

SUBJECT:	FUTURE PROVISION OF HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING CENTRES (HWRC) INCLUDING THE CLOSURE OF USK
MEETING:	STRONG COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE
DATE:	28TH SEPTEMBER 2020
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 This report sets out the measures that will be necessary to meet the future statutory recycling targets and deliver waste services efficiently and effectively moving forward. Many of the decisions agreed by Cabinet in December 2019, endorsed and supported by Strong Communities Select Committee, were postponed due to the Covid 19 pandemic. This report provides an update on implementation and seeks scrutiny, endorsement or amendment to the recommendations prior to reporting to Cabinet. , The report considers proposals for revised service delivery changes for the Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) including the full closure of Usk HWRC. These changes are in light of increased budget challenges and the many positive behavioural changes by the public in managing waste during Covid 19.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 In December 2019 Cabinet agreed to implement several service changes at the HWRCs including:
- black bag opening, this is due to be implemented on all sites
 - revised opening hours for the procurement of the HWRC contract that would be decided in conjunction with Chief Officer and Cabinet Member(given the new data that is now available since Covid 19 this information is presented to Strong Communities Select Committee for further consideration)
 - full closure of Usk HWRC. (Usk is currently closed due to Covid 19)
- 2.2 The recommendations to rationalise the service provision of household waste recycling centres are:
- A) Continuation of the booking system at all sites, initially implemented to ensure social distancing
 - B) The full closure of Usk HWRC
 - C) Introduce revised opening hours of 08:00 to 16:00
 - D) Additional day closure at Five Lanes and Llanfoist
 - E) Commence procurement of the HWRC contract based on the revised service model above.

3. KEY ISSUES:

Overview

- 3.1 Monmouthshire's recycling rate peaked in 2016 at 67% and there has been a slow but steady decline in annual performance since that point. The UK has seen a plateauing of recycling performance and many Councils have seen reductions in recycling tonnages. The all Wales household recycling rate decreased from 61% in 2017/18 to 60.7% in 2018/19 but there has been substantial investments and interventions across Wales and most local authorities are expected to meet the 2019/20 64% target.
- 3.2 Monmouthshire was forecast to miss the recycling targets in 2019/20. As such, reports highlighting potential service changes including rationalisation of HWRC provision were taken through Strong Communities and Cabinet. The decision to close the Usk facility taken in December 2019 is in abeyance to allow further consultation on the wider HWRC provision and additional compositional analysis of waste streams.
- 3.3 Monmouthshire achieved the recycling target for 2019/20. This turnaround was due to a strong campaign of recycling messages from December to March and also the unforeseen closure of HWRCs due to Covid 19 on March 23rd 2020. The closures and sudden reductions in waste entering the HWRC's ensured targets were met. It is difficult to predict performance in 2020/21 but the first quarter saw the highest recycling rate ever in MCC of 74% with record numbers of residents using kerbside recycling collections and with HWRCs closed.
- 3.4 Fines for failing to meet the recycling targets remain a concern. The implementation of measures already agreed along with the proposals within this report, will be key to ensuring MCC continue to meet and exceed the recycling targets. These targets are fully aligned to the Council's Climate Change Emergency and Circular Economy policy commitments.
- 3.5 Monmouthshire tries to ensure that the focus on waste management is reducing waste production wherever possible. Promotions and campaigns to reduce food waste, single use plastics, and using returnable milk bottles impact negatively on recycling tonnages but remain the right thing to do for the waste hierarchy and the environment.
- 3.6 After waste reduction, kerbside collections of a wide range of materials is the most environmentally friendly way to manage household recycling and waste. Monmouthshire County Council provide collection services for the vast majority of household recycling and waste streams.
- 3.7 There is a statutory duty under Environmental Protection Act 1990 to provide one Civic Amenity site (more commonly known now as Household Waste Recycling Centres) within a County Council to dispose of bulky items. The site must be open on at least one day of the weekend unless this period is over Christmas. These sites were originally set up to dispose of waste that couldn't be collected at the kerbside.

- 3.8 Public awareness of climate change and the rise in waste specific TV shows like Money for Nothing have impacted positively on the public psyche. Covid 19 has dramatically changed public behaviour in relation to waste and the wider environment. We should actively promote and maintain these positive behaviours that support action for climate change emergency. People are slowly moving away from the thought that HWRCs are tips and dumps and more towards re-use and recycling facilities.
- 3.9 There are many who believe visiting the sites several times per week to dispose of black bag and residual waste and not using kerbside recycling options is still acceptable. Ease of access, unchallenged use of the residual waste skip, disposal of black bags full of mixed waste undermines the efforts of the vast majority who try to recycle everything they can at the kerbside each week. Future provision needs to offer a wider variety of recycling and reuse options on a smaller number of sites.
- 3.10 Over the last five years many local authorities have rationalised service provision and focussed investment in fewer, better quality and higher performing sites. Like Monmouthshire, most have implemented day closures and many more have reduced/seasonal hours.
- 3.11 Almost 50% of all domestic waste and recycling produced in Monmouthshire in 2018/19 arrived at the HWRCs as single car/van journeys. This is despite Monmouthshire having full kerbside recycling systems for domestic waste streams and a bulky waste collection service operated by Homemakers. The average site throughput across Wales is closer to 30% of domestic waste and recycling.
- 3.12 Vehicle restrictions including van and trailer permits were introduced in 2016. This saw a reduction of waste from traders using the sites to dispose of commercial waste. An outright ban of commercial type vehicles was deemed impractical and a registration and permitting system was introduced. The system worked well but single use permits for one off visits was also introduced and this saw tonnages increasing again on sites. The resident permits followed in 2019.

Pre-covid

- 3.13 A growing number of Welsh authorities introduced compulsory recycling at HWRCs in 2018/19. Black bag sorting stations appeared in Swansea, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Torfaen and Blaenau Gwent and recycling rates increased by 15-20% at the sites. Reducing black bag skips also allowed for more recycling streams to be separated and hard plastics, mattresses, carpets and other materials are now offered at most of those sites.
- 3.14 Many sites across Wales and the UK are reporting +80% recycling rates compared to Monmouthshire's combined recycling rate of 58% across the four sites as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1

	Five Lanes	Llanfoist	Troy	Usk	Total
Residual	3021.89	4288.50	1268.28	680.06	9258.73
Recycle	4622.08	6013.91	1519.99	625.85	12781.83
	7643.97	10302.41	2788.27	1305.91	22040.56
Recycling %	60.47%	58.37%	54.51%	47.92%	57.99%

- 3.15 The recycling rates at the sites are the lowest in Wales and this reduces the positive recycling percentages being achieved by the high number of residents who recycle at the kerbside. This is not only due to the high volumes of waste that enter the sites but a lack of capacity at the smallest sites to include additional recycling options.
- 3.16 Welsh Local Government Association benchmarking data highlights issues with the Monmouthshire sites and the recommendations from 2016/17 included the retendering of the contract with specific recycling targets, rationalisation of facilities to ensure 70%+ recycling and pre/post sorting of black bags to capture additional recyclate.
- 3.17 As can be seen from the WLGA Benchmarking data of HWRC provision below, Monmouthshire is the most expensive service with the lowest recycling rates. This is due to the high cost of operating 4 sites open 70 hours per week compared to neighbouring authorities who only provided the single statutory site. It is also the higher than average percentage of household waste delivered to the site which meant Monmouthshire had the lowest waste collections cost in 2017/18.

HWRC Sites 15/16 WLGA Benchmarking Data

- *Total net service cost; £32.40 per household.*
- *Ranked 15th lowest cost out of 22, median cost £28.63, lowest cost £13.58.*
- *HWRC sites handled 21,745 tonnes of waste at an average of 528kg per household per annum. (Ranked highest out of 22, median 290kg, highest 528kg). Of this total, 13,695 tonnes was recycled which represents a diversion rate of 63% (Ranked 19th of 22, median 77%, highest 100%).*

HWRC Sites 2017/18 WLGA Benchmarking data

- *Total net service cost; £53.37 per household.*
- *Ranked 22nd lowest out of 22, median cost £30.13, lowest cost £5.58.*
- *HWRC sites handled 16,257 tonnes of waste at an average of 391kg per household per annum. (Ranked 1st highest out of 22, median 221kg, highest 391kg). Of this total, 8,922.05 tonnes was recycled which represents a diversion rate of 54.88%.*

- 3.18 Table 1 shows for 2018/19 shows improvement over 17/18 benchmarked data of 3.11% increase in recycling but also an increase of almost 6000 tonnes of waste. This increase coincided with recycling interventions in neighbouring authorities.
- 3.19 The resident permits were introduced in June 2019 where, every household was issued with a permit to use the sites. This was in response to increasingly high volumes of cross border waste entering the sites following neighbouring authority restrictions on their sites. This has been very successful and overall waste tonnages reduced by over 3000 tonnes in 2019 compared to 2018. The 3000 tonne reduction in waste entering the sites also contained a high percentage of recycling and this negatively impacted recycling rates.
- 3.20 A trial of mattress recycling was due to be introduced at the HWRCs this year and will be followed by carpets. These are very high cost recycling materials, typically costing twice that of Energy from Waste treatment per tonne. These materials will need to be recycled at Five Lanes and Llanfoist to meet our 70% target. If the booking system and restrictions remain in place there will be less need to recycle more low quality, very high cost items as the throughput of materials to the sites will be reduced.
- 3.21 Chart 1 shows compositional analysis of residual waste going into Llanfoist, Five Lanes and Mitchel Troy. It shows how much material could have been recycled at the kerbside. Almost 20% of residual waste entering the sites was food waste (also known as putrescibles). In comparison, Table 2 shows that 38% of black bag waste contents at the Usk site was food waste.

Chart 1 – Compositional analysis of black bags at Llanfoist, Five Lanes and Mitchell Troy

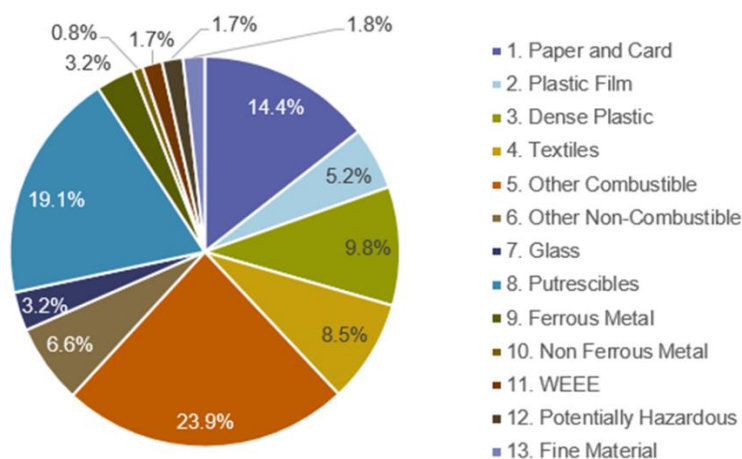
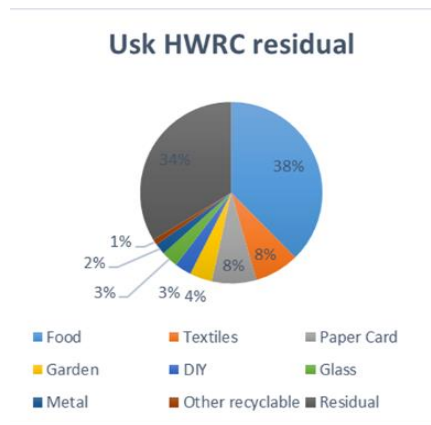


Table 2 –Compositional analysis of black bags in Usk HWRC 2019

Food	38%
Textiles	8%
Paper/card	8%
Garden	4%
DIY	3%
Glass	3%
Metal	2%
Other recyclable	1%
Residual	34%



- 3.22 Table 2 shows that making local waste disposal an easy option does not achieve high recycling rates. Many residents use the sites rather than participating in kerbside recycling or adhering to the two black bag limit.
- 3.23 Recycled waste at the Usk site reduced again in 2019 to 45% and is the lowest performing site in Wales. The data gathered during Covid19 confirms that greater participation in kerbside collections and reduced access to HWRCs increases recycling rates.
- 3.24 Black bag sorting was agreed as part of the Cabinet Report in December 2019, however, implementation was delayed due to Covid 19 restrictions. Authorities who have successfully implemented these types of intervention have reported that residents pre-sort more waste before coming to the sites and black bag waste reduces substantially. Sustainability experts, WRAP and the HSE have produced guidance on introducing and operating these types of schemes as the success of early adopters is clear (Appendix 1).
- 3.25 Five Lanes and Llanfoist have ample space to introduce a black bag sorting area and a good level of options for other waste streams to be recycled. It is important that when this is implemented it is done across the board or it will increase waste tourism within the county as residents opt for sites with no restrictions.
- 3.26 Black bag sorting will be impossible to implement at Usk due to the size of the site and lack of recycling options there. It will also be very difficult at Mitchel Troy but there is additional space and a greater number of options available for additional recycling.

Key Issues: HWRCs usage through a Covid 19 lens

- 3.27 The Covid pandemic has shown what can be achieved in recycling terms when all the sites were closed. A recycling rate of 70%+ was achieved when waste was only collected at the kerbside. The efforts of the residents that support all the recycling schemes at the kerbside are undermined by a minority that use the HWRCs for disposal of black bag waste with high quantity of material that could have been recycled at the kerbside. The recycling rate achieved at the HWRCs also increased with the smaller sites remaining closed and the booking system introduced.

3.28 There has also been a massive reduction in number of visitors to the sites compared to 2019 as evidenced by the booking system data. This positive behaviour change has increased recycling at the kerbside and high overall recycling rates are being maintained.

3.29 Table 3 below shows visitors during June 2019, Usk was not included on the count but tonnage data would suggest that 170 - 200 cars per day use the facility when compared to the larger sites and material composition.

Table 3

Mitchel troy	Total number of entrants in June:					7184		
Average	Tuesday	Wednesday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday			
8am - 9am	30	16	24	24	25	Average per day	342.0952	
9am - 10am	26	25	37	49	37			
10am - 11am	30	33	42	38	45			
11am - 12pm	42	30	35	49	52			
12pm - 1pm	30	35	34	49	37			
1pm - 2pm	24	25	20	41	50			
2pm - 3pm	30	36	35	37	43			
3pm - 4pm	32	30	28	41	42			
4pm - 5pm	21	24	18	36	27			
5pm - 6pm	14	20	19	23	18			
Average Total:	277	274	292	387	375			
Five Lanes	Total entrants in June:					9736		
Average	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday		
8am - 9am	20	17	20	22	38	34	389.4533	
9am - 10am	38	27	33	43	43	39		
10am - 11am	41	39	42	50	42	56		
11am - 12pm	39	40	37	36	44	61		
12pm - 1pm	27	36	30	33	45	60		
1pm - 2pm	41	29	39	50	48	49		
2pm - 3pm	46	42	38	53	47	47		
3pm - 4pm	35	30	32	45	42	49		
4pm - 5pm	33	33	28	40	41	38		
5pm - 6pm	21	20	18	25	19	17		
Average Total:	339	311	314	397	407	451		
Llanfoist	Total entrants in June:					16598		
Average	Monday	Tuesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday		
8am - 9am	28	31	76	50	49	35	663.92	
9am - 10am	42	53	98	70	63	63		
10am - 11am	40	65	97	81	76	108		
11am - 12pm	41	50	102	81	82	125		
12pm - 1pm	28	57	85	72	81	131		
1pm - 2pm	41	42	85	69	72	116		
2pm - 3pm	37	42	83	69	71	91		
3pm - 4pm	33	43	75	56	59	81		
4pm - 5pm	27	32	59	60	64	58		
5pm - 6pm	21	22	37	29	36	30		
Average Total:	338	436	796	636	654	839		

Tables 4 a, b, c, d show numbers of visitors during the last two months and where those visitors came from.

Table 4a

Visits to Llanfoist July – September 2020. The original capacity for 420 vehicles was reduced to allow vans and trailers and currently there is capacity for 360+ vehicles per day.

02/07/2020	19	16/07/2020	327	30/07/2020	307	13/08/2020	289	27/08/2020	296
03/07/2020	145	17/07/2020	316	31/07/2020	301	14/08/2020	310	28/08/2020	302
04/07/2020	179	18/07/2020	303	01/08/2020	110	15/08/2020	253	29/08/2020	250
05/07/2020	170	19/07/2020	222	02/08/2020	127	16/08/2020	176	30/08/2020	238
06/07/2020	163	20/07/2020	253	03/08/2020	201	17/08/2020	216	31/08/2020	210
07/07/2020	226	21/07/2020	270	04/08/2020	164	18/08/2020	130	01/09/2020	201
08/07/2020	0	22/07/2020	0	05/08/2020	0	19/08/2020	0	02/09/2020	0
09/07/2020	294	23/07/2020	315	06/08/2020	296	20/08/2020	294	03/09/2020	265
10/07/2020	288	24/07/2020	311	07/08/2020	303	21/08/2020	259		
11/07/2020	241	25/07/2020	298	08/08/2020	249	22/08/2020	203		
12/07/2020	230	26/07/2020	243	09/08/2020	211	23/08/2020	197		
13/07/2020	233	27/07/2020	238	10/08/2020	241	24/08/2020	243		
14/07/2020	262	28/07/2020	251	11/08/2020	170	25/08/2020	172		
15/07/2020	0	29/07/2020	0	12/08/2020	0	26/08/2020	0		

Table 4b
Heat map showing visits

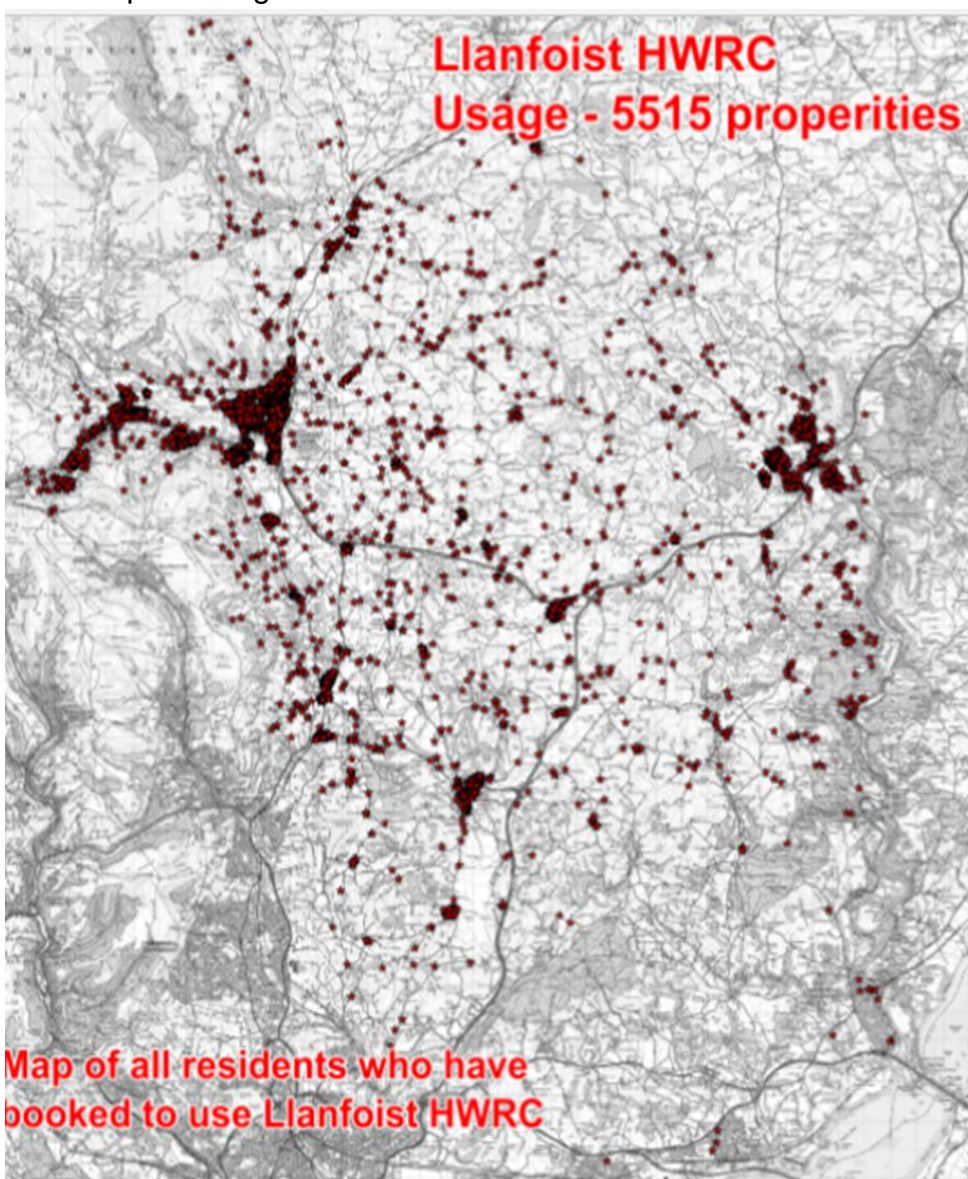
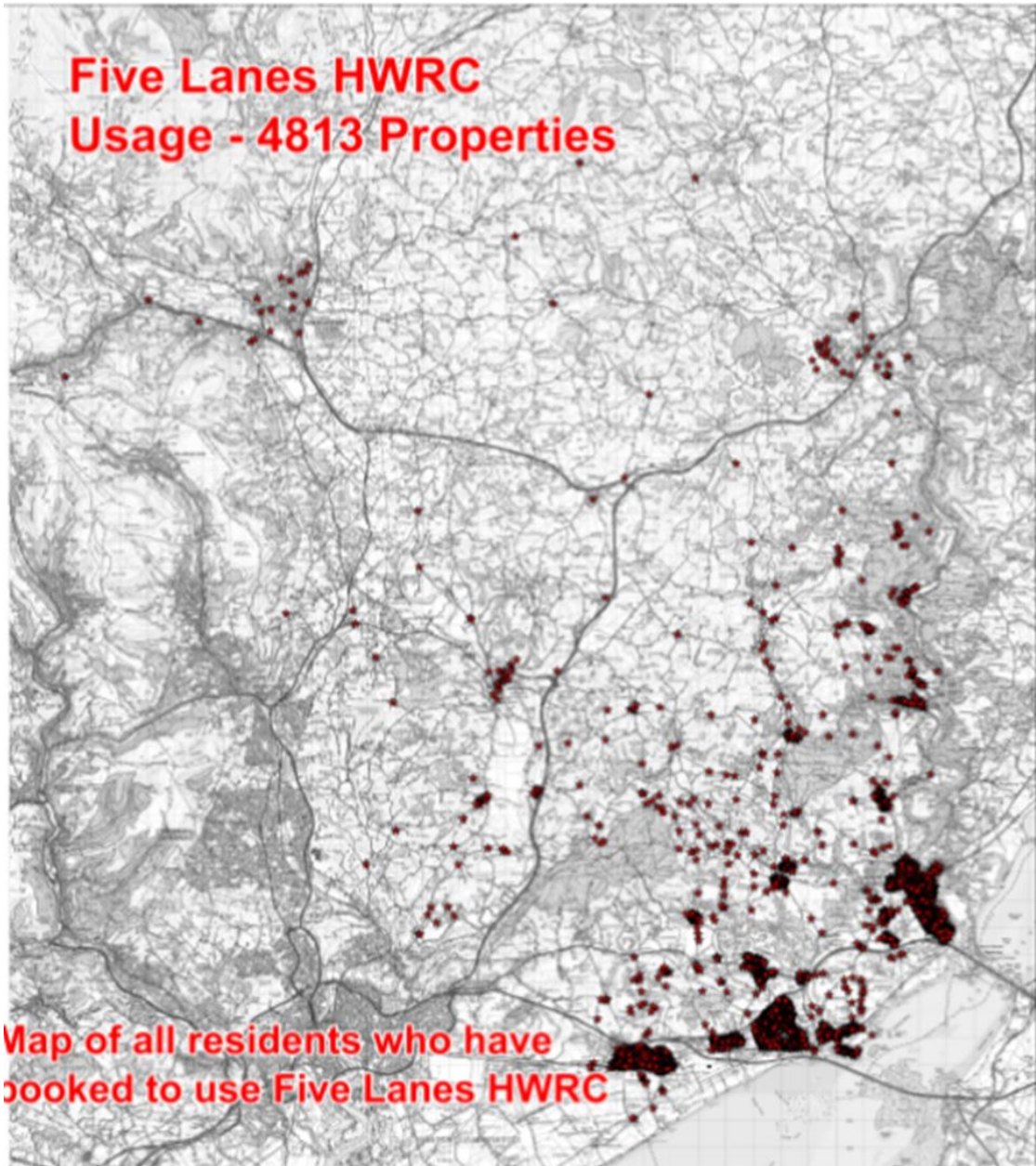


Table 4c
Five Lanes visits, capacity for 360 visits

03/07/2020	123	17/07/2020	319	31/07/2020	263	14/08/2020	284	28/08/2020	284
04/07/2020	109	18/07/2020	213	01/08/2020	106	15/08/2020	169	29/08/2020	218
05/07/2020	136	19/07/2020	172	02/08/2020	89	16/08/2020	129	30/08/2020	125
06/07/2020	137	20/07/2020	167	03/08/2020	148	17/08/2020	151	31/08/2020	133
07/07/2020	128	21/07/2020	197	04/08/2020	117	18/08/2020	121	01/09/2020	115
08/07/2020	186	22/07/2020	219	05/08/2020	139	19/08/2020	96	02/09/2020	137
09/07/2020	0	23/07/2020	0	06/08/2020	0	20/08/2020	0	03/09/2020	0
10/07/2020	250	24/07/2020	302	07/08/2020	273	21/08/2020	253		
11/07/2020	181	25/07/2020	217	08/08/2020	195	22/08/2020	137		
12/07/2020	191	26/07/2020	187	09/08/2020	155	23/08/2020	136		
13/07/2020	160	27/07/2020	174	10/08/2020	162	24/08/2020	175		
14/07/2020	219	28/07/2020	157	11/08/2020	122	25/08/2020	119		
15/07/2020	209	29/07/2020	184	12/08/2020	110	26/08/2020	103		
16/07/2020	0	30/07/2020	0	13/08/2020	0	27/08/2020	0		

Table 4d



- 3.30 Tables 3, 4a and 4c, show a stark difference in site usage as we come out of Covid restrictions. In 2019, the average daily visits were 1500 across the 4 sites, in 2020 this is reduced to 420 across the two sites open.
- 3.31 The heat maps 4b and 4c show that Llanfoist not attracts more visits. This is despite Five Lanes being closer in mileage terms for many of those visits. Encouraging residents to use the full range of kerbside services will reduce unnecessary milage and single journeys to sites.
- 3.32 Table 3 shows a reduction in usage between 4pm and 6pm, this is considerably more noticeable during the winter hours. The booking system allowed for a clean down of the site between 10am-11am, 1pm-2pm and 5pm and 6pm with no public access. We have not received any requests for visits between these times since the introduction of the booking system.
- 3.33 Tonnage and performance data in Table 5 shows what can be achieved when the usage of the HWRCs was limited.

Table 5

	Tonnage Apr-July		Recycling rate Apr-July	
	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>
Kerbside	8629	9678	67.5%	68.5%
HWRC	6772	2393	64%	74%

- Overall decrease in tonnage of approximately 3,400 tonnes (-22%)
- Increase in kerbside tonnage of approximately 1,000 tonnes (+12%)
- Decrease in HWRC tonnage of 4,400 tonnes (-65%)
- Figures indicate a slight increase in kerbside recycling rate
- Figures indicate a 10% improvement in HWRC recycling rate

- 3.34 Bookings peaked in week 2 with 80% of slots filled. This has decreased to 62% of capacity being used on the two sites open in July and August. The reopening of Mitchel Troy will give a small increase in capacity resulting in 40% headroom. Table 6 shows the potential savings that could be achieved if the sites were opened to align with actual capacity usage’.

Table 6

Current Service provision in contract - 220 hours per week
Opening hours currently operated (inc Mitchel Troy) - 117 hours per week
Capacity currently utilised - 75 hours per week
Open 8am to 4pm - maintain 2 x 30 min breaks for cleaning/skips - capacity 117 hours
Open 8am to 4pm and close additional day Llanfoist and Five Lanes - capacity 103 hours
8am – 4pm estimated saving £140k pa
Close additional day Llanfoist and Five Lanes estimated saving £100k

3.35 Over 80% of the bookings are made via the self-service portal and 20% of residents booking via the Contact Centre. Many of residents are complimentary to staff on site despite some initial issues for some in using the booking system. The system is not as intuitive as we would want long term but was developed very quickly to get the sites re-opened.

HWRC provision survey

3.36 The Cabinet decision to close the Usk facility is currently in abeyance to allow for a consultation on the provision of services and proposed changes. The consultation ran from March 10th to April 10th 2020 and was promoted on social media, the press, on the sites and through Usk Town Council. Usk Town Council were due to canvas residents of Usk and a letter drop was planned to coincide with the consultation process. There was a total of 959 on-line responses received. 8 respondents did not complete what site they use but answered a range of the other questions. Not all questions were completed by all respondents. The consultation did not focus on the closure of Usk alone and asked a range of questions regarding the HWRC provision across Monmouthshire as set out below.

Which site do you use most regularly?

Five Lanes	330
Llanfoist	206
Mitchel Troy	233
Usk	182
Total	951

What is most important to you about a Household Waste Recycling Centre?

Helpful staff	4256
Wide range of facilities for recycling	4218
How far I have to travel to site	4102
Black bag/rubbish is accepted	3889
Area for putting items aside for re-use/resale	3686
Ease of access to skips on site e.g. No steps	3585
A reuse shop on site open to the public	3342
Stopping business waste being brought to site	3047
Commercial vehicles are restricted e.g. Vans and trailers	2953
Area for sorting black bags on site (to increase recycling)	2651

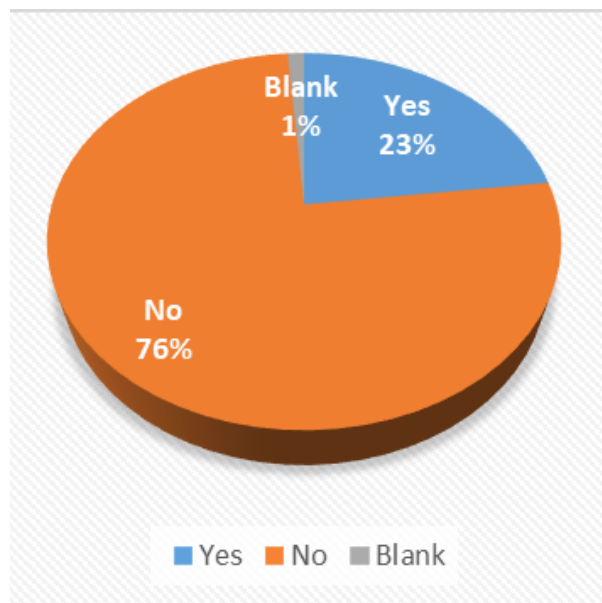
The question asked residents to rank the most important thing to them about the sites 1-5 where 5 was the most important. The table above shows the data for all 4 sites.

What is most important to you about a Household Waste Recycling Centre? (Usk only responses)

Wide range of facilities for recycling	515
Helpful staff	469
How far I have to travel to site	467
Area for putting items aside for re-use/resale	417
Black bag/rubbish is accepted	391
Stopping business waste being brought to site	390
Commercial vehicles are restricted e.g. Vans and trailers	383
A reuse shop on site open to the public	332
Ease of access to skips on site e.g. No steps	314
Area for sorting black bags on site (to increase recycling)	312

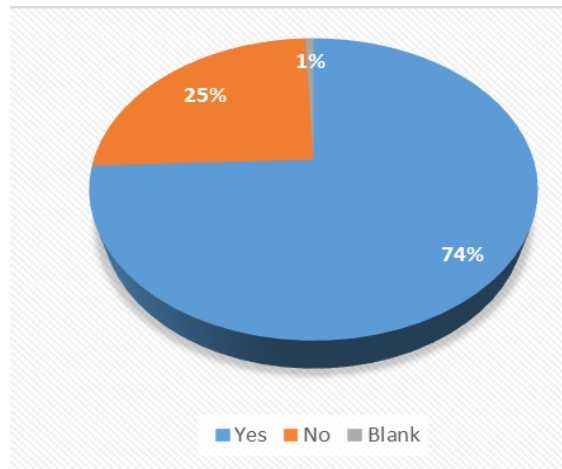
3.37 The responses from users of the Usk facility ranked the importance of a wide range of recycling facilities on site as their main priority. This is likely to be in recognition that the Usk facility has the narrowest range of recycling facilities on site and this limited choice is reflected in the poor recycling performance.

Do you agree with the recommendation to reduce the number of HWRCs across Monmouthshire?



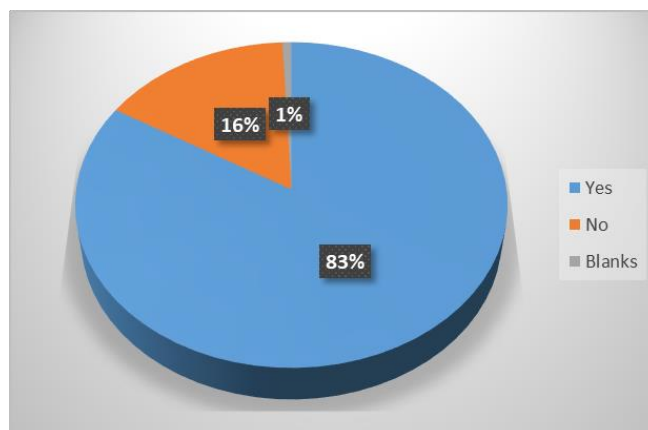
- Any consultation that recommends a reduction in service is unlikely to see an overwhelming positive response. Almost a quarter of respondents did support a reduction in the number of HWRCs in Monmouthshire.

Do you support the recommendation to close the site at 16:00 on Saturday and Sunday?



- Almost three quarters supported sites closing at 16:00 on Saturdays and Sundays.

Do you support the recommendation to close at 16:00 during the winter when visitor numbers are reduced?



- Overwhelming support for shorter opening hours in the winter

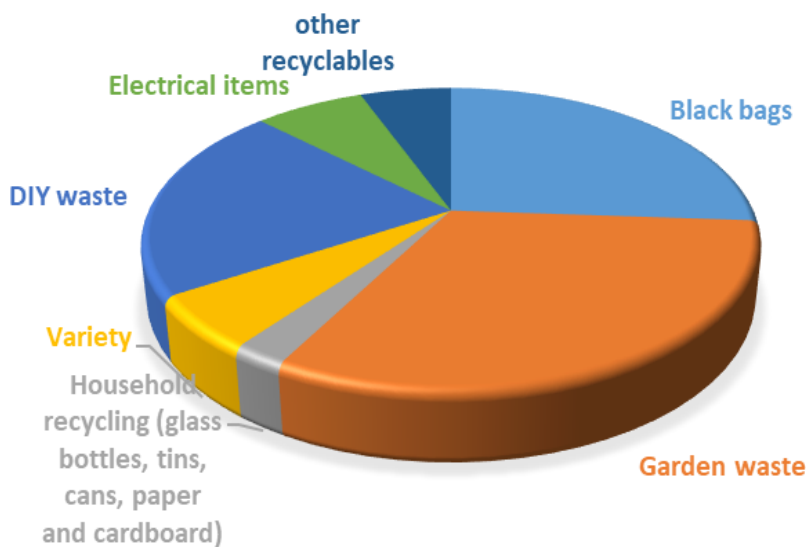
How often do you visit the site to dispose of waste/recycling?

How often do you visit the site	Usk	Mitchel Troy	Llanfoist	Five Lanes
More than once a week	27	14	9	5
Once a week	59	42	27	21
fornightly	20	41	29	48
Monthly	32	50	55	89
Occasionally	22	77	72	158
Never	1	1		3
Total	161	225	192	324

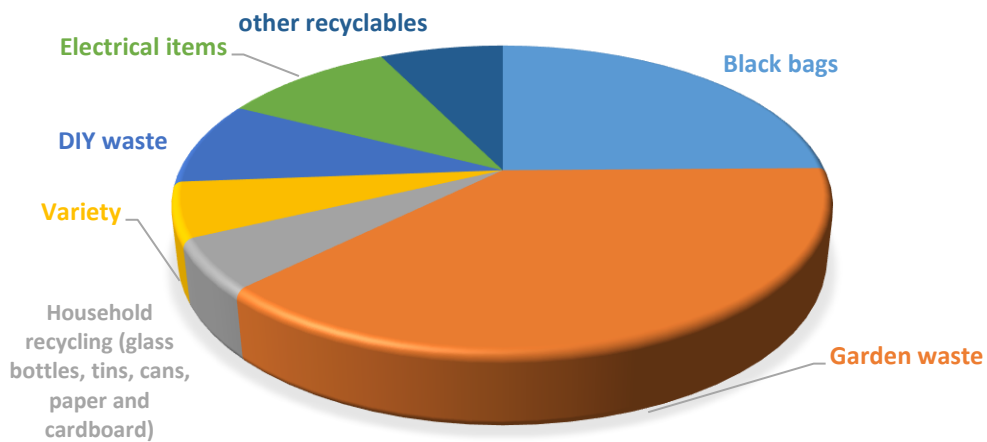
- 17% of Usk visits are more than once a week compared to 6% Mitchel Troy, 5% Llanfoist and 1.5% Five Lanes
- 37% of Usk visits are once a week compared to 19% Mitchel Troy, 29% Llanfoist and 5% Five Lanes
- 14% of Usk visits are occasional compared to 34% Mitchel Troy, 38% Llanfoist and 49% Five Lanes
- Based on the responses at least 71% of the visitors to Usk HWRC were also there the week before depositing waste/recycling.

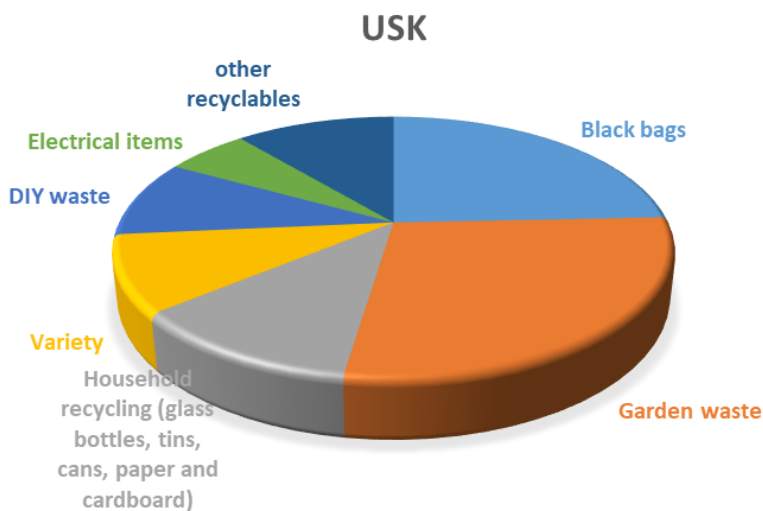
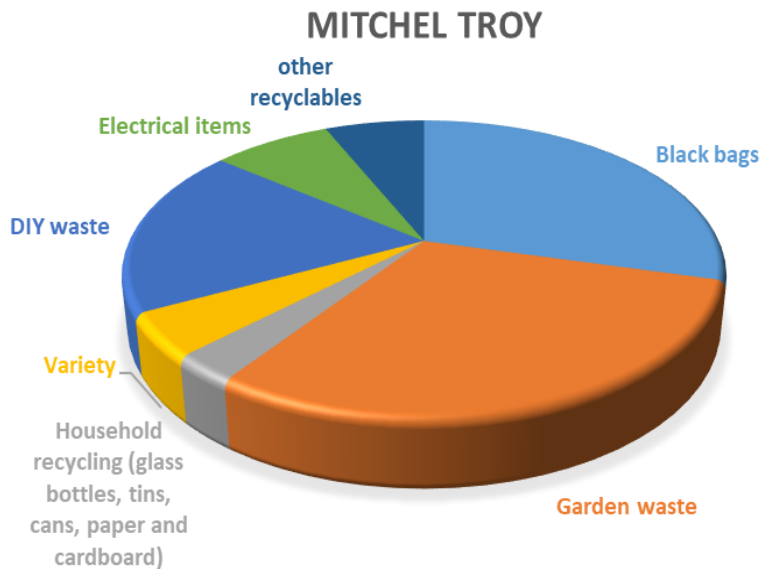
What material do you mainly bring to site?

FIVE LANES



LLANFOIST





- Respondents state that they mainly deposit material that could be collected at the kerbside (approximately 65%) on all sites. This is black bags, garden waste and household recycling.
- The proportion of Usk users stating they mainly bring household recycling to the site is far greater than other sites at 12% compared to 2% in Five Lanes.
- These are the perceptions of site users and do not correspond with site tonnage data. Five Lanes is the most accurate match on perception and actual tonnage with black bags and variety being 33% and current recycling rates of 63%+

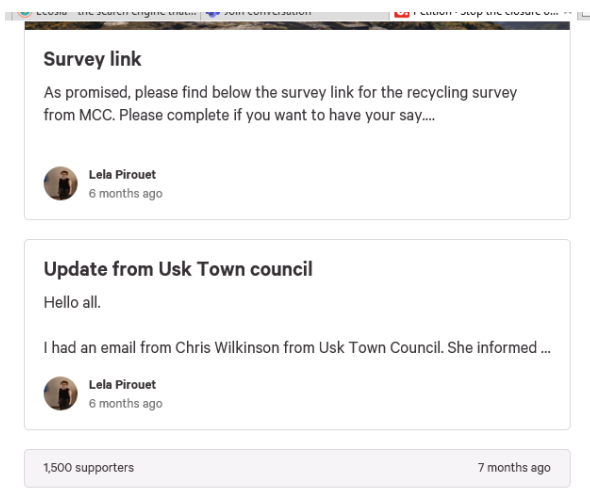
3.38 The survey also allowed free typing for other comments:

- There was a wide range of comments provided. The majority of comments from Mitchel Troy related to the frequent temporary closures and the need to resolve this issue.

- The majority of Usk users comments related to keeping the site open and flytipping concerns.
- Llanfoist and Five Lanes had a range of comments regarding staff being helpful/unhelpful, flytipping concerns, return to weekly rubbish collections, stop single use plastic bags, free garden waste service, no to sorting black bags, preference to use these sites rather than Usk Mitchel Troy, others requested additional facilities be positioned closer to their towns etc.
- Some confusion and mis-communication is clearly present. One response from Usk was that they preferred to use the split-level ramp in Llanfoist for easy access but could no longer do this since the permits were introduced. They believed as a resident of Usk they could not use Llanfoist. (the resident permits allow residents to use any of the MCC sites)

Rationalisation of HWRC provision and the closure of Usk

- 3.39 Discussions on future waste provision through Strong Communities and subsequent reports to Cabinet in December 2019 recommended the closure of Usk for a number of reasons.
- 3.40 It is recognised that the facility at Usk is highly regarded by a large number of local residents. Following the announcement of the planned closure in December 2019 an on-line petition on Change.org saw approximately 1000 signatories sign the petition to keep the facility open these signatories include support from outside of the county. The petition is now closer to 1800 signatures. The consultation process set out was also promoted through this medium.

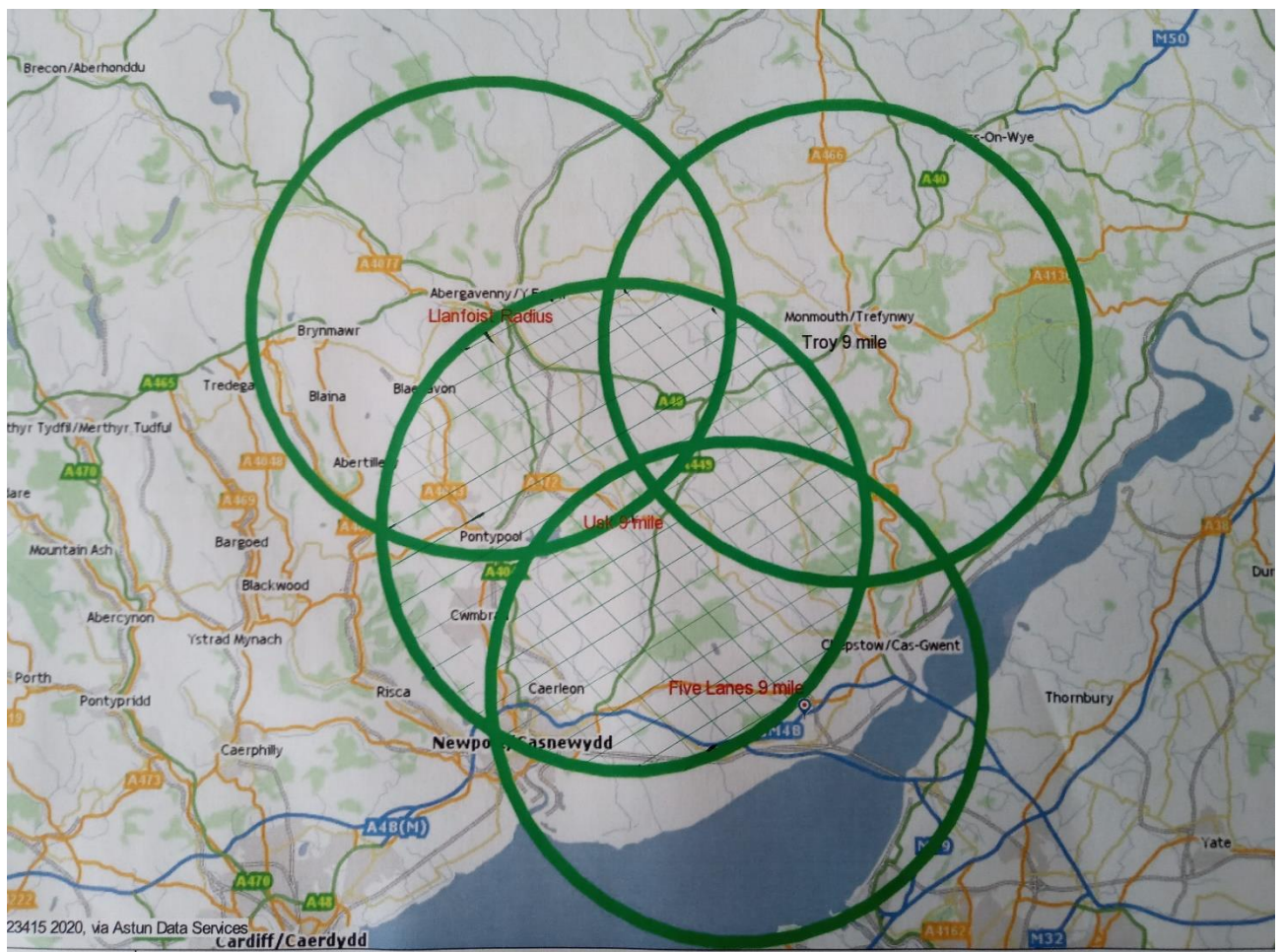


- 3.41 Usk Town Council have submitted a report to the Council highlighting the reasons why the site should not be closed and potential options that should be reviewed. The report from Usk Town Council is provided as an appendix to this report being considered by the Committee. The report states that Usk does not compare favourably in service provision to the other major towns yet serves a community, including outlying villages of 1987 households. It states that residents of Usk would need to travel a 20 mile round journey to Llanfoist or Five Lanes.

In addition, Usk Town Council have recently established an initiative and a local action group called Save Usk's Recycle Facility (SURF) which welcomes residents to share their views. It is unclear at the time of writing this report if the action group is supporting the data and evidence for closure in the December Report or countering them.

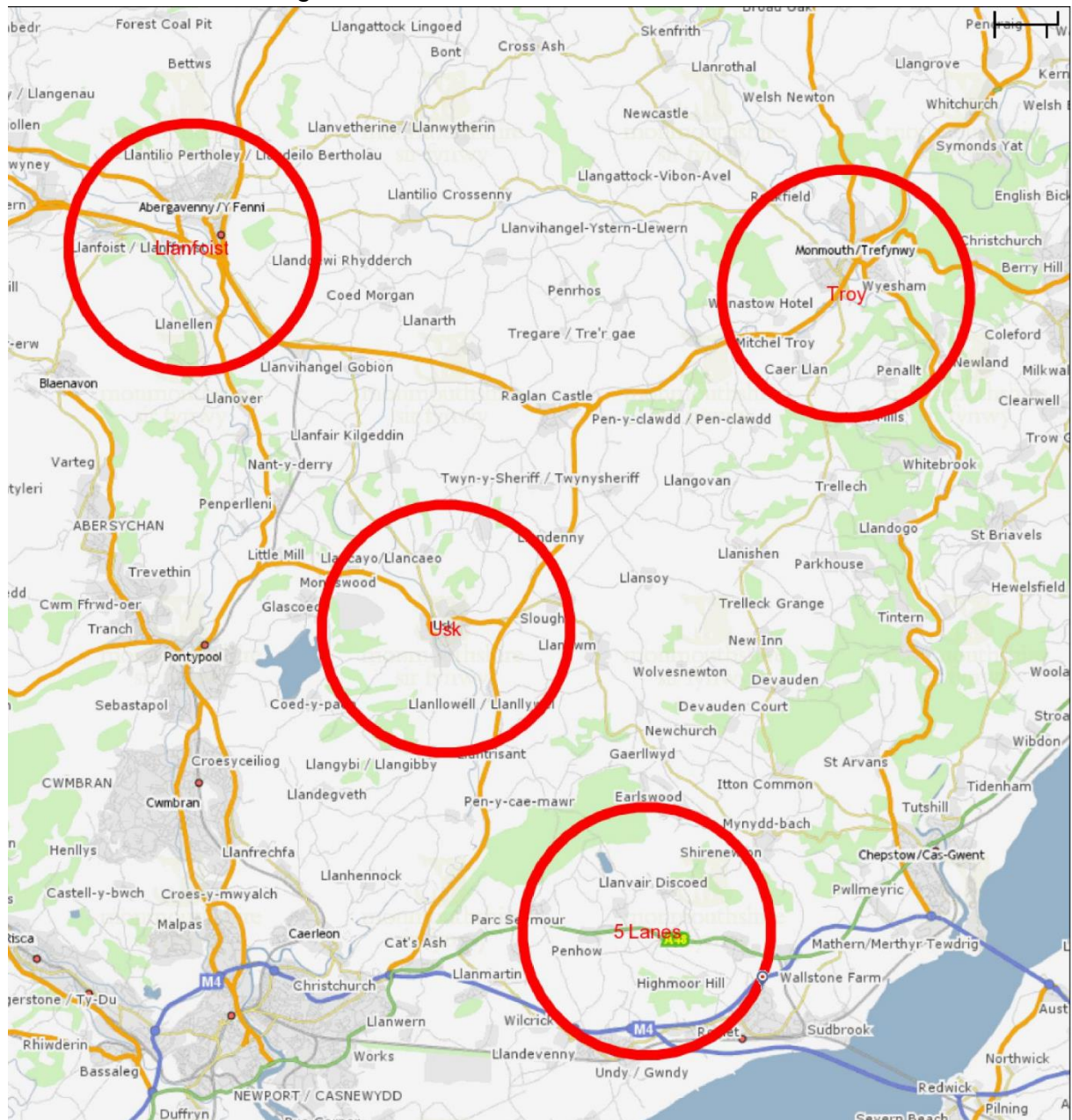
3.42 In order to provide the Strong Communities Select Committee with relevant information pertaining to the matters raised in the Usk town Council report and concerns raised by SURF further information is provided as follows.

Only Abergavenny and Monmouth have an HWRC within the extended town area. Chepstow and Caldicot don't have a facility within their town and residents travel a 15 mile and 10 mile round journey to use Five Lanes. The picture below shows that over 99.9% of residents live within a 9 mile radius of Llanfoist, Five Lanes and Mitchel Troy, the hatched circle is a 9 mile radius of Usk and includes Llanfoist and Five Lanes sites.



The Usk Town Centre Report request that sites should be maintained to service an area as described of 1987 households (a radius of 2.5 miles of Usk). If this coverage of existing sites was replicated it would leave huge areas across the county without services.

2.5 mile radius of exiting sites



3.43 From a wider Wales perspective, Torfaen, Blaenau Gwent and Newport residents are served by a single site in each county. Cardiff's 364,000 residents are served by two sites. Residents in Crickhowell travel a 28 mile round trip to their nearest facility in Brecon or 64 mile round trip to Llandrindod Wells when Brecon is closed.

3.45 The Usk site does not meet current best practice guidelines due to the steps and gantries that are used at the site. The gantries make the site unsuitable for disabled or infirm residents and poor lighting of the gantries leads to complaints and potential slips, trips and falls. The difficulty in keeping the gantries clean along with site staff unable to support residents with material is the reason that Usk has remained closed during Covid 19.

- 3.46 Lighting and electrics on site need investment and power surges knocked out lighting in the Maryport street carpark several times in November 2019. This work would have been needed to be completed in readiness of winter hours for 2020.
- 3.47 A near miss with a disabled resident and 44 tonne vehicle occurred when the vehicles used to drive out against the flow of traffic. A Viridor Health and Safety investigation at the time requested that this long standing practice be stopped. The loss of 18 car park spaces to improve the access and egress for the large vehicles was implemented but issues with traversing through a busy carpark with a 44 tonne vehicle remains a substantial risk. Removal of the site would enable an increase in car parking spaces that would be of significant benefit to traders in the town and the car park is frequently full.
- 3.48 There have been several bumps in the car park with cars waiting for the site. A woman struck by her husband's car on the exit to the site was thankfully not harmed seriously. Several claims for damage for slips, trips and falls on the site have continued to be raised over the years despite the improvements made.
- 3.49 The links between air pollution and respiratory diseases are well-documented. During peak summer season the site attracted between 170 and 200 additional vehicles through the car park and town each day. The introduction of the booking system (Usk site will only accommodate a maximum of 10 cars per hour post-covid and social distancing) will substantially reduce this impact but any return to normal will again exacerbate these issues.
- 3.50 A review of service provision based on site use, tonnages and capacity to improve carried out by Eunomia in 2017 clearly identifies the need for further investments in Usk and Troy with particular concerns regarding drainage and Health and Safety at Usk. Even with investment in the drainage required to meet NRW standards, investment in gantries, surfacing and lighting improvements estimated at over £30,000 the site would still be too small to accommodate a wide range of skips and will remain the lowest performing recycling centre in Wales.
- 3.51 Flytipping is cited as the main concern when any changes to waste services are proposed. There is little correlation between access to HWRCs and fly-tipping and authorities that have closed sites do not report increased fly-tipping as a result.

Reported flytipping:

Flytipping Comparison		
	2019/20	2020/21
April	113	119
May	115	116
June	73	107
July	132	129
August	54	68

- 3.52 The data for April to August 2020 shows a spike in June 2020 this is likely to be linked to lockdown restriction lifting as sites across Wales opened at the end of May.
- 3.53 The increases in fly-tipping are predominantly in Abergavenny and along the border. Of the reported incidences 10 were related to a bin store within 2 minutes of Llanfoist HWRC and occurred in July and August. The Llanfoist site had been open for over a month at this point.
- 3.54 There has been a reduction in fly-tipping in Monmouth during 2020 compared to 2019 and Usk remains at similar levels.

HWRC and Transfer Station Contract Management

- 3.55 The existing contract for HWRC management has been operational since 1992 and is due to be retendered. The contract is partnership arrangement Monmouthshire County Council and Viridor and both parties recognise that the existing contract needs to be substantially changed to take account of recycling performance and budget constraints. Viridor have worked with the Council throughout this partnership and have been instrumental in increasing recycling on sites and reducing operational costs despite the original contract being based on landfill.
- 3.56 Cabinet agreed to retender the service in 2016 and soft market testing was carried out with a good level of market interest. It was clear from the market that clarity of service provision in the tender documentation was key to reducing risk pricing. The tendering process was due to commence in 2017 with conclusion in 2018. Changes to the service provision as a result of the Medium Term Financial Planning budget processes including day closures, rationalisation, household permits and profit sharing mechanisms meant the clarity required by contractors was not available. Ambiguity in tenders can lead to risk pricing, legal challenges or low numbers of tenders and therefore the procurement process has not commenced.
- 3.57 MCC negotiated with Viridor to reduce the management of sites fee by £40,000 with no indexation of contract for 20/21. This was on the understanding that the contract will be retendered during 2020 and the existing contract was extended until March 31st 2021. This has now been extended until September 2021 to allow for decisions on service provision to be finalised. Abeyance of the decision on Usk and subsequent Covid 19 pressures have delayed progress. Viridor have agreed to support MCC until September 2021 to allow for the tender process to be completed but this is likely to incur additional costs.
- 3.58 Officers have reviewed the costs and identified options for insourcing. This would give the Council flexibility in service provision going forward but the recent crashes in the recycling market have identified the wider risks of predicting running costs against income generation from recycling. Monmouthshire's total tonnages are very small and the buying and selling power of larger waste management companies offer far less risk in volatile markets.

4.0 OPTIONS APPRAISAL

- 4.1 Booking System
- 4.2 HWRC service provision
- 4.3 Opening hours
- 4.4 Additional day closures
- 4.5 HWRC Contract Management

4.1 Booking System

Option 1 : Do Nothing

- Allow residents to visit the site without booking. This would not allow the controls necessary to manage the Covid 19 requirements.

Option 2 : Continuation of booking system

- The data supports the continuation of the booking system. We will work with the neighbouring authorities and Abavus to ensure the system is more intuitive and supports self-servicing at higher levels

4.2 Closure of Usk

Option 1: Do Nothing

- Do nothing is rarely an option. Escalating costs, poor performance, budget constraints, procurement deadlines all necessitate change, coupled with Covid 19 the Do Nothing Scenario is unlikely to be an option for any service going forward.

Option 2: Unmanaged (un-staffed) recycling facility or bring bank system on existing or other site.

- Any permanent waste storage facility would need planning and permitting. While existing sites are usually accepted by neighbouring properties, new sites or changes to existing facilities are usually vehemently opposed. An unmanned facility would only be able to take waste materials that are collected at the kerbside.
- Bring banks were removed in Wales with the roll-out of kerbside collections, historically they attracted fly-tipping and trade abuse and in some areas they became a target for arsonists. Many were on large supermarket sites where there was a physical and CCTV presence that helped control abuse.
- Powys recently closed its unmanaged facilities and garden waste skips due to increased trade abuse and spiralling costs of contamination in skips. Sites accepting potentially hazardous materials tyres, asbestos, paint, waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) etc must be managed and staffed.

Option 3: Managed (staffed) facility with recycling only on present site.

In theory, this would seem an ideal solution to increase recycling. This would potentially work on a large site with a very wide range of recycling facilities but on a site limited by size and capacity the options for a variety of recycling materials are significantly limited.

- A recycling only facility was considered as an option for Usk but the relatively low tonnages through the site would not justify the costs of managing the facilities. The 625 tonne recycling throughput at Usk would equate to staff costs of £115 per tonne compared to £10 per tonne in Llanfoist.
- Any material brought to the site that could not be recycled in the very limited number of skips would be turned away. Residents turning up with carpet/underlay, hard plastics, plastic bags, mixed materials, upholstery, MDF, crisp packets, tetrapaks etc. in any quantity would be advised to visit one of the other sites. If the booking system is retained it would be unlikely that these sites would have been booked by the residents and residents would have to take the waste home again and rebook for another day. This would be a constant source of frustration for the residents.
- Overall residents ranked black bag disposal as the fourth most important issue and 25%+ of residents said they mainly dispose of black bags. It is unlikely that they would feel their expectations regarding, helpful staff, wide range of recycling facilities and proximity of the site was positively managed, if they were not allowed to bring any residual waste (including bulky items) to site.
- Over 60% of waste entering Usk could be collected at the kerbside. Over 60% of the black bag contents, being disposed at Usk, could easily be recycled at the kerbside.

Option 4: Consider other restrictions

- Restricting the quantity of black bags allowed per visit was an approach taken by several Councils. Most had a maximum of 2-4 black bags per visit being the equivalent of a missed kerbside collection. Many residents state they use the sites on a daily/weekly basis and limits are unlikely to be effective. The issue on Usk is not only black bags but any waste material that could be recycled on a larger facility.
- Restricting numbers of visits per year per household is equally difficult to enforce and make equitable and introduces the same issues of restricting vehicle sizes. Different size vehicles, vans/trailers, types of waste brought in etc. Restricting size of vehicle was partly introduced with restrictions on vans/trailers but there are many exemptions.
- Reduce skip size to include additional recycling capacity at Usk. Reducing the size of the skips would necessitate additional closures to remove the popular materials. It will be more expensive to make an increased number of collections of smaller skips and increase the carbon footprint of haulage.

Option 5: Site managed and operated by Usk TC/ third party/ volunteers

- Sites must be permitted to accept waste. Sites must be managed and operated by suitably qualified persons.
- The staffing costs on the site are relatively small compared to the cost of disposal of material throughput. The 1300 tonnes of material entering the site would cost approximately £120,000 to treat (recyclate value netted off).
- Several businesses have shown an interest in using the site and this could be investigated by Usk Town Council as a community led facility.

Option 6: Insourcing to reduce costs

- Insourcing the services has been fully investigated and remains an option dependant on the final tender costs received and the prevailing risks associated with volatility of recycling markets. The flexibility benefits in the Council managing the sites would be reduced if officers are able to negotiate favourable service and variation of provision terms with tenderers but this is not guaranteed.

4.3 Opening Hours

Option 1 : Do Nothing

Maintain existing hours, this would be providing an over capacity of 40% based on current figures.

Option 2 : Reduce hours

The reduction in hours will provide savings as set out in report, it will maintain an headroom of 40% capacity with a reduction in site closures in the middle of the day to 2 x 30 min breaks for cleaning down site.

4.4 Additional day closures

Option 1 : Do Nothing

Maintain existing hours, this would be providing an over capacity of 40% based on current figures.

Option 2 : Reduce hours

The additional day closures will provide savings as set out in report, it will maintain an headroom of 25% capacity. Greatest savings are achieved with weekend closures but costs are based on mid-week closure.

5.0 EVALUATION CRITERIA

5.1 Measures used to measure the success of the proposals will include.

An increase in the proportion of waste received at HWRCs which was recycled;
A reduction in average operating costs of HWRCs;
Maintenance of fly tipping at or below current levels
Increased levels of residents self-servicing for bookings
Capacity and headroom for bookings maintained at +10%

6.0 REASONS:

- 6.1 The statutory recycling targets set out by Welsh Government are extremely challenging. It is recognised that increasing recycling can only be achieved by reducing easy options for rubbish disposal. Monthly collections of residual waste, closures of HWRCs, reduced capacity of residual collections are challenging but all deliver higher recycling and better environmental outcomes.
- 6.2 Changes to the way we operate the HWRCs in Monmouthshire are key to increasing overall recycling rates due to the higher than average volumes of waste that enter the sites. Diverting waste into the domestic kerbside recycling collections will benefit the climate change emergency work with fewer car journeys. Segregating black bags on site will change behaviour and further increase recycling.
- 6.3 The booking system makes people consider what they are buying and how they will dispose of their rubbish. For the first time there is accurate unequivocal data showing site usage patterns and capacity on sites. Working to known capacity rather than trying to meet perceived demand will ensure the Council can continue to provide more of the services our residents rely on.
- 6.4 Many residents have said that they now use Freecycle and other services to reuse material that they previously brought to site for disposal. Many have also commented that they think more carefully on the items they purchase since Covid 19. Consideration of the lifecycle, obsolescence and re-use of items is critical in creating a circular economy.
- 6.5 The costs of providing four recycling sites across the county places huge budgetary constraints on the waste section. A review of service provision based on site use, tonnages and capacity to improve carried out by Eunomia in 2017 in appendix indicates that Usk and Mitchell Troy are only sustainable long term with significant and costly improvements with particular concern regarding drainage and gantries in Usk.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 7.1 Continuation of the booking system is relatively straightforward using the existing portal. The portal is based on a bulky waste booking form and is clunky but sufficient and usable. Improvements are likely to incur some additional costs but as it's used by neighbouring authorities who would also benefit from a bespoke system, these costs may be minimal. Although 80% of customers are self-servicing the increase in telephone enquiries at the Contact Centre is acknowledged. The booking system reduces peaks and troughs on site and this should be reflected in lower tender prices.

- 7.2 The closure of Usk would provide an in year cashable saving of £40,000 in 2020 and subsequent years in reduced management fees. There are £30,000 unbudgeted costs in reviewing the drainage and upgrading lights, gantries and surfacing should Usk reopen in 2020. There will be increased costs in kerbside collection but through Covid 19 these resources have been quantified and at current collection rates these are managed within existing rounds.
- 7.3 Revised opening hours of 08:00 to 16:00 in line with continuation of booking system will see a reduction in staffing costs of £140,000 compared to existing provision. These savings are based on MCC operating the service in-house.
- 7.4 The additional day closure at Llanfoist and Five Lanes will reduce staffing costs by £100,000 based on in-house provision.
- 7.5 Costs are saved by reduction in agency costs and overtime and should not impact existing staff wages. The existing contract is based on minimum wage while the proposed new contract is based on the living wage. Reductions in hours for staff on site is offset by the increased hourly rate.
- 7.6 An additional re-use shop at Five Lanes is dependant Welsh Government funding. If successful, the income generation and subsequent profit will be invested in climate change emergency projects.
- 7.7 Retendering the HWRC and Transfer stations will need resources from the council's legal, finance and procurement departments. At this stage the financial costs are unknown but it is anticipated that a like for like service provision would increase costs. The continuation of the booking system, the closure of Usk and reduced opening hours being included in the tender documents will reduce tender prices and contact costs going forward. Clarity on future service provision will ensure the market can provide the most economically advantageous tender position for MCC. The procurement of a 10 year contract with an estimated value of £15m will be supported through Atebion, clarity on all aspects of the contract will reduce complexity and costs of procurement for all parties.

8.0 WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS IMPLICATIONS (INCORPORATING EQUALITIES, SUSTAINABILITY, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):

- 8.1 The changes to the services proposed or to be considered further as a consequence of this report have significant positive contributions to make to the Wellbeing Goals. In particular it has strong benefits for a Prosperous Wales, by supporting the ongoing development of a low carbon economy. There is also potential to contribute to Cohesive Communities, by working collaboratively and in partnership with our communities to reduce the impact that waste has upon our communities.
- 8.2 There are no significant positive or negative impacts on the protected characteristics, safeguarding or corporate parenting. The principles of Long term, Prevention,

Integration, Collaboration and Involvement have been used throughout the development of these proposals.

- 8.3 It is clear that the closure of the Usk facility is strongly opposed by a number of local residents and Usk Town Council. Perceived negative impacts on the community of Usk would be offset with improved air quality, additional parking close to the high street for businesses and improved recycling rates across the county.

9.0 CONSULTEES:

Cabinet Member
Strong Communities Select
Soft market testing of the Market
All Member waste awareness days

10.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS:

WLGA Benchmarking Finance Data 2015/16 and 2017/18
Eunomia Study into Monmouthshire County Council HWRC provision
WRAP and HSE – Black bag sorting guidance

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