

**CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL**

**COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES**

<b>COMMITTEE:</b>	Council Meeting		
<b>MEETING DATE AND TIME</b>	6.00pm Thursday 11 <sup>th</sup> March 2021	<b>LOCATION</b>	Zoom
<b>REPORT FROM</b>	Chief Officer		
<b>AGENDA ITEM REPORT TITLE</b>	Congleton Waste Disposal Site – Cheshire East Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 15 <sup>th</sup> March 2021.		
<b>Background</b>	<p>Cheshire East Council has announced that Congleton Waste Disposal Site is due to close by September 2021 which has resulted in significant local opposition to this decision. Councillors have already started to question this and called for this decision to be reviewed. The purpose of this agenda item is to agree on the Councils approach into the provision of this service for Congleton, this will be presented to Cheshire East Councils Overview and Scrutiny Committee which meets on the 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021.</p>		
<b>Update</b>	<p>On March the 4<sup>th</sup> there was an informal meeting of councillors that reviewed the information contained in the attached report. That meeting has helped shape the options that the Council may wish to consider as the Councils approach on this matter.</p> <p>The main issue is that there has been very little collaboration on the closure of the site which would have a significant impact for residents. It is understood that the site was lease hold and the owner had made the decision to sell the site for an alternative use. Councillors have been advised that alternative sites had also been explored, but also told that the Cheshire East Council could no longer afford to pay for a new site.</p> <p>Individually Councillors have and continue to challenge Cheshire East Council members on many fronts, ultimately the Council needs to be as one in its position on this matter.</p> <p>The Town Council wants to find a solution for this issue this can only be done with Cheshire East Council, to enable the Town Council to do this we need to initially understand how this decision was arrived at which involves -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Understanding the consultation process, outcomes and establishing if it took into consideration the population growth in Congleton .</li><li>2. Understanding of the business case for closure, ie how do the financial considerations outweigh the environmental and the equality considerations.</li><li>3. Clarification of the budget of £4 million as it seems excessive based on initial Town Council research.</li><li>4. Establishing if leasing an alternative site had been explored.</li><li>5. Were some of CEC existing assets explored as an option both short term and long term. ie re open the Arclid site until a permanent solution is found.</li><li>6. Understanding what alternative sites were explored (previously requested)</li><li>7. Were innovation projects considered rather than a straight replacement.</li><li>8. What alternative finance solutions / funding streams have been explored.</li></ol>		

	<p>Whilst Congleton Town Council has limited resource it does have extensive local knowledge and connections. With officers and councillors working in collaboration with Cheshire East Council, it is feasible that an alternative solution could be found noting that there would need to be a clear scope and timescale for this work.</p> <p>It would be hoped Cheshire East Council views this collaborative work as a positive action, from a Town Council perspective it maybe viewed that this would be the minimum the Town Council expects from Cheshire East Council.</p>
<b>Proposal</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. That Congleton Town Council approach Cheshire East Councils Overview and Scrutiny Committee for Cheshire East Council work in Collaboration with Congleton Town Council to explore all options for an alternative site in Congleton for a period of 6 months.</li><li>2. Other options for consideration</li></ol>

**POINTS FOR CONSIDERATION – RECYCLING STRATEGY WORKING GROUP MEETING**  
**4th MARCH, 2021**

Background Information:

**Background** Cheshire East carried out a consultation exercise into the future of Household Waste Recycling Centres in Cheshire East between the 23 November and 4<sup>th</sup> January. There were 4 main options all of which included the closure of Congleton site (because CEC was aware that the landlord did not wish to extend the lease). There was also an option to maintain current sites with a replacement site for Congleton. Across the borough the option to retain the current sites with a replacement site for Congleton was the most popular option. (59% approved). The survey received 10,208 responses. 2,503 of these were from Congleton site users. The demographics do not say where people are from, just identify which waste site they use. Acknowledgement was also given to the Save our Congleton Recycling Centre petition (organised by Cllr Duffy) which at the time had more than 1,900 signatures. – update now has 9/3/21 now has 3,240

Congleton HWRC site users were more likely to strongly support this option to remain current sites compared to other site users (62% strongly support average 59%). Congleton users were also more likely to strongly oppose this option (26% strongly oppose). This perhaps represents those who do not want the site to be replaced or to change location and would rather it remain where it is.

Cheshire East Waste Collection Reorganisation Consultation - Summary of responses

The survey results and recommendations were reported back to the Cheshire East Council Environment and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny on the 12<sup>th</sup> February. At this meeting the recommendation was:

**Propose to not replace Congleton Household Waste Recycling Centre at the end of the current lease in Sept 2021. The nearest alternative sites would be in Alsager and Macclesfield. Once procurement undertaken, may need to consider further site closures.**

At the full Council meeting of 17<sup>th</sup> February 2021, Councillor Laura Crane announced that the decision had been deferred for one month and that their proposals with additional detailed information would be taken back to the Overview and Scrutiny meeting being held on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

At that full Council meeting, Laura Crane also stated that if people can suggest the services that they would like to see cut to enable a site to be built in Congleton, she stated that she was more than happy to listen.

On 24<sup>th</sup> February 2021, Laura Crane wrote to residents advising that Cheshire East Council had approached the landowners of the existing site to negotiate an extended lease or to purchase the site but without success.

Congleton Town Council's Strategy Working Group (SWG) on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> March met to establish what our ambition is as a Town Council with regards to the Household Waste Recycling Centre. And actions to achieve this. Below is 16 points raised by Councillor Douglas which I believe Councillors are in agreement with so will not need to be discussed or repeated at the Strategy Working Group.

**Details 1-16 from Cllr Douglas:**

1. Number of daily users quoted in this consultation drew on figures from May and June 2020 during the first lockdown when many stayed at home to protect loved ones and when Cheshire East restricted the days we could visit depending on our vehicle registration number.
2. Latest information of number of daily users that are available prior to the pandemic, is five years old, from early 2016, when Arclid was still open.
3. Despite fewer people living in Congleton then, the total number of daily visits to the Congleton site in 2016 was over 30% higher than the figure quoted in these misleading proposals, despite Arclid still being open.
4. With users forced to switch from Arclid and an increasing population, the true daily usage figure for Congleton will be significantly higher.
5. Consultation failed to provide any detailed analysis of the damage to our environment. There will be increased CO2 emissions with users obliged to travel longer distances.
6. Paul Duffy has computed that even using the consultation's flawed figures, Congleton's closure would increase CO2 emissions by about 200 tonnes per year. With visitor numbers almost double outside lockdown, Congleton's closure would increase CO2 emissions by about 400 tonnes every year.
7. The consultation also failed to consider other adverse environmental damage
  - a) increased engine idling in longer queues
  - b) increased fly-tipping
  - c) reduced recycling given residents will put recycled items into general domestic waste because they cannot afford the additional time to travel the longer distances.
8. Increased fly-tipping is disastrous for our natural environment and also has economic costs clearing it up, another issue not considered in this consultation.
9. The proposals to close recycling sites discriminate against the elderly and the less mobile.
10. Closure of any recycling site adds to the loss of recycled waste through fly-tipping and in increased general household waste. Cheshire East report that when Arclid was

closed, 4% of its tonnage was lost. Arclid is five miles from Congleton. Alternatives to the Congleton site are much further than that so there would probably be significantly higher losses. Even if the loss was 4%, Congleton's closure would result in a loss of 111 tonnes every year. (see table A at end of table for the most up to date current figures on the HWRC given to us by CEC for Congleton in Bloom)

11. Report fails to consider whether Macclesfield and Alsager could actually cope with the increase in throughput following the closure of the Congleton site.
12. Report fails to consider Highway issues for Macclesfield and Alsager recycling sites if there is no site for Congleton. On 20th February 2021, photo shows a car making a dangerous manoeuvre outside the Macclesfield recycling site as obliged to overtake the long queue waiting to use the facility by crossing a long white continuous line over the brow of a hill.
13. The implications of growing population also seem to have been ignored in these proposals.
14. In February 2020, Cheshire East Council approved a budget for a new purpose-built recycling site for Congleton. Such a site would offer significantly improved recycling capabilities for the benefit of our environment for many generations to come.
15. Cllr Paul Duffy's petition for the retention of a site at Congleton has been signed by over 2,100 people. (updated to 3,200)
16. If no site is provided for Congleton, then with the resulting damage to our environment, Cheshire East Council is failing to keep to its commitment of protecting our environment or in achieving its goal of being carbon neutral by 2025.

**Points of Agreement amongst Councillors – taken from a Survey Monkey with 15 responses.**

1. Congleton Town Council believes it is essential that Congleton has a Household Waste Recycling Centre for its current and future residents within the Congleton area 100% agree
2. How likely do you think each of the following potential impacts will occur if Congleton doesn't have a Household Waste Recycling Site within its area

Very Likely   LikelY   UnlikelY   Very UnlikelY   Don't know

	VERY LIKELY	LIKELY	UNLIKELY	VERY UNLIKELY	DON'T KNOW	TOTAL
Increase in carbon footprint by with longer journeys	100.00% 15	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	15
More waste going in household waste bins	93.33% 14	6.67% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	15
Increase in fly tipping	80.00% 12	20.00% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	15
Congestion at closest other Waste Sites	100.00% 15	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	15
Increased bonfires (smoke pollution)	46.67% 7	46.67% 7	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	6.67% 1	15
More reusing of products	0.00% 0	6.67% 1	60.00% 9	26.67% 4	6.67% 1	15
Overall saving to Cheshire East Council	6.67% 1	0.00% 0	40.00% 6	33.33% 5	20.00% 3	15

3. Congleton Town Council believes that Cheshire East Council is responsible for managing the safe disposal of waste for its residents, and should do so in a way that has the least impact on the climate and encourages opportunities to recycle and reuse.

93% Strongly Agree, 7% agree

4. Congleton Town Council is concerned that Cheshire East Council does not seem to have taken into account the growth of new homes being built in and around Congleton which will increase demand for the Household Waste Recycling Sites

92% Strongly Agree, 8% Agree

5. If the current site is no longer available then CEC needs to make provision for a new Household Waste Recycling Site in Congleton – it's fourth largest town.

93% Strongly Agree, 7% Agree

6. Congleton Town Council understands that Cheshire East Council had included £4 million for a replacement waste site in Congleton within its Addendum list of Capital Projects in its medium-term strategy. We believe that the business case has been made for this sum to be transferred to the list of committed projects.

85% Strongly Agree, 7% Agree and 7% Strongly Disagree

Comment that don't believe CEC has tried to make a business case.

7. Congleton Town Council understands that CEC spent £50k carrying out research into potential alternative sites for a new waste plant for Congleton, we would like to understand why the findings of this report have not been shared with any Congleton councillors or officers.

100% Strongly Agree

8. Congleton Town Council is surprised that the Portfolio holder has suggested that CTC should go through the CEC budget and advise how the £250,000 a year could be found.

100% Strongly Agree

9. Congleton Town Council is extremely disappointed that Cheshire East Council has completely ignored the findings from its consultation. In the consultation exercise the most popular option across the whole borough was to retain the current sites with a replacement site for Congleton. Why was the recommendation that there should be no Household Waste Recycling Centre for Congleton?

93% Strongly Agree 7% neither agrees or disagrees

10. Q10 Congleton Town Council believes it is insulting to our residents that they are being told by the Portfolio Holder that they should take more of Councillors - Household Waste Recycling Centre

100% Strongly Agree

11. Congleton Town Council and the Congleton Sustainability Group should offer to work with Cheshire East to seek alternative sites and potentially explore grants to provide a state of the art Waste site with recycling facilities for Congleton.

93% Strongly Agree. 7% Agree

#### **Items for discussion at the Strategy Working Group**

1. Response and request to speak at the Cheshire East Environment and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 15<sup>th</sup> March – suggesting the Cllr Sally Holland, Town Mayor wearing her Chain of Office should represent the Town Council and speak on behalf of us all feeding back from this meeting.
2. Applying pressure on CEC in the run up to the 15<sup>th</sup> March
3. Agreeing what the Town needs re the site and potential locations
4. Do we act on the challenge on the CEC budget to find £250k savings
5. Do we have any suggestions for locations for a potential site
6. Is there more that we can do to help with the reuse and recycle aspects of waste
7. Do we have any other ideas eg – other potential options to make this happen for Congleton? Could CEC be inventive enough to look for a site for a state of the art recycling centre for Congleton with a repair workshop (jobs and training), thrift shop, scavengers yard all alongside it? Yesterday a new funding stream was announced for this...

[Climate Action Fund opens to applicants across the UK, looking to address waste and sustainable consumption in their communities | Big Lottery Fund | Official Press Release \(wired-gov.net\)](#)

Cllr Suzie Akers Smith provided the table below with details of throughput tonnage.