

Cllr. Robert Douglas

For over three months residents have been challenging the validity of this Administration's claim that a new recycling site would cost £ 4 million.

How is it that Norfolk can build a site for £ 1.9 million and Nottingham another for £ 2.5 million? Cheshire East is paying £ 27,500 each year for our existing site and is willing to continue to pay that sum.

By deducting this cost means a £ 2,000,000 site would cost less than £ 100,000 per year, less than 40% of the cost constantly quoted in this document. £ 100,000 is just 0.01% of Cheshire East's budget.

74% of all respondents to the consultation stated they would only be willing to travel up to ten minutes to reach their nearest recycling site. The silver bins for many of us are already full, whereas our black domestic bins are near empty.

On page 144 in your documents, we see the remark about residents only adding one or two items to the residual waste bin from time to time. This is totally unrealistic. At least 4% of Congleton site's throughput will be lost, 111 tonnes every year – much of it recycled items dumped in domestic waste bins because residents will not travel all the way to the alternative site, totally contrary to our green agenda.

Without a site in Congleton, the number of homes served by Macclesfield's site will increase by over 15,000 homes – an increase of 63%. This March, the police advised people to avoid the area around the Macclesfield site because I quote, "absolutely massive queue". Following the closure of Congleton's site, the queues at Macclesfield will be much worse. Furthermore, this queue means traffic not visiting the site has to carry out dangerous manoeuvres putting lives at risk. This danger has not been highlighted even though Cheshire East proposes to spend £ 5 million to improve the safety of a junction just a mile away.

This proposal is deeply flawed and fails to consider all the options available. I request that you recommend that a working group is set up which reports back in six months with the solution to this problem.

Cllr. Kay Wesley

I am Chair of the Community & Environment Committee of Congleton Town Council. I'm here to ask you to request that Cabinet review the decision about Congleton's Household Waste and Recycling Centre in the interests of the residents of Congleton, Macclesfield, Alsager and neighbouring rural areas. I urge you to consider the long-term priorities of Cheshire East Council.

In its Environment Strategy 2020-24 the council has ambitious goals to reduce carbon emissions and improve air quality as well as objectives for reduction in waste and increase in recycling, reusing, or composting.

It is clear from Cheshire East's own analysis and from the public consultation that the closure of Congleton tip will lead to longer journeys and more carbon emissions. Most Congleton households are not within a 15-minute drive of Macclesfield or Alsager in normal traffic conditions. There is also

a significantly increased risk of fly-tipping and reduction of recycling. This will bring down the performance of the Borough overall against both clean air and recycling targets.

Cheshire East also has a five-year Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and the Equality Impact assessment in these papers concludes that the closure “impact all households equally” with a passing mention of disabled and elderly residents potentially being disadvantaged due to being reliant on others to drive them to the tip. But this is not a tiny minority – Congleton has the highest proportion of elderly residents in Cheshire East. We need local facilities to serve residents who are down-sizing, moving into residential care and dealing with bereavement.

I would also challenge the assertion that there is no inequality due to sex. A disproportionate number of people who do not have a car, who are elderly or who are single parents, are women. They are going to be disproportionately disadvantaged by this loss of a local service. All this is going to be exacerbated because Congleton is getting more new housing than any other town in Cheshire East, with thousands more families requiring a Household Waste and Recycling Centre.

Councillors, ambitious strategy documents published on glossy paper mean nothing without action. Here is an opportunity for Cheshire East Council to demonstrate its commitment to the environment and to equality.

I call on the Scrutiny committee to advise Cabinet that making a decision on 13th April is premature. Congleton Town Council asks that this committee fulfils its role fully by creating a task and finish group to evaluate all possible avenues over the next 6 months to ensure adequate provision of waste and recycling facilities in Congleton.

Cllr.Suzy Firkin

Committee Members and fellow Councillors,

I know that you take your role as a member of this scrutiny committee seriously and I wish to encourage you to be part of a real solution to Cheshire East’s challenges on Waste Reduction and Recycling.

The current proposal under scrutiny will see the closure of Congleton Waste and Recycling Centre without the provision of a replacement one. It lacks ambition and does nothing to address the challenges of the climate emergency or guarantee a reduction in waste generated. It will only disperse it and create additional problems such as fly tipping and additional green-house gases.

As a scrutiny committee you can challenge the portfolio holder and the leader of the council to do better. At a strategy meeting of Congleton Town Council I was privileged to hear many fantastic suggestions – not just for Congleton but for the surrounding area. Other counties and countries are creating reuse and upcycling centres along with ‘Fix It’ centres and hubs for residents to exchange items. These facilities have the potential to actually bring in income and are innovative ways of helping to change behaviours of residents and bring down our environmental burden. They are also eligible for grants which can help mitigate the expense of providing a new facility.

There were also many suggestions of potential sites that might be suitable and local commercial partners who might be interested in being part of the solution.

You will already be aware that the consultation and data on which this closure is based is highly contested. However, it is not too late for Cheshire East to take an innovative and collaborative approach to create something better for the future not just make the easy and flawed decision to close Congleton. Not only the residents of Congleton, but the whole of Cheshire East, would thank you for showing that the council can do better and demonstrate that it takes both its Climate Change and budgetary constraints seriously.

I call on the Scrutiny Committee to advise Cabinet that making a decision on April 13th is premature. We ask that this committee fulfils its role fully by creating a task and finish group, reporting in the next 6 months, to evaluate all possible avenues to ensure the provision of waste and recycling facilities, fit for the future, in Congleton.