



Title: **Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) Charging for Waste Rubble or Similar Material that was Previously Free of Charge**

Public Agenda Item: **Yes**

Wards Affected: **All Wards in Torbay**

To: **Council** On: **29 September 2011**

Key Decision: **No**

Change to Budget: **Yes** Change to Policy Framework: **No**

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1. What we are trying to achieve and the impact on our customers

- 1.1 This report responds to the need to make in year budget savings in Spatial Planning, if a balanced budget is to be achieved by year end. These savings are cashable and will count towards targets for 2012/13, with member approval. The scheme will be similar to that introduced by Devon County Council on 1/4/11, where waste rubble that was previously accepted free of charge at the Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC), will be charged for.
- 1.2 Such a scheme could potentially generate objections from members of the public, but Devon County Council reported at its last Devon Environmental Service managers group on 14/7/11, that objections to their charging had settled down, with a decreasing number of complaints.
- 1.3 There is the possibility of increased fly tipping with some householders not wishing to pay the new charges, but since Devon County Council introduced its new scheme, fly tipping is only slightly higher than 12 month previous, as at June 2011.

2. Recommendation for decision

- 2.1 That Torbay Council implements a charging system for waste material associated with rubble and for vehicle tyres at the Paignton Household Waste Recycling Centre, six weeks after approval by the Council, as follows (Charges are inclusive of VAT):

- | | |
|--|--------------|
| 1. Soil, rubble, ceramics, paving slabs, bricks, building blocks etc | £2 per bag * |
| 2. Asbestos (a 6' x 3' sheet) or a bag * | £20 |
| 3. Plasterboard (a 8' x 3' sheet) or a bag * | £7 |
| 4. Car Tyres (no commercial) | £2 each |
- * A bag should be no bigger than 20" x 30"

3. Key points and reasons for recommendations

- 3.1 Contrary to popular belief, this waste is not classified nationally as household waste. Torbay Council like all other councils in the UK only has a legal obligation to provide Recycling centre facilities for household waste (which is waste arising from the day to day running of a household). However, items from the repair or improvement of houses (e.g. DIY type waste) is classified as construction waste and there is no requirement for the council to provide any service for the disposal of this material or accept it free of charge. The Audit Commission also states that this type of waste (rubble and soil associated with rubble) is not household waste, so even if it is recycled it cannot be included in the household waste recycling figure.
- 3.2 To avoid confusion, household waste comprises the unwanted contents of the house and not part of the house itself. This means that waste created from landscaping or garden alterations such as dismantling a rockery or digging up a patio/concrete hard standing, cannot be classified as household waste.
- 3.3 In addition, vehicle tyres are also not classed as household waste and therefore there is no requirement for the council to accept them at all and certainly not on a free of charge basis.

For more detailed information on this proposal please refer to the supporting information attached.

**Les Crump
Executive Head of Spatial Planning**

Supporting information

A1. Introduction and history

- A1.1 Since 1 April 2011 Devon County Council has charged for items that were previously free of charge at all its Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs).
- A1.2 The materials recommended for charging are not classified as household waste, so even though some can be recycled, they do not count towards Torbay's household recycling rate. Asbestos and plasterboard are both hazardous wastes, and as such currently cost £223 and £55 per ton to dispose of respectively. Based on 2010-11 tonnages the total disposal cost for these materials in a year is around £9,700 to Torbay Council.
- A1.3 Torbay Council is under no obligation to follow what Devon County Council has done, but with the need to make budget savings, Landfill Tax continuing to increase and the likelihood of residents outside Torbay's boundary using Torbay's HWRC as a free tipping site for these materials, then this option needs to be considered.

A2. Risk assessment of preferred option

A2.1 Outline of significant key risks

- A2.1.1 Without these charges being implemented then the saving of about £50k p.a. will need to be found from other areas within the Spatial Planning budget.
- A2.1.2 Certain people may be so averse to paying for this service that they may choose to fly-tip their waste, even though this is a serious crime. Fly tipping is currently collected by TOR2, but if the levels increase significantly as a result of a change in policy, they may require a contract change to cover any increased costs.

A2.2 Remaining risks

- A2.2.1 This change is likely to generate an increase in complaints from the public. Although there is no direct cost to this, officer and member time will undoubtedly be taken up by many enquiries at the start of any implementation until it settles down.

A3. Other Options

- A3.1 Take no action and continue not to charge for this type of material.

Looking at the tonnages that are currently being received at the HWRC most of the materials remain at a constant level. Rubble is an exception to this. When TOR2 started running the HWRC they improved security at the site. Under TOR2's management the average for rubble from September 2010 to March 2011 equates to 43 tons a month. Currently the monthly average from April to August 2011 is 60 tons which if continues means that Torbay could receive an additional 205 tons, which will cost Torbay Council an additional £16,800 to dispose of (see Appendix 1). This is at a time when most other waste tonnages are dropping,

As more people find out that Torbay does not charge, it is likely that there will be a further increase in rubble tonnages as residents from outside the Bay use Torbay's HWRC for free disposal for these materials, with the resultant increase in disposal costs.

A4. Summary of resource implications

A4.1 If implemented the resource to collect the waste and related charges will fall to TOR2 as they currently run the HWRC as part of the Joint Venture contract. Interim negotiations with TOR2 have outlined what they are likely to charge for providing this service on behalf of Torbay Council. After TOR2 have taken their fee, Torbay Council should have a net surplus of approximately £50k p.a. and this should help to balance the Spatial Planning overspend in 2011-12 by around £17k as well as the targets for 2012-13. This is based on approval at full council on the 29/9/11, with proposed implementation on 14/11/11.

A5. What impact will there be on equalities, environmental sustainability and crime and disorder?

A5.1 Having to pay for a service that was previously free, will make some people reconsider whether the decision to throw something away that is still perfectly functional is the right option, which is in itself more environmentally sustainable. Waste minimisation is at the top of the national waste hierarchy and is supported within Torbay's Municipal Waste Management Strategy.

There is a possibility that some of this material could be fly-tipped, so incidents of environmental crime may increase due to this change in policy.

A6. Consultation and Customer Focus

A6.1 These recommendations have been discussed at Strategic Leadership Board.

A7. Are there any implications for other Business Units?

A7.1 If fly tipping is increased then the Enforcement Team within Community Protection may have an increased workload due to additional investigations and prosecutions relating to this illegal practice.

Appendices

Appendix 1 HWRC Charging Tonnage comparison