



Bledlow-cum-Saunderton Parish Council

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Cllr Gareth Williams
Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment
c/o Buckinghamshire Council
The Gateway Offices
Gatehouse Road
Aylesbury
HP19 8FF

7 September 2022

Dear Cllr Williams,

Wigans Lane Household Recycling Centre (HRC)

First, thank you for inviting me and my fellow councillors to the Zoom call last Friday to discuss the proposed reopening of the Wigans Lane HRC. I have now had a chance to look at the papers being presented to the cabinet recommending that the HRC should be reopened in November. Consequently, the parish council's position has changed as follows:

1. We continue to neither support nor object to the reopening per se. It will benefit some parts of the community while adversely affecting those living nearby and along the approach routes.
2. But, **we object to the reopening** unless the very real practical problems presented by the site are addressed.

I have summarised our objections below and, we ask if you are minded to continue, that the cabinet make it a condition of its approval that all issues are resolved before any reopening.

Traffic safety entering the HRC



The approach to the site is difficult, with poor sight lines and the entrance set on a hill with a steep gradient. At peak times traffic queues at the entrance, both up and down the hill. Both these factors are significant highways safety concerns especially as the site is also located on the route of the Chilterns Cycleway this concern is particularly acute.

During our call your officer suggested this might be managed by not allowing traffic to enter the site from the direction of Bledlow Ridge. While on the face of it this is a good idea, the practical implications for the surrounding lanes would be severe as there is nowhere for users to perform a ‘U’ turn to reapproach the HRC, particularly if they are towing a trailer.

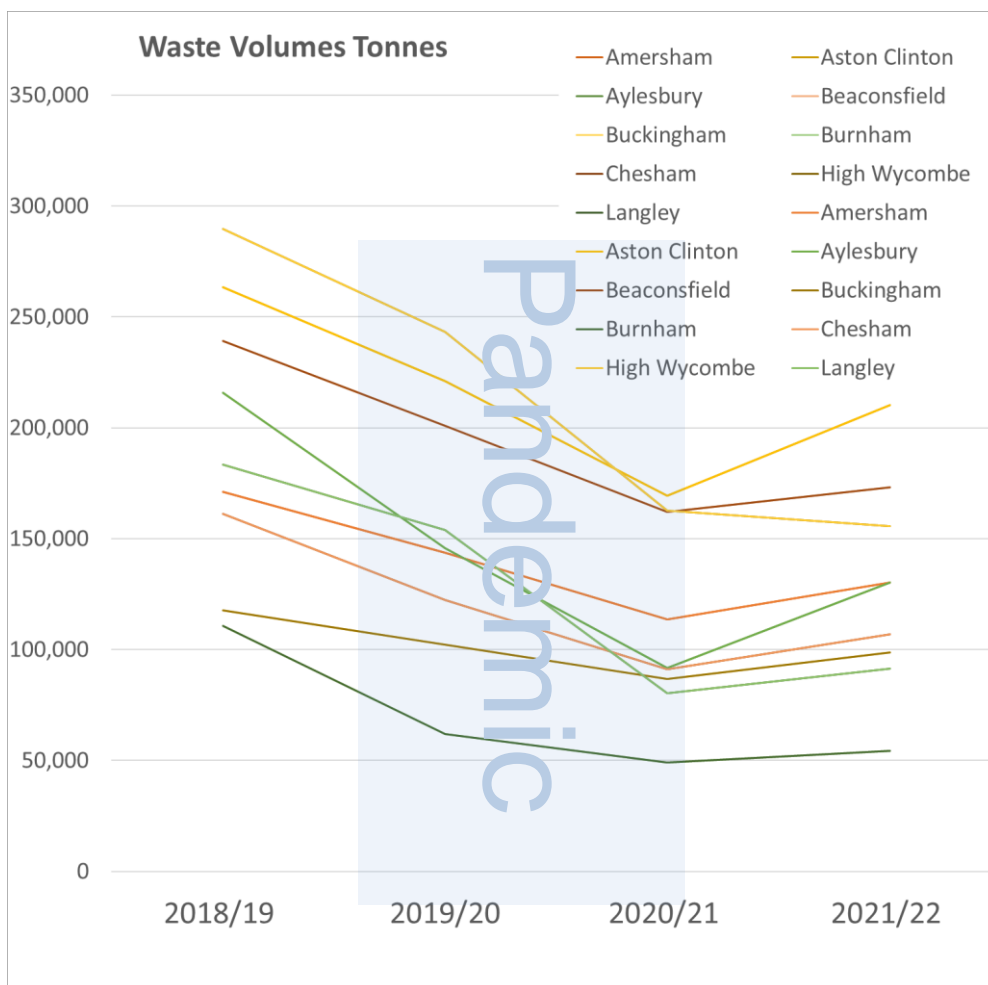
Traffic safety – no satisfactory approach routes

Approach routes to the site are difficult: it can only be reached by minor or unclassified roads. During our call, it was suggested that traffic should be directed along ‘the best possible routes’. As illustrated on the map appended to this letter, there are no good routes. Traffic approaching from ‘A’ or ‘B’ roads either has to navigate single lane stretches or steep hills. This problem is further exacerbated for HGVs collecting the waste owing to weight and height limits on many approach roads, and with other approach roads having gradients of up to 16%, including immediately adjacent to the site.

Capacity will rapidly be exceeded

The site is limited to processing 5,500 Tonnes of waste p.a. Given the limited capacity of local approach routes to Wigans Lane this limit is absolutely necessary. Even before the closure the HRC was working at or beyond this limit.

Year	material processed
2016/17	5,501.7 tonnes (limit breached)
2017/18	5,175.9 tonnes



Your analysis of waste volumes shows a general decline in volumes in 2019/20 and 2020/21. But this coincided with the worst of the Covid pandemic, with growth returning to all sites except High Wycombe in 2021/22.

The county has just introduced a £50 annual charge for green waste bins which will encourage Buckinghamshire users to use the HRC as an alternative.

Potential volumes have already increased with the expansion of Princes Risborough, Longwick, Haddenham and across the Oxfordshire border in Chinnor. While charging out of county users may reduce volumes slightly, the cost/benefit calculation will still make Wigans Lane attractive to users from nearby large and expanding settlements such as Chinnor.

Thus, we fear that your projections are unrealistic and Wigans Lane capacity will very soon be exceeded, and the return on Buckinghamshire Council's investment will be much curtailed.

Site operation – congested, inefficient and constrained

Without an on site 'one way system' the HRC is not laid out to modern standards. Cars entering have to manoeuvre in a tight area and vehicles are required to undertake a three-point turn in order to exit. This also has the effect of slowing down the operation of the site causing queues during peak periods.

In order to ease the problems of access the operation of the site should be managed to minimise conflict with the start and end of the school day at Bledlow Ridge School which can already cause significant congestion on a main access route to the site.

Planning factors – Buckinghamshire officers' advice should be followed

Before reopening, Buckinghamshire Council should address the issues raised in our submission to the recent planning appeal which I attach for your convenience, and additional points identified by the Secretary of State's Inspector such as evidence regarding the catchment area and indeed the advice of the County's own officers in their recommendations to the BCC Development Control Meeting of 23 March 2020 which was cancelled and in advance of the Appeal to the Secretary of State in 2021.

The Bledlow-cum-Saunderton Neighbourhood Plan Policy 6 of the BcS (Bledlow-cum-Saunderton) Neighbourhood Plan includes a Dark Skies policy:

Protection of the intrinsically dark skies of the parish and AONB by minimising light pollution through adherence to the appropriate industry guidelines.

Thus, we would expect lighting to be turned off outside working hours and ask that any lighting which is installed conforms with 'Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light GN01:2011)' published by the Institute of Lighting Professionals.

Longer term

We are encouraged by your report's comment that 'The long-term aspiration would be to build a new HRC closer to the Princes Risborough area' and agree that this is the only long term solution. But during our call we established that there is currently no allocated budget, no identified site, nor even a short list. So in the absence of any binding commitment, we must assume that the reopening will be open-ended and the site will operate at maximum capacity for the foreseeable future.

Under these circumstances, I trust you will understand the Parish Council's objection to the proposal put before you. In any event, I am keen that we continue our dialogue so that Buckinghamshire Council will be informed by the local knowledge the Parish Council can offer.

Yours sincerely,



Simon Breese
Chairman, Bledlow-cum-Saunderton Parish Council

cc

All Buckinghamshire Council Cabinet Members

Cllrs Carrington, Adoh and Etholen

Andrew Jenkins, Lead Officer

Martin Dickman, Environment Services Director

Clerk and Councillors, Bledlow-cum-Saunderton Parish Council

Attachments (in separate PDF):

Buckinghamshire Council advice to abortive Development Control Meeting 23 March 2020

Buckinghamshire Council Appeal Position Report

Secretary of State's Appeal Decision

Appendix: principal problems with approach routes

