

FROM: Owen Lyttle
BRANCH: Environmental Policy Division
CONTACT: Irrelevant & Sensitive

DATE: 17 April 2020

TO: EDWIN POOTS MLA
MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, ENVIRONMENT AND RURAL
AFFAIRS

SUB/1246/2020 - REOPENING OF HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING CENTRES.

SUMMARY

Issue: Setting principles for local councils which can be used to reopen Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC).

Timing: Desk Immediate – due to interest from CCG(NI) and media and, if possible, for clearance before CCG(NI) on Monday 20 April 20.

Financial Implications:* N/A.

Employment of External Consultants Implications: N/A

Legislation Implications:* N/A.

Equality Implications: N/A.

FOI Implications: Not disclosable. Section 35 FOI Act 2000.

Rural Needs Implications: N/A.

Executive Referral: N/A.

Presentational Issues: This issue has attracted significant attention at a political level. The guidance and principles will assist local councils to progress the reopening of HWRCs as appropriate by providing a basis for decision making while continuing to support public safety in relation to Covid-19.

Date Draft Press Release A Press Release will be prepared when you have considered the recommendations in this submission and agreed an approach.

Cleared by Press Office:

Recommendation: That you:

- (a) confirm your position which is that the HWRCs should open as soon as possible, subject to public safety considerations in relation to COVID-19;
- (b) agree to the principles at **Annex A** being used as the basis for guidance to be issued to local government;
- (c) subject to your agreement to the first two recommendations, agree that a draft Executive paper is prepared, so that Executive agreement can be secured for the principles and subsequent guidance.

BACKGROUND

1. This submission is a follow-up to SUB-1241-2020 dated 16 April 20, and takes on board your comments to progress with the reopening of HWRCs.

2.

LPP/LAP

3. It is clear however that as we move through the peak phase of COVID-19 and begin to consider recovery and renewal, the circumstances will change. This in turn will have an impact on whether restrictions will be lifted and when. While the current lockdown is planned for 3 weeks, it is possible (indeed likely) that circumstances may result in some restrictions being reduced during that period. As this cannot be predicted precisely and will depend on the course of the disease, it will be important to have clear principles which can be applied to each decision as it arises whether at a central government or local government level.
4. **Annex A** therefore provides a set of principles to use as a basis for decision making for reopening HWRCs as soon as practically possible while still supporting the Northern Ireland approach to controlling the COVID-19 virus. The principles have been primarily prepared to inform decisions on the reopening of HWRCs; however, they are also applicable to all waste management services. Defra is currently developing guidance for the reopening of HWRCs and relevant elements of that guidance can be incorporated in Northern Ireland guidance to support the principles.

RECOMMENDATION

5. That you:

- (a) confirm your position which is that the HWRCs should open as soon as possible, subject to public safety considerations in relation to COVID-19;
- (b) agree to the principles at **Annex A** being used as the basis for guidance to be issued to local government;
- (c) subject to your agreement to the first two recommendations, agree that a draft Executive paper is prepared, so that Executive agreement can be secured for the principles and subsequent guidance.

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ATTACHMENTS

Annex A – Covid-19: Guidance for Waste Management Services

CC List
Dr Denis McMahon
Brian Doherty
Norman Fulton
Robert Huey
Fiona McCandless
David Small
Tracey Teague
Helen Anderson
Dave Foster
John Mills
Claire Vincent
Richard Crowe

Names Redacted

~~Colin Breen~~

Names Redacted

Press Office
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Correspondence