

Report to Cabinet

15 September 2026



Improving Safety and Welfare Infrastructure at Knutton Lane Depot

Lead Member:

Cllr Ben Simpson – Cabinet Member for Waste Recycling & Green Spaces

Lead Officer:

Andrew Bird – Service Director, Sustainable Environment

Key Decision: Yes

Ward(s): None

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – site layout

Appendix 2 – internal refurbishment of welfare facilities.

Report Assurance:

	Name	Date
Lead Officer	Andrew Bird	19/8/26
Monitoring Officer	Olwen Brown	7/9/26
Section 151	Craig Turner	7/9/26
Chief Executive	Gordon Mole	27/8/26
Cabinet Member	Ben Simpson	

Report Summary

The Knutton Lane Depot requires substantial refurbishment due to its age and a prolonged period of underinvestment. Improvements are needed to enhance health and safety standards, particularly through the effective segregation of pedestrians from moving vehicles and plant machinery, as well as upgrades to site lighting and security measures.

In addition, the existing welfare facilities, including toilets, showers, and canteen areas, are outdated and no longer meet the standards expected of a modern workplace. Investment is required to provide high-quality welfare infrastructure that supports employee wellbeing and reflects the challenging conditions in which many staff work.

Recommendations

That Cabinet:

1. Approves the works and budget necessary to refurbish and upgrade the Knutton Lane depot to improve health & safety welfare and the working environment identified.
2. Authorises the Service Director – Sustainable Environment, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Waste, Recycling and Green Spaces, to approve the final design having considered the costs, and to award contracts for the improvement works to the Knutton Lane depot facility to the lowest suitable tender subject to the full costs falling within the available budget.

1. Background

- 1.1. Knutton Lane depot was constructed in the 1960's and has been altered in terms of some of the functions undertaken as operations have changed and developed over the decades since it was built. In some instances, (waste and recycling materials bulking and transfer being a good example), buildings are now being used for operations they were never designed or intended for. Likewise, much of the operational welfare facilities and offices are of poor quality and create a poor working environment.
- 1.2. The Council undertook a stock condition survey in 2018, which was reviewed in 2020. This looked at the potential investment needed in 2020/21 then the following 10 years. Annual spend varied between £100k to £300k but the overall total was £2m. It should be noted that this included not only urgent repairs but also overall improvements. Much of the work identified in the 2018 stock condition survey remains to be actioned, with some elements decaying further.
- 1.3. The site is a busy operational facility with many vehicle and plant movements. In addition, around 150 staff are based and work out of the depot delivering frontline operational services in recycling & waste and Streetscene services. The site also operates a waste transfer station and garage workshop which maintains the council's vehicle and plant fleet.
- 1.4. Regardless of LGR the site will remain a strategic part of the delivery infrastructure.
- 1.5. Waste sites are one of the most hazardous working environments in the country and feature highly on the HSE's radar for compliance. Many industrial injuries, and unfortunately fatalities involve people coming into contact with machinery and vehicles. Segregation of moving vehicles and plant from people is paramount in site design and control measures put in place to minimise the risks associated with these sites.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. The project's aims fall into two distinct areas, firstly tackling priority health & safety concerns with new and additional control measures to reduce risks outlined in paragraph 1.4 above. In practice these works involve resurfacing, significant upgrading in lighting, line marking and upgrading CCTV infrastructure.
- 2.2. The second area will see improvements around the welfare and working environment. Current welfare facilities are extremely poor and compare poorly with similar facilities within the industry in the public and private sectors. These works will concentrate on refurbishment and upgrading of the welfare facilities including toilets showers and canteen areas and creation of workspace for management and supervision of the recycling and waste service. Further works involves the refurbishment of the rest of the office building including the first floor and providing office and training room facilities.
- 2.3. Additionally, this phase will also look to improve heating and cooling infrastructure in the welfare and office buildings.
- 2.4. These works are necessary to provide a safe and efficient working environment for employees providing front line statutory services.
- 2.5. The works will be delivered in phases over the next 12 months as set out below.
- 2.6. Phase 1 will deal with the most urgent Health & Safety related issues, including upgrading CCTV systems, extensive line marking across the whole depot, additional barriers to keep people and moving vehicles apart, and replacement and upgraded lighting. Phase 1 works will commence in October to be fully completed in early 2027
- 2.7. Phase 2 will consist of upgrades to the welfare and office working conditions, consisting of complete refurbishment of the canteen, toilets and showers, installation of air conditioning where required and redecoration of all office and welfare areas. Phase 2 works will commence on completion of phase 1 in April 2027.
- 2.8. Planning permission for all the proposed works has been obtained.

3. Strategic Approach

- 3.1. Knutton Lane Depot is a strategic operational facility for the Borough Council, with many of its front-line statutory services operating out of it. The services the Council provides to residents and businesses need to be efficient and effective and of high quality. To help in delivery of these key frontline services, the depot needs to be a safe environment for employees given the complex mix of activities undertaken on the site with many vehicle movements and handling recycling and waste materials for onward processing destinations.
- 3.2. Given the work undertaken by the front-line services, a higher standard of welfare facilities needs to be provided, which are warm and comfortable in winter and cool in the summer. They need to be easily cleaned and maintained and create a sense of ownership by employees based at the facility. This project will enhance the working environment of the depot and further improve Health and Safety measures and controls.

4. Finance & Resources

- 4.1. There are significant financial and resource implications associated with this project.

- 4.2. Works are anticipated to take around 10 months to complete all phases of the project commencing in the autumn of 2026. Project spend will be over 2 financial years 2026/27 and 2027/28. The majority of the spend will fall in 2027/28, which follows the profile of the Councils Capital Programme.
- 4.3. There is £600,000 earmarked in the Councils Capital Programme for the depot to be spent over two financial years 2026/27 and 2027/28. Refurbishment works will not rise above this figure.
- 4.4. Potential escalating costs for the whole of the project are the main risk to delivery, however the phasing of the project into distinct lots will allow careful management of the budget.

5. Legal & Governance

- 5.1. Under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974. It is the duty of every employer to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all its employees. The matters to which that duty extends include in particular —
 - So far as is reasonably practicable as regards any place of work under the employer's control, the maintenance of it in a condition that is safe and without risks to health and the provision and maintenance of means of access to and egress from it that are safe and without such risks;
 - The provision and maintenance of a working environment for his employees that is, so far as is reasonably practicable, safe, without risks to health, and adequate as regards facilities and arrangements for their welfare at work.
- 5.2. The depot provides a strategic operating centre from which several statutory frontline services are delivered.
- 5.3. Poor working conditions have featured in staff surveys for employees working from the depot premises. The poor state of repair in several areas together with tired facilities in terms of toilets and showers together with welfare areas which need addressing. Continuing to do nothing with the depot facility, patch and repairing where necessary, simply delays the point at which significant expenditure is required.

6. Supporting Information

6.1 None