

DEPOTS REVIEW PROPOSAL

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Included as one of the Councils key objectives for 2013/14 (JO 025) was a review of the Council's existing 3 depot sites.
- 1.2 The operational services (Waste & Recycling, Streetscene, Building Works, Vehicle Workshop, CPU & Stores and Environmental Services Administration) currently work out of 3 main depots, Marsh Lane - Lymington, Claymeadow - Totton and Christchurch Road Ringwood. The depots at Lymington and Totton are owned by the Council. Ringwood depot is leased from Hampshire County Council with 2 1/2 years remaining on the lease.
- 1.3 The combined sizes of the 3 sites is 5 acres (2.8 Marsh Lane, 1.7 Claymeadow and 0.5 Ringwood).
- 1.4 These depots have been in use for over 30 years and in that time much has changed in the requirements of the business units that currently use the sites.
- 1.5 The 2014/15 combined revenue budget for the operation of the 3 depots is approx. £420,000, supporting services with a turnover of over £10 million.

2. CURRENT ISSUES

- 2.1 The operation and scale of activities undertaken at the depots has, over time, changed significantly and each of the depots today has operational risks that are summarised as follows:

Claymeadow, Totton – The site at Claymeadow is situated within a residential housing area and close to a school and falls well below ideal operational standards.

Marsh Lane, Lymington - The high occupancy levels and busy operational environment at the depot present a challenge in maintaining a safe working environment for all. Currently the commercial vehicle fleet shares the yard with office and operational employees' own vehicles. There is no vehicle or pedestrian separation. Pressure on outside space for vehicle parking limits the ability to provide sufficient additional space for business unit storage requirements and other space for essential activities such as recycling facilities.

Christchurch Road, Ringwood – Although usage has increased at the depot and is close to capacity it is currently believed to be manageable in the medium term. The need for change at Ringwood is less than at the other two depots.

3. OPTIONS TO IMPROVE OPERATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

- 3.1 **Claymeadow, Totton** – To efficiently deliver the main operational activities of Waste & Recycling and Street Scene there is only one financial viable option and that is to acquire a new depot site within the Totton area.
- 3.2 **Marsh Lane, Lymington** – At this site there is need to reduce the current occupancy level which is close to becoming unmanageable. As at Claymeadow the Waste & Recycling and Street Scene services would require a direct replacement within the same general location. However as an alternative, Building Works and Central Purchasing/Stores could operate at another location to assist in achieving the objective of reducing occupancy to a safer level.
- a) The Building Works service primarily provides a reactive and planned maintenance service to the Council's housing stock, which is distributed widely across the district. A centrally located operational base therefore would suit this service very well. It is a large service with approximately 80 employees, 60 of which are operational tradesmen with a fleet of 50 Council vehicles. Relocation of the Building Works service from Marsh Lane Depot would go a long way to addressing the current congestion problems at this site. Implementation of a new mobile working ICT system for this service further enables a more flexible way of working making the location of the operational base and need for operatives to visit the operational base less critical.
- b) The Central Purchasing and Stores service, also based at Marsh Lane Depot, could operate from a different location within the district. It is not essential to be co-located with the Environment Services teams currently based at Marsh Lane, in fact there are closer working relationships with the Building Works service as over 50% of total over-the-counter stores issues are made by Building Works and the Central Purchasing team are very closely involved in building materials procurement generally. Relocation of this team would free up valuable internal storage space as well as newly refurbished office accommodation for 9 employees.
- 3.3 **Christchurch Road, Ringwood** – No change is proposed in current operational activities.

4. ALTERNATIVE DEPOT SITE OPERATIONAL OPTIONS

- 4.1 The review has identified the need to provide new or additional space for the provision of Depot facilities. As a minimum requirement, land circa 2 to 3 acres is required (Current Valuation of industrial land is circa £450,000 to £600,000 per acre.)
- 4.2 The Council's Estates and Valuation team have been tasked with actively sourcing and evaluating possible alternative sites within the District which would be needed to address the current identified risks.
- 4.3 Contact has been made with the local commercial property and land agents with a brief of the Council's broad requirements provided. Regular contact has been maintained with regular updates provided as and when new sites become available.

The team have also independently researched and followed up possible opportunities that have emerged through local knowledge.

- 4.4 Despite this wide ranging search there are only a limited number of sites that have come forward that would be suitable in any respect (location, size, facilities, tenure). Should a suitable site become available the Council would need to respond immediately in order to secure the land.
- 4.5 Once a potential site is identified, and as a prerequisite to any acquisition, an application will need to be presented to the Traffic Commissioner, to secure an Operator's Licence. This will need to include, among other things, an outline design of any potential general layout but most importantly the location of private, commercial and HGV parking, vehicle maintenance workshops and access roads to and from site, including relationship with the main highway.

5 CRIME AND DISORDER, ENVIRONMENTAL AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None arising from this report.

6. PORTFOLIO HOLDERS COMMENTS

Environment Portfolio Holder

Ensuring that the Council has the Depots infrastructure to support its core services, such as refuse and recycling collections and street cleansing, into the future is vital

The recommendation ensures that the Council is in a position to maximise any opportunities and is supported by the Portfolio Holder.

Finance and Efficiency Portfolio Holder

The Portfolio Holder supports the recommendations.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 It is recommended that, in order to progress the review of Depots, that:
 - i) Officers continue their work to identify suitable sites in the areas of Totton and Lymington.
 - ii) Delegated authority be given to the two Executive Directors, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the Head of Property Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Efficiency to acquire land suitable for a Depot Site (circa. 2/3 acres) should it become available on terms acceptable to the Council.
 - iii) A budget of £50,000 be approved to progress the development of any identified site to enable an outline plan to be developed enabling an application to the Traffic Commissioner to be made. Any application made will be subject to prior consultation by the two Executive Directors with the Portfolio Holders referred to in 2 above.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

None