

(9xiv) **Mr J Bruce**

To the Chair of the Communities and Place Committee

“Across the Highlands, the vast majority of recycling centres are now open with the notable exception of Grantown and Kingussie. These appear to be the only sites which do not have a target reopening date. What is the particular issue in reopening these sites and is a target date available?”

A small number of household waste recycling centres (HWRCs) remain closed at this time. They are found in Badenoch and Strathspey and in Sutherland. They are all small sites with particular size and workforce constraints.

All HWRCs require new arrangements to be put in place for them operate safely. This includes covid compliant arrangements for staff and site users such as social distancing and traffic management. Before services re-open they require a risk assessment to be carried out with mitigation in place and agreement with Trade Unions. They also require staff availability. New arrangements require more staff on site, but our pool of staff is limited.

The waste management team is working hard to find solutions to open all centres. All centres opened have reduced hours as we also have a budget saving of £40k to make this year as agreed at Council in February 2019.

The two sites in Kingussie and Grantown are the only sites which previously had weekend opening only and staffing at the weekends is more problematic. The site layout and difficult access road in Grantown and the small site area at Kingussie limit the opportunity to apply adequate control measures to ensure physical distancing is maintained.

Measures continue to be taken to return HWRC's back to being closer to normal, this includes increasing times to accommodate weekend opening. We are targeting increased opening by the end of August, Grantown and Kingussie are on the same timeline as other sites for the reintroduction of some weekend opening. The discussions with Members in Badenoch and Strathspey on 17th July clarified some re-opening options.