

Penicuik Recycling Centre

Report by John Blair, Director, Resources

1 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to seek approval to refurbish the existing recycling centre and abandon proposals to establish a new recycling centre within the Penicuik area.

2 Background

At its meeting of 25 September 2012 Council approved an allocation of £1.38 million to provide a new recycling facility off Eastfield Farm Road, Penicuik as a result of a number of concerns relating to the existing site at Bellmans Road in Penicuik.

A planning application was lodged to allow for the construction of a new facility at the site off Eastfield Farm Road, however a number of objections were raised, principally in relation to its location relative to Strathesk Primary School. A decision was taken to pause the application to ascertain if there was suitable land in the general Penicuik area that would offer up a more suitable site. This investigation has indicated a number of plots that could have merited further consideration including:-

- Milton Bridge Ministry of Defence site
- Glencorse adjacent to treatment works
- Gowkley Moss
- Rear of Tesco
- Former Territorial Army site
- Mauricewood Bing
- Pomathorn Mill
- Pentland Industrial Estate
- Edgefield Industrial Estate

However, given the financial situation facing the Council, and the relocation of the collection and street sweeping operations and vehicles to Stobhill it is considered prudent to reconsider the options available before proceeding further.

A draft layout of a refurbished depot at the existing site is attached (Appendix 1).

The table below outlines the options available:-

Table 1: Options Available to Council

Option	Capital Cost	For	Against
Construct a new facility	£1.38m	No traffic related residual H&S issues at the existing site. Capability to maximise recycling opportunities. Releases the existing site for development.	Cost of new facility.
Retain and improve the existing site	£0.30m	Opportunity to increase recycling.	Minor residual H&S issues
Close the existing site	£0.10m	Produces recurring saving of circa £90,000. No residual H&S issues at the existing site. Releases the existing site for development.	Would require residents to travel to Stobhill. Potential increase in fly tipping. Would require Land Services staff to relocate to Stobhill.
Retain the existing site with no improvements	Nil	Retains facility for Penicuik residents. Requires no substantial spend.	Minor residual H&S issues. No opportunity to increase recycling.

Notes:- There remains a minor residual health and safety issue due to the congestion that occurs on the approach road to the site which is narrow. This has in part been mitigated by opening the site earlier at 9.30 am.

The benefit of utilising the existing site (e.g. for housing) has not been factored in at this time.

If the existing site is closed the recurring savings are based on waste service staff and building costs. This would however be largely negated by the additional fuel costs for twelve members of Land and Countryside staff travelling to Penicuik from Newtongrange, the time lost due to travelling and the need to provide a welfare facility and storage for the large grass cutting machinery.

The table below is a summary of the number of Community Recycling Centre facilities operated by a range of Councils who responded to a short questionnaire.

Table 2: Selection of CRC's Operated by Councils across Scotland

Council	No of sites	Population	Opening Hours (Summer)	Opening Hours (Winter)
Angus	7	110,000	9.15 am – 7.00 pm	9.15 am – 5.00 pm
Clackmannanshire	1	51,000	8.00 am – 8.00 pm	8.00 am – 6.00 pm
East Lothian	4	98,000	8.30 am – 6.30 pm	8.30 am – 4.15 pm
Edinburgh	3	486,000	8.00 am – 7.30 pm	8.00 am – 6.00 pm
Falkirk	2	153,000	8.00 am – 8.00 pm	8.00 am – 6.00 pm
Inverclyde	2	80,000	8.00 am – 8.00 pm	8.00 am – 6.00 pm
Midlothian	2	81,000	9.30 am – 4.15 pm	9.30 am – 4.15 pm
North Ayrshire	4	135,000	9.00 am – 6.45 pm	9.00 am – 4.45 pm
South Ayrshire	4	114,000	10.00 am – 8.00 pm	10.00 am – 6.00 pm
W Dunbartonshire	3	91,000	7.45 am – 7.45 pm	7.45 am – 5.30 pm
West Lothian	6	172,000	8.00 am – 8.00 pm	8.00 am – 8.00 pm

3 Report Implications

3.1 Resource

Capital Costs

The construction of a new facility has already been provided for in the Councils General Services Capital Plan, with a total budget of £1.38m. £0.021m was spent in 2012/13 and £0.051m was spent in 2013/14, leaving a remaining budget of £1.308m in the General Services Capital Plan for 2015/16. The borrowing costs arising from this capital expenditure are already included in the Council's revenue budget from 2015/16.

The impact on borrowing costs on the Council's revenue budget from the options in table 1 above, are as follows:-

Option	Construct a New Facility (provision in Revenue budget)	Improve the Existing Site	Close the Site	Retain Existing Site
Capital Spend	£1.380m	£0.300m	£0.100m	£0.000m
Reduction in Capital Costs	£0.000m	-£1.080m	-£1.280m	-£1.308m
Revenue Budget Impact 2014/15	-£0.029m	-£0.029m	-£0.029m	-£0.029m
Revenue Budget Impact 2015/16	-£0.069m	-£0.087m	-£0.095m	-£0.092m
Revenue Budget Impact 2016/17 onwards	£0.000m	-£0.071m	-£0.085m	-£0.092m

The financial implications for each option are highlighted in the table above. Closure of the existing site would see the reduction in the staff compliment of 3 full time equivalents in addition to the saving on utilities, rates, etc.

The cost of any fly tipping and the uplift is assumed to be covered within existing resources.

3.2 Risk

Given the current financial position facing the Council and the need to bridge the funding gap there is a risk that unless difficult decisions are made regarding spending plans, it may be increasingly difficult to close the financial gap.

There is a risk that closing the existing site without a replacement could lead to an increase in fly tipping as well as a strong negative reaction from residents in the Penicuik and surrounding area.

Whilst there are no accidents directly relating to the congestion outside the existing site, there is still a small associated risk attached.

3.3 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation

Themes addressed in this report:

- ☐ Community safety
- ☐ Adult health, care and housing
- ☐ Getting it right for every Midlothian child
- ☐ Improving opportunities in Midlothian
- ☒ Sustainable growth
- Business transformation and Best Value
- ☐ None of the above

3.4 Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan

Midlothian Council and its Community Planning Partners have made a commitment to treat the following areas as key priorities under the Single Midlothian Plan:-

- Early years and reducing child poverty
- Economic Growth and Business Support
- Positive destinations for young people.

This report does not relate directly to any of these key priorities.

3.5 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

If the existing site was closed and no alternative facility provided there is likelihood that the Council would see a drop in its current recycling performance.

3.6 Adopting a Preventative Approach

Provision of a site in the Penicuik area allows for recycling by residents and reduces the likelihood of fly tipping.

3.7 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

No consultation has been undertaken at this stage.

3.8 Ensuring Equalities

Removal of this facility would require Penicuik area residents having to travel to Stobhill to deposit their waste acting as a disincentive to self dispose.

3.9 Supporting Sustainable Development

Provision of a facility ensures the Penicuik area residents have a local site to deposit their waste and contribute to the Councils overall recycling targets.

3.10 IT Issues

There are no IT issues identified.

4 Recommendations

Council is recommended to;

- a) Set aside the Council decision of 25 September 2013 to provide a new recycling centre, and
- b) Agree to the inclusion of £300,000 in the General Services Capital Plan to refurbish the existing site at Bellmans Road, replacing the current provision of £1.308m in the General Services Capital Plan, as per the layout in Appendix 1, noting the reduction in borrowing costs of £29,000 in 2014/15 and £71,000 per annum thereafter.

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Background Papers:

