The principle of the scheme is to stop the illegal use of the Household Waste Sites by businesses. The Household Waste Sites are licensed to handle only household waste and cannot legally accept commercial waste. There has been considerable evidence that businesses have been using the Household Waste Sites to dispose of their waste, thereby escaping the costs they are required to pay to dispose of their own waste. The impact of this is that Council Tax Payers are subsidising businesses waste disposal costs.

Savings and Household Waste Site Tonnages

5. Appendix 1 to this report outlines the impact of the Trailer and Commercial Vehicle Permit Scheme on the Tonnages of waste handled by through the Household Waste Sites, across both Herefordshire and Worcestershire.
6. Since the scheme was introduced there has been an overall reduction in waste of 12% across all of the Household Waste Sites in the two Counties. Whilst overall reductions across the two Counties are slightly higher this is due to a "Residents Scheme" being introduced in Bromsgrove, the combination of the Residents Scheme and the Trailer and Commercial Vehicle Permit Scheme have reduced the waste tonnages at this site by 50% as this now effectively stops residents from Birmingham City Council's area using the site.
7. The scheme has undoubtedly led to savings for the two authorities. As detailed in Appendix 1 the savings for 2007/08 are estimated to be some £871,000, whilst the costs of the scheme are estimated to be £240,000. This makes a net saving of

Further information on the subject of this report is available from Andrew Tector.

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£631,000. Herefordshire's Contract payments are based on 25% of the overall contract payment; therefore our net saving through the scheme is £157,750.

Fly tipping

8. It has been alleged that fly tipping has increased as a consequence of the introduction of the Trailer and Commercial Vehicle Permit Scheme. There is evidence to support this assertion but some care needs to be exercised in assessing the scale of the problem.
9. The Council, along with all local authorities record fly tipping through a national database run by the Environment Agency, called Flycapture. In April 2007 the Service became aware that it was underreporting fly tipping incidents because of confusion over the definition of what is a recordable fly tip incident. This was rectified in April 2007 and this means that we effectively increased the number of recordable fly tip incidents by 100%. This means without any increase in the number of fly tip incidents we will have doubled the number of incidents we record. The underlying trend appears to have been an increase of around 57%. This figure would seem to be high as the authorities in Worcestershire have reported only a minimal increase in fly tipping for the same period.
10. The figures also show a split between the origin of fly tips, that is whether the Council assesses them to have been domestic or commercial origin. This data has shown that there was an increase in domestic fly tips from April to August 2007 and since August there has been an overall decline in domestic waste being fly tipped. Interestingly the highest level of domestic waste fly tipping occurred in August 2007 when, due to flooding, the Trailer and Commercial Vehicle Permit Scheme was suspended.
11. The statistics for commercial fly tipping show an ongoing increase with the highest levels being recorded in November 2007.
12. The overall costs to the service of clearing fly tips stands at an estimated level of £22,500 (based on expenditure up to November 2007) for the financial year 2007/08. (The final figure may well exceed this because of a large commercial fly tip in late November of hundreds of tyres and lpg cylinders – this incident is the largest fly tip in the County for a number of years and is completely unrelated to the permit scheme on Household Waste Sites.) Using the £22,500 figure as the cost of clearing all fly tips the increased levels this year are costing about an extra £9,000. This extra cost, when set against the savings of the Permit Scheme means the Council are saving in the order of £148,000 this year on the introduction of the scheme.
13. In addition to these savings there are a number of other issues that need to be taken into account. The reduction in tonnages will undoubtedly improve our strategic objective in reducing the municipal waste the Council collects and disposes of. This, in addition, reduces our need to trade Landfill Allowances, helping us to meet targets for the Diversion of Bio-degradable Waste. The Council is now also far more active in taking formal action over fly tips. In 2006/07 the Service undertook one formal action, in 2007/08 formal action has been instituted 45 times, up to November. Where evidence is found, formal investigations are undertaken and legal action is undertaken, this action includes seeking payment from fly tippers to pay for the costs of any clean up operations. In addition the Council's web pages on fly tipping have been updated and improved.

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RECOMMENDATION

THAT the report be noted.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None identified.

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