Waste Transfer Station

As you may be aware, Rossendale Borough Council (RBC) has submitted a Planning application for the redevelopment of the Henrietta Street Waste Transfer Station. Whilst it is healthy to encourage debate and receive constructive feedback and comment a number of misconceptions have been circulating and as such this document hopes to provide clear answers to some of the frequently asked questions.

Background

RBC is only a Waste Collection Authority, Lancashire County Council (LCC) is the Waste Disposal Authority and can instruct RBC where to take collected waste. Currently General Waste is disposed of at Whinney Hill Landfill at LCC's instruction. The Whinney Hill LCC contract ends on the 31 March 2026 and LCC have advised that if no other arrangements are in place, we will be instructed to take our General Waste to Farington – this is a 60-mile round trip and takes over 1 hour each way (not taking into account traffic issues).

Henrietta Street is a Registered Waste Transfer Station and has been operational as such since before 1997. Our current Waste Transfer Licence was granted in 1997. All of our fleet of Refuse Collection Vehicles are based at Henrietta Street. We currently collect 5 main waste streams.

- Glass Cans & Plastics – Bulked up on site at Henrietta Street and collected by LCC daily.
- Paper & Card – Bulked up on site at Henrietta Street and collected by LCC daily.
- Garden – disposed of directly at Brosters Environmental
- Residual – disposed of at Whinney Hill daily by RBC. The majority is taken directly to Whinney Hill but there are significant volumes bulked up at Henrietta Street
- Cleansing - Bulked up on site at Henrietta Street and taken to Darwen WTS

The Environment Act 2021 became law in November 2021, introducing changes to waste collection so that recyclable household waste (which includes food waste) must be 'collected separately from other household waste'.

If there any no alternative solution in place, we would be instructed to deliver directly into Farington all residual and food waste streams.

FAQ's

Waste Volume

We currently deal with around 25,000 tons of waste per year, this equates to 480 tons per week or 120 tons per day (majority of waste/recycling is collected Tuesday – Friday) – this waste is only collected in Rossendale. Whilst the application refers to 50,000 tons of waste, this is due to Environment Agency Bandings. Standard rules show a 75,000 Ton Band for max receivables. We are applying via the bespoke permitting rules and have specified a max of 50,000 rather than 75,000 Ton. However, **we do not anticipate increasing the current volumes of waste collected** significantly in the future (only the building of new houses would change the waste volumes). Whilst food waste will be collected via a dedicated collection it is currently disposed of in the residual waste so **there will be no overall increase. The site will not be collecting waste from outside Rossendale.**

Waste Processing

The site will not process waste in any way, it is and will continue to be a transfer site i.e. our bin wagons offload the waste, and this is then loaded onto a large HGV for transport to Farrington (for processing). **The purpose of the Transfer Station is to bulk up waste and reduce the number of vehicle movements. This reduces fuel usage, traffic congestion and carbon emissions and as such saves a significant amount of money.** Whilst the application states that waste may be onsite for 4 days this will be the exception, most waste will be offloaded by RBC Wagons one day and will be collected the following day, there will not be significant buildups of waste over a prolonged period. The site needs to have provision in place to cover for any problems in the collection schedule and as such the application must show that sufficient capacity is there to store waste for 4 days.

Odour

Currently waste is stored outside in the open air - the paper bay has a roof to stop the paper getting wet - and there is no form of odour suppression system in place. Glass Cans & Plastics, Paper & Card, Residual Waste and Street Sweepings are transferred through the site. There will be no change to the type of waste transferred through the site following development, whilst a dedicated Food Waste Collection will be introduced this waste is currently contained in the Residual Waste and as such no new waste (volume or type) will be collected.

Whilst there is odour omitted from the waste currently, which does get worse in summer, **by bringing the waste inside we will be able to contain the smell more**

effectively. The plans include provision for specialist odour control systems to be installed. The system proposed works on a negative air pressure – it sucks fresh air in from outside and forces the air from inside the building through Charcoal air filters. This technology is used effectively on a range of industrial buildings which emit significantly more odorous waste than is proposed in the Transfer Station. Whilst any current odour issues are minimal and localised, moving the transfer of all waste inside will dramatically improve the situation.

Unsightly / Waste Blowing round site and surrounding area

This is an ongoing challenge with the current site arrangements, as all waste transfer is undertaken in the open air there is waste blown around the site. When vehicles are loaded and unloaded there is the opportunity for light materials to be blown around and outside the site, equally when waste is piled up outside high winds can result in waste being blown outside the site boundary. One of the significant benefits of the new arrangements is that all waste will be transferred and stored inside the building. All vehicles will be loaded and unloaded in the building and waste will be stored within the building, meaning that **residents and other neighbours will not see piles of waste as they currently do.**

Vermin

Wherever waste is stored there will inevitably be some form of vermin, whilst the current site has a pest control contract in place which reduces any issues associated, **containing waste in a building will allow for much more effective pest control measures** to be put in place. The most obvious pest problem currently is birds. The current arrangements make it difficult to stop birds accessing piles of waste stored outside, moving waste inside a building will significantly reduce this issue. Equally any rat / mouse issues will be more effectively controlled in a building where access and egress routes can be more effectively monitored and solutions put in place. The nature of the waste being stored for short periods (mostly overnight) minimises vermin issues.

Noise

Again, all waste transfer takes place outside currently and as such there is no noise suppression. **By moving waste transfer activities inside this allows for the building to be designed with noise screening and will significantly reduce the noise from the site.** As the waste is not processed on site the main noise issue is vehicle movements – this will be significantly reduced by the building design and tipping and loading inside the building.

Flooding

The area of the site proposed for the new building has not experienced any flooding in the last 50 years. The building is proposed to be built at the top of the hill and ground level is more than 6 meters higher than Henrietta Street. To put this into context, the whole of the new Aldi building will need to be submerged before the river level reaches the proposed Waste Transfer Station building floor.

Whilst there is always a risk of surface water flooding, this is designed for in the building design. A completely new drainage system with waste interceptors will be built as part of the development.

Fire

Fire is always a risk in any building and the increased use of lithium-ion batteries increases the risk in a waste transfer site. Currently the site has no dedicated fire suppression systems (except fire extinguishers) as the waste is stored outside. **The new development has specialist fire suppression systems designed into the building**. The system is based around a water canon model, which uses significantly less water than a traditional sprinkler system and as such **minimises any pollution risk** – fire prevention water will be retained in the building for appropriate disposal.

Pollution

The current site has minimal protection in place in relation to pollution and this would be very difficult as the waste is stored outside. **By moving the waste transfer activities inside a purpose-built building, pollution prevention measures can be designed into the building.** The building will have a sealed high strength concrete foundation and push walls and will have specialist drainage systems which will include interceptors. The site will meet the latest Environment Agency design requirements.

Traffic

The majority of RBCs fleet of vehicles are based at Henrietta Street, the redevelopment will have minimal impact on vehicle movements. Half of the increase in vehicle movements (16 per day) relate to the introduction of 7.5-ton food waste collection vehicles. There will be an additional 4 visits either to or from the site by the 26-ton waste collection vehicles and an additional 8 visits (4 vehicles entering and exiting the site) by the LCC HGV half of which will be offset by us no longer using the RBC 32 Ton Hook loader

Location

The waste transfer station sits outside the Heritage Zone and Bacup town centre, it is surrounded on 2 sides by industrial units which are of a similar design to the building type proposed. Aldi are in the process of building their new supermarket next to the existing Waste Transfer Station and had full knowledge of the site usage when they chose their location for the supermarket. The Residual Waste storage area is currently outside and on full view from the Aldi car park. The redevelopment will move this further away from the Aldi site and enclose it in a building, meaning that it is no longer on view.

A number of sites have been considered by both RBC and LCC and Henrietta Street was the most suitable and currently operates as a Waste Transfer Station. Shared facilities with other East Lancashire local authorities have been considered but suitable locations could not be found that would be operationally viable.

The site is overlooked by 15 houses on Rochdale Road but currently these houses overlook the waste stored in the open air and all transfer activities are in full view. **The proposal is to move this activity inside the building, meaning that the view from the houses will just be of a building roof.** See pictures below.

Current view

Proposed view

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The new building will take advantage of Solar Panels on its roof - to cover the electric used in the building and also to generate income - and will have rainwater harvesting built in for the washing of vehicles etc. **The building will also significantly reduce our carbon footprint by drastically reducing the fuel usage of the fleet.**

Timing of application

LCC have dictated the timing of the project by discontinuing the use of Whinney Hill Landfill on the 31st of March 2026. This means that the redevelopment must be complete by this time, if not interim arrangements will need to be made. This would likely mean that we would need to **deliver all waste directly to Farrington in Leyland at a significant additional cost.** The planning application was made in November to ensure sufficient time was available in the project plan and build window to aim to meet these deadlines.

Any potential local government reorganisation in Lancashire is not expected to affect these plans. At present, no agreed proposals for reorganisation are in place. Regardless of any changes, the Waste Transfer Station remains a critical component of the waste collection infrastructure in Rossendale. Even if a Lancashire Waste Disposal Authority were established, the Waste Transfer Station would still be essential for consolidating waste before it is sent for further processing.