

Members' Library Service Request Form

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| Originator | Bruce Moffat |
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| Document Title | Recycling Centre Opening Hours |

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| Authorised By | Bruce Moffat |
| Designation | Service Manager Transport & Waste |
| Date | 05/01/21 |

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REPORT TO: Members' Library Service

MEETING DATE:

BY: Head of Infrastructure

SUBJECT: Recycling Centre Opening Hours

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the changes to the opening times of the Recycling Centres to 08:30 until 17:00 each day to bring East Lothian Council into line with other neighbouring Councils as of April 1st 2021.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 East Lothian Council operate four Recycling Centres which are open from 08:30 until 16:30 in the winter extending to 18:30 between April and September. This gives the public 56 hours of access in the winter and 70 hours access in the summer per week.
- 3.2 Edinburgh Council operate three Recycling Centres which are open seven days a week from 08:30 until 17:00 with a late night opening on a Thursday until 18:30. This gives the public a total of 61 hours per week to access the centres.
- 3.3 Edinburgh Council operate a booking system for all vehicles which limits the amount of traffic through their centres and creates lengthy delays for residents who wish to book a time slot to visit the Recycling Centres.
- 3.4 Midlothian Council currently have one Recycling Centre operating, having closed their Penicuik centre due to COVID -19 safety reasons. Their Recycling Centre is open from 09:30 until 16:15 seven days a week giving the public a total of 47.25 hours per week to access the centres.

- 3.5 Midlothian Council operate a booking system for vans and vehicles with trailers.
- 3.6 Residents are only allowed to use Recycling Centres that are operated by the Local Authority that they reside in unless they pay for disposal.
- 3.7 Due to the Recycling Centres in East Lothian being open considerably longer in the summer than neighbouring Councils as well as less waiting times residents from other counties have been found to travel to East Lothian to dispose of household waste.
- 3.8 East Lothian Council staff ask for proof of address wherever possible however this is dependent on staffing numbers and also the volume of traffic on site and workload during each day.
- 3.9 Three of East Lothian Council's Recycling Centres are operated by a single member of staff with Kinwegar having a minimum of two staff on duty.
- 3.10 As the number of site users increases staff have less time to check the eligibility of the site user before they unload their vehicle. This allows residents from other Local Authorities access to facilities intended for East Lothian residents.
- 3.11 Members of the public who are not from East Lothian are turned away which can cause confrontation between staff and public.
- 3.12 The vast majority of people turned away are from Portobello, Joppa and Dalkeith, All within 6 miles of the closest East Lothian Council Recycling Centre.
- 3.13 Due to the exact number of site users from outwith East Lothian being unknown we cannot accurately state how much their waste cost East Lothian Council for disposal. However, each tonne that is deposited can cost up to £110 to be transported and disposed of.
- 3.14 By bringing the operating times into line with neighbouring authorities we will reduce the appeal of travelling to East Lothian for the sole purpose of disposing of waste.
- 3.15 When challenged members of the public from outside East Lothian state they try to gain access to East Lothian centres due to longer opening hours, less waiting time and a more relaxed atmosphere.
- 3.16 All vehicles entering the four recycling centres in East Lothian pass over automatic traffic counters which were installed in 2014. This gives us an accurate record of the number of site users and the times they access the centre.

- 3.17 Traffic figures show that between 2015 and 2019 there was an increase in site user numbers of 19.31% (81,392 visitors)

Combined annual recycling centre visitor numbers

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Total visitors</u> |
|-------------|-----------------------|
| 2015 | 421494 |
| 2016 | 459988 |
| 2017 | 473673 |
| 2018 | 485055 |
| 2019 | 502886 |

- 3.18 Since the centres reopened on June 1st after being closed due to COVID-19 we have recorded a sustained significant increase in vehicles using the centres. These are the highest figures ever recorded, including traditionally busy periods such as Christmas and school holidays. These figures also coincide with the introduction of a booking in system by both Edinburgh and Midlothian Councils which has reduced the number of vehicles they allow into their centres each day.

Monthly recycling centre visitor comparison 2019 -2020

| <u>Month</u> | <u>2019</u> | <u>2020</u> | <u>Increase (%)</u> |
|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| June | 44277 | 54529 | 27.5 |
| July | 48396 | 57802 | 19.4 |
| August | 49494 | 53702 | 8.5 |
| September | 43413 | 51355 | 18.3 |
| <u>Total</u> | <u>185580</u> | <u>217388</u> | <u>17.1</u> |

3.19 The visitor numbers for the previous four months show that overall 5.2% of site users would be affected by a change to opening hours.

| <u>Dunbar Recycling Centre</u> | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|---|
| <u>Month</u> | <u>Total site users</u> | <u>Site users after</u> <u>5pm</u> | <u>% site users</u> <u>after 5pm</u> |
| June | 10285 | 535 | 5.2 |
| July | 11058 | 608 | 5.5 |
| August | 10812 | 624 | 5.8 |
| September | 10346 | 659 | 6.4 |
| <u>Total</u> | <u>42501</u> | <u>2426</u> | <u>5.7</u> |

| <u>Kinwegar Recycling Centre</u> | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|---|---|
| <u>Month</u> | <u>Total site users</u> | <u>Site users after</u> <u>5pm</u> | <u>% site users</u> <u>after 5pm</u> |
| June | 23560 | 979 | 4.2 |
| July | 25228 | 1182 | 4.7 |
| August | 22106 | 1019 | 4.6 |
| September | 21890 | 970 | 4.4 |
| <u>Total</u> | <u>92784</u> | <u>4150</u> | <u>4.5</u> |

| <u>Macmerry Recycling Centre</u> | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|---|---|
| <u>Month</u> | <u>Total site users</u> | <u>Site users after</u> <u>5pm</u> | <u>% site users</u> <u>after 5pm</u> |
| June | 11802 | 526 | 4.5 |
| July | 11928 | 579 | 4.9 |
| August | 10484 | 470 | 4.5 |
| September | 10194 | 421 | 4.1 |
| <u>Total</u> | <u>44408</u> | <u>1996</u> | <u>4.5</u> |

| <u>North Berwick Recycling Centre</u> | | | |
|--|--------------------------------|---|---|
| <u>Month</u> | <u>Total site users</u> | <u>Site users after</u> <u>5pm</u> | <u>% site users</u> <u>after 5pm</u> |
| June | 8882 | 569 | 6.4 |
| July | 9588 | 685 | 7.1 |
| August | 9387 | 750 | 8.0 |
| September | 8925 | 710 | 8.0 |
| <u>Total</u> | <u>36782</u> | <u>2714</u> | <u>7.4</u> |

| <u>Combined Recycling Centre Site User Numbers</u> | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|---|---|
| <u>Month</u> | <u>Total site users</u> | <u>Site users after</u> <u>5pm</u> | <u>% site users</u> <u>after 5pm</u> |
| June | 54529 | 2609 | 4.8 |
| July | 57802 | 3054 | 5.3 |
| August | 53702 | 2863 | 5.3 |
| September | 51355 | 2760 | 5.4 |
| <u>Overall total</u> | <u>217388</u> | <u>11286</u> | <u>5.2</u> |

- 3.20 Staff currently work an 11 hour day between April and September. As the number of site users increase the pressure on staff increases and the ability to withdraw from work duties to have regular breaks becomes more challenging.
- 3.21 There is no capacity in the existing budget to ensure that staff have regular uninterrupted breaks by utilising additional resources to provide cover. Therefore closer of sites for breaks would be an alternative but exceptionally difficult to manage given the visitor footfall.
- 3.22 By altering the Recycling Centre opening times staff would work a constant 9.25 hours per day which includes time to prepare the centre for opening and also time to close the centre and carry out routine maintenance duties.
- 3.23 By standardising the Recycling Centre opening times we would remain open until 17:00 in the winter months. This would give residents an additional 30 minutes each day between 1st October and 31st March each year.
- 3.24 By standardising the Recycling Centre opening times we would create consistent all year round opening times which will avoid confusion for site users.
- 3.25 Information available from NHS websites states that working longer hours increases the risk of severe depression, strokes and heart disease.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None

5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on equality, the environment or economy.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Financial – Small incalculable saving due to reduction in cross border waste disposal costs. Reduction in overtime costs to cover holidays and sickness during longer summer hours and reduction in cost of public holiday working due to reduced length of shift.
- 6.2 Personnel - No impact on staff numbers or overall hours worked but will increase mental and physical wellbeing of staff and allow for increase in personnel on shift each Thursday.

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None

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| AUTHOR'S NAME | Bruce Moffat |
| DESIGNATION | Service Manager Transport & Waste |
| CONTACT INFO | bmoffat@eastlothian.gov.uk |
| DATE | 05/01/2021 |