

## Record of Decision

Key Decision	Work Programme Reference
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1. **TITLE:** Materials Reclamation Facility (MRF)
2. **SERVICE AREA:**
3. **DECISION MADE BY:** Director (DB)
4. **IN CONSULTATION WITH** Portfolio Holder for Place
5. **DECISION:**

To allocate £10,600 of capital funding as an emergency measure for replacement of the air compressor at the Council's Materials Reclamation Facility (MRF). This will be implemented with urgency as an unforeseen circumstance, with a report to follow at Executive Committee.

### 6. REASON FOR DECISION

This equipment provides a regulated supply of dried compressed air to two critical pieces of sorting equipment at the MRF: The Titech near-infra red optical sorter that separates packaging materials from paper, and the 'air blade' that further sorts plastic film from other polymers. This enables mixed recycling to be sorted into steel, aluminium, paper, card and 5 separate streams of plastic for sale to reprocessors at the best price.

The existing compressor is part of the original equipment installed at the MRF in 2001 and has exceeded its designed life span. In response to recent breakdowns, advice from our engineer has been sought and two quotes for effective repairs actually exceed the purchase cost of new equipment.

Without a functioning air compressor the MRF is unable to operate effectively and sort materials to a standard required to maintain current net income levels, which are already forecast to be £50,000 lower than the budget for 2017/18.

Repeated breakdowns are affecting the service by requiring frequent input of manager time, and MRF Operatives being asked to work harder to make up for downtime on the optical sorter, increasing the risk of manual handling strain.

If the Council proceeds with food waste recycling, an air compressor will still be required for sorting of plastics, cans and contaminants and whether we choose the 'Option 3' or 'Option 4' scenarios for the collection of food waste and dry recycling. Therefore there is no risk of this equipment being replaced and then not needed.

### 7. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

In the event of a total breakdown of the existing compressor, a mobile unit may be hired for £170 per week. However, this is only sustainable as a short term measure for two reasons:

- (i) The diesel fumes generated by a mobile compressor would blow across a pedestrian walkway and staff car park
- (ii) A mobile compressor does not regulate the supply of air to match the requirements of the air drier and optical sorter. As a result, the drier and optical sorter would suffer increased wear and potentially shorten their operational life.

Operating without a reliable air compressor would greatly reduce our capacity to sort recyclates resulting in a significant drop in income received. Alternatively, to reduce the work of the air powered sorting equipment with manual labour is not feasible because there is no cabin space to accommodate the additional four FTEs that would be required.

Therefore replacement of the existing compressor is the most cost-effective solution. From placement of an order, delivery and installation will take 6-8 weeks. During this period, the MRF Manager will operate the existing compressor as long as it is practicable. In the event of total failure, which can occur at any time, a mobile compressor will be hired as a short term measure.

- 8. **PRINCIPAL GROUPS CONSULTED:** Matt Hulland, MRF Manager  
Simon Hill, Cleansing and Fleet Manager
- 9. **DOCUMENT CONSIDERED:** Quotations for new compressor and repair of existing unit
- 10. **DECLARED CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:** NA
- 11. **DISPENSATIONS GRANTED:** NA

<b>Decision Number</b>	<b>Date of Decision Made</b>	<b>Date decision will be implemented</b>
14	24/10/2017	24/10/2017