

Meeting: Cabinet

Date: 17 February 2026

Wards affected: All

Report Title: Access to Devon County Household Waste Recycling Centre – Cabinet Response to Council Recommendation

When does the decision need to be implemented?

Upon conclusion of the call-in period

Cabinet Member Contact Details: Councillor Adam Billings, Cabinet Member for Pride in Place, Transport and Parking, adam.billings@torbay.gov.uk

Director Contact Details: Alan Denby, Director of Pride in Place, alan.denby@torbay.gov.uk

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. This report responds to the Council's recommendation to Cabinet for the Director of Pride in Place to approach Devon County Council to explore the possibilities to enable Torbay Council residents to access the Brunel Road Recycling Centre, Brunel Road, Newton Abbot, to encourage greater recycling and responsible waste disposal, and reduce fly tipping in Torbay and the surrounding area. The report provides the outcome of the conversations held between the Director of Pride in Place and colleagues at Devon County Council and the financial implications, operational considerations, and potential risks to Torbay's recycling performance and income streams.

2. Reason for Proposal and its benefits

- 2.1. Torbay Council will not seek access to Devon's Household Waste Recycling Centres at this stage because of the potential risks to Torbay's recycling performance and income streams, which could be negatively impacted by diverting waste outside our current systems and the anticipated financial and resource implications which although unquantified are likely to be significant. The Council will instead continue to focus on improving its own recycling services and strengthening resident engagement.

3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

- 3.1. That Cabinet be recommended not to pursue access for Torbay's residents to Devon Household Waste Recycling Centres at this time due to the risks outlined in this report.

4. Appendices

- None

5. Background Documents

- None

Supporting Information

6. Introduction

- 6.1. At the meeting of Council on 11 December 2025, and following a Liberal Democrat amendment which was incorporated by Councillor Billings in his motion, a recommendation was made to Cabinet that the Director of Pride in Place be requested to explore with Devon County Council the possibility of enabling Torbay Council residents to access the Brunel Road Recycling Centre, Brunel Road, Newton Abbot, to encourage greater recycling and responsible waste disposal, and reduce fly tipping in Torbay and the surrounding area. This report provides the outcome of the conversations held between the Director of Pride in Place and colleagues at Devon County Council.
- 6.2. Torbay currently manages its own waste services, including kerbside recycling and disposal through the Energy-from-Waste (EfW) facility managed through the South West Devon Recycling Partnership. While there is interest in exploring access to Devon's Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs), doing so would involve significant considerations. These include potential financial commitments such as gate fees and contributions to Devon's operational costs, as well as additional transport expenses for residents. It would also require dedicated staff resources to negotiate terms, establish contractual arrangements, and administer access systems.
- 6.3. Beyond these practical challenges, there are strategic risks: Torbay's recycling performance is measured against its local collection systems, and increased reliance on Devon HWRCs could undermine data control and reporting. Furthermore, diverting residual waste away from the EfW plant may reduce tonnage, impacting income from energy recovery and contractual obligations.
- 6.4. Devon County Council colleagues have also indicated that the Brunel Road site is operating at capacity and that it does, on occasion, struggle to meet the demand on it which has grown since the decision was originally made not to allow Torbay residents to access the facility. At this time additional demand on the site could not be accommodated.

7. Options under consideration

- 7.1. On the basis of the advice received from Devon County Council there is no alternative option.

8. Financial Opportunities and Implications

8.1. Initial analysis suggests that negotiating access to Devon's Household Waste Recycling Centres would involve notable financial commitments and operational costs. Indicative estimates include gate fees in the region of £120–£150 per tonne (subject to Devon County pricing), as well as staffing costs equivalent to approximately 0.2 FTE over six months to manage negotiations and administration. In addition, there would be unquantified transport-related expenses, including increased mileage for residents and potential subsidies for low-income households. These factors highlight that any financial opportunity is currently outweighed by significant and uncertain cost implications.

9. Legal Implications

9.1. None

10. Engagement and Consultation

10.1. Whilst we've not undertaken any public consultation, we acknowledge that there is clear interest from residents in Torquay, particularly those closer to the Newton Abbot HWRC, in having the choice to use that facility. This interest should be noted as part of any future engagement.

11. Procurement Implications

11.1. None

12. Protecting our naturally inspiring Bay and tackling Climate Change

12.1. The report does not result in any different actions by the Council and as such there are no changed impacts.

13. Associated Risks

13.1.

Risk	Impact	Mitigation
Reduced recycling performance	Loss of control over data and targets	Maintain data-sharing agreements and monitor performance
Impact on EfW income	Lower tonnage reduces revenue and may breach contract	Limit residual waste diversion and review EfW contract terms
Administrative complexity	Additional workload for staff and system changes	Allocate temporary resource and automate access verification

14. Equality Impact Assessment

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act and groups with increased vulnerability	Data and insight	Equality considerations (including any adverse impacts)	Mitigation activities	Responsible department and timeframe for implementing mitigation activities
Age	<p>18 per cent of Torbay residents are under 18 years old.</p> <p>55 per cent of Torbay residents are aged between 18 to 64 years old.</p> <p>27 per cent of Torbay residents are aged 65 and older.</p>	<p>The report does not result in any different actions by the Council and as such there are no changed considerations from business as usual.</p>	Not applicable	Not applicable
Carers	<p>At the time of the 2021 census there were 14,900 unpaid carers in Torbay. 5,185 of these provided 50 hours or more of care.</p>	<p>The report does not result in any different actions by the Council and as such there are no changed considerations from business as usual.</p>	Not applicable	Not applicable
Disability	<p>In the 2021 Census, 23.8% of Torbay residents answered that their day-to-day activities were limited a little or a lot by</p>	<p>The report does not result in any different actions by the Council and as such there</p>	Not applicable	Not applicable

	a physical or mental health condition or illness.	are no changed considerations from business as usual.		
Gender reassignment	In the 2021 Census, 0.4% of Torbay's community answered that their gender identity was not the same as their sex registered at birth. This proportion is similar to the Southwest and is lower than England.	The report does not result in any different actions by the Council and as such there are no changed considerations from business as usual.	Not applicable	Not applicable
Marriage and civil partnership	Of those Torbay residents aged 16 and over at the time of 2021 Census, 44.2% of people were married or in a registered civil partnership.	The report does not result in any different actions by the Council and as such there are no changed considerations from business as usual.	Not applicable	Not applicable
Pregnancy and maternity	Over the period 2010 to 2021, the rate of live births (as a proportion of females aged 15 to 44) has been slightly but significantly higher in Torbay (average of 63.7 per 1,000) than England (60.2) and the South West (58.4). There has been a notable fall in the numbers of live births since the middle of the last decade across all geographical areas.	The report does not result in any different actions by the Council and as such there are no changed considerations from business as usual.	Not applicable	Not applicable

Race	In the 2021 Census, 96.1% of Torbay residents described their ethnicity as white. This is a higher proportion than the South West and England. Black, Asian and minority ethnic individuals are more likely to live in areas of Torbay classified as being amongst the 20% most deprived areas in England.	The report does not result in any different actions by the Council and as such there are no changed considerations from business as usual.	Not applicable	Not applicable
Religion and belief	64.8% of Torbay residents who stated that they have a religion in the 2021 census.	The report does not result in any different actions by the Council and as such there are no changed considerations from business as usual.	Not applicable	Not applicable
Sex	51.3% of Torbay's population are female and 48.7% are male	The report does not result in any different actions by the Council and as such there are no changed considerations from business as usual.	Not applicable	Not applicable
Sexual orientation	In the 2021 Census, 3.4% of those in Torbay aged over 16 identified their sexuality as either Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or, used another term to describe their sexual orientation.	The report does not result in any different actions by the Council and as such there are no changed considerations from business as usual.	Not applicable	Not applicable

Armed Forces Community	In 2021, 3.8% of residents in England reported that they had previously served in the UK armed forces. In Torbay, 5.9 per cent of the population have previously served in the UK armed forces.	The report does not result in any different actions by the Council and as such there are no changed considerations from business as usual.	Not applicable	Not applicable
Additional considerations				
Socio-economic impacts (Including impacts on child poverty and deprivation)		The report does not result in any different actions by the Council and as such there are no changed considerations from business as usual.	Not applicable	Not applicable
Public Health impacts (Including impacts on the general health of the population of Torbay)		The report does not result in any different actions by the Council and as such there are no changed considerations from business as usual.	Not applicable	Not applicable
Human Rights impacts		The report does not result in any different actions by the Council and as such there are no changed considerations from business as usual.	Not applicable	Not applicable
Child Friendly	Torbay Council is a Child Friendly Council, and all staff and Councillors are Corporate	The report does not result in any different actions by the Council and as such there	Not applicable	Not applicable

	<p>Parents and have a responsibility towards cared for and care experienced children and young people.</p>	<p>are no changed considerations from business as usual.</p>		
--	--	--	--	--

15. Cumulative Council Impact

15.1. None

16. Cumulative Community Impacts

16.1. None