

## SAVE OUR ISLAND ARTICLE FOR April 2024 HAYLING HERALD

Well, here we go again ... again.

Hampshire County Council (HCC) are again proposing to close the Hayling Island Recycling Centre to save money. We, of course, have been given the opportunity to give our views – basically so HCC can claim consultation with the community – but the intent is closure, along with all the other small recycling centres in Hampshire.

The usual language of threat is put right up front: If we don't do this (presumably along with other service reductions yet to be announced) the risk is that HCC may declare bankruptcy. Let's look at this in context.

Since the 1970s, most of the Island's services have been outsourced by the Councils – energy, housing, drainage, water, hospital trusts – our Police Station was closed – and Hayling First Responders are now a charity. We have a 200-year-old road network, and a coast at high flood risk which suffers uncontrolled pollution. In addition, we already have two-week bin collections, and an additional cost for a garden waste bin.

The proposal document uses very selective statistics in its justification, and the major issues for Hayling are not recognised or addressed. The proposal also says that the distance that a resident has to cover to reach a Recycling Centre should be less than seven miles, and the travel time should be under 20 minutes. It is however reasonable to look at reducing the number of open days and the time available each day to align access with the demand profile, and to keep the costs to a minimum.

- The 20-minute travel time does not reflect the congestion on the A3023, and seemingly does not care how long it takes you to get back home (which can be the major problem here.) There are no statistics provided on the queuing times involved.
- Hayling is a major leisure destination for the area on the Havant Borough Council's (HBC) plans – look for this to continue to expand – which in turn will place more pressure on the restricted road infrastructure, and will increase the frequency and duration of periods of severe congestion. The 20 minutes travel time is probably the time to join the daisy chain on the site (see picture 1) which can be up to 50 cars, and even more when all the small sites are shut down.
- The Havant Recycling Centre is located on a toxic waste dump, just 100 mtrs from a tidal river. And this area is going to flood from the sea sometime before 2100, as predicted by the Environment Agency, which will necessitate its relocation somewhere north, which will exceed the target 7-mile limit. And of course, there will be no way back by then as the Hayling Island site will have been sold to a developer.

In addition, we believe, is the time for both Councils to cut their cloth. We know the UK Civil Service in total has grown by 100,000 employees since 2017. It is reasonable to ask if a similar growth occurred in HCC and HBC. We would like to see what cost reduction could be achieved with, let's say a 10, 20, 30% reduction in the permanent workforce in both Councils, and migrating to a member-led structure (Councillors) from the existing Officer-led (Civil Service) and refocus all activities on community needs.

We would encourage our sole County Councillor Lance Quantrill to lead a charge to prevent this additional burden proposed by the political masters being inflicted on a community which has done nothing to cause this problem.

PIC 1 SHOWING HAVANT RECYCLING CENTRE

