

What are the arguments for moving the Waste Transfer Station and Materials Recovery Facility from Hollingdean Depot?

ChatGPT said:

There are several compelling arguments for relocating the Waste Transfer Station (WTS) and Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) from the Hollingdean Depot — especially in the context of broader regeneration goals, improved waste management strategy, and community priorities.

1. Strategic Urban Regeneration

- **Prime redevelopment opportunity:** Hollingdean Depot occupies a large, well-located site in inner Brighton with potential for **high-density, sustainable housing** and **greenspace**.
- **Aligns with housing targets:** Moving the facility unlocks land for ~300 homes, helping meet **Brighton & Hove's housing needs** without expanding into the South Downs or greenfield areas.
- **Community benefit:** Replacing a heavy industrial use with housing, parks, and community facilities enhances the **quality of life** for surrounding residents.

2. Health and Environmental Justice

- **Air quality concerns:** Waste trucks accessing the site increase **traffic congestion and localised air pollution**, especially on narrow residential streets like Upper Hollingdean Road.
- **Noise and odour:** Despite mitigation, residents report ongoing **noise, smell, and visual impacts** from the site, which is adjacent to schools, homes, and green spaces.
- **Environmental inequality:** Industrial land uses disproportionately affect lower-income areas — relocating supports a **more equitable urban environment**.

3. Operational Inefficiency

- **Constrained site:** The depot is **physically limited** by surrounding development, steep terrain, and narrow access roads, making expansion or modernisation difficult.
- **Inefficient routing:** Waste vehicles have to navigate dense urban streets — adding fuel use, time, and risk — whereas a new site could be located near **arterial roads (A27, A23)**.
- **Disconnection from other infrastructure:** Current site lacks proximity to complementary facilities like Newhaven ERF or strategic transport hubs.



4. Future-Proofing Waste Strategy

- **Net-zero and circular economy goals:** Brighton & Hove, and wider Sussex, aim to **decarbonise waste operations** — this requires **modern infrastructure**, potentially including:
 - Anaerobic digestion
 - Advanced MRFs with robotic sorting
 - Direct link to waste-to-energy or rail freight
- **Regional integration:** As a **larger unitary authority** forms, consolidating and modernising waste infrastructure becomes more feasible — and Hollingdean may no longer be optimal.



5. Political and Community Momentum

- **Long-standing local pressure:** Residents have campaigned for years for the depot's relocation, citing poor consultation and ongoing environmental harms.
- **Planning consistency:** Brighton & Hove City Plan supports **urban intensification**, active transport, and sustainable neighbourhoods — incompatible with continued heavy waste use at this site.
- **Partnership opportunities:** A Sussex-wide waste plan opens the door to **shared facilities** in less sensitive locations, funded regionally or with national grants.



Common Counterarguments (and Responses)

Objection	Response
“Relocation is costly”	True, but offset by land value uplift, new homes, and operational
“Site already exists and works”	It functions, but at a high social and environmental cost; long-term inefficiencies grow
“Finding a new site is politically difficult”	Broader Sussex authority allows more strategic siting with less public resistance

Here is a **draft policy brief** to support the relocation of the Hollingdean Waste Transfer Station and Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) as part of a broader regeneration and regional waste strategy:



Policy Brief: Relocation of Hollingdean Waste Facilities for Sustainable Regeneration and Regional Waste Resilience

Executive Summary

This brief proposes the relocation of the Waste Transfer Station (WTS) and Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) currently located at **Hollingdean Depot, Brighton**, in order to enable the creation of **sympathetic, low-carbon housing** with integrated **greenspace**, while advancing a **regional, future-ready waste infrastructure** for the new **Sussex Unitary Authority**.

The proposal aligns with strategic goals for **housing delivery, environmental justice, carbon reduction**, and **operational efficiency** across the East and West Sussex region.

1. Rationale for Relocation

A. Urban Regeneration and Housing Need

- The depot occupies a high-potential site in central Brighton, suitable for ~300 homes.
- Proposed development would integrate public greenspace, low-impact architecture, and active travel routes.
- Unlocking the site helps meet urgent housing targets without greenbelt incursion.

B. Environmental and Health Justice

- Current operations contribute to noise, odour, and pollution in a densely populated neighbourhood.
- Residents, schools, and green corridors (including the nearby golf course and allotments) are negatively affected.
- Relocation addresses a long-standing environmental injustice in a disadvantaged area.

C. Waste Strategy Modernisation

- Hollingdean's constrained site lacks room for innovation or scale.
- A regional site could integrate:
 - Robotic recycling technologies

- Rail or barge transfer
- Renewable energy integration
- Anaerobic digestion or other circular economy tools
- Future waste resilience depends on **centralised, strategic sites**, not legacy urban locations.

2. Strategic Fit with Sussex-Wide Governance

With the creation of a **unitary Sussex authority**, there is an opportunity to:

- Consolidate waste infrastructure and reduce duplication
- Share costs and benefits regionally
- Re-site operations on **better-connected, less-sensitive land**, such as:
 - **Newhaven ERF** (expansion)
 - **Ford Eco-Park** (West Sussex)
 - **Polegate/Hailsham corridor** (East Sussex)
 - **Shoreham Cement Works** (long-term reuse)

These sites offer access to the **A27/A23 corridors**, larger land parcels, and fewer residential conflicts.

3. Economic and Delivery Considerations

Costs & Offsetting

- Relocation cost: Estimated £30–£40 million
- Offsetting sources:
 - Land sale or partnership for housing delivery (~£10–15 million value uplift)
 - Capital grants from DEFRA or Homes England
 - Regional investment funds for net-zero waste infrastructure

Phased Approach

1. Identify and secure strategic relocation site (in coordination with new unitary plan)
2. Decommission and clean up Hollingdean Depot
3. Launch housing and greenspace redevelopment, aligned with City Plan policies

4. Policy Recommendations

1. **Instruct a joint strategic waste review** across Sussex to identify shared facility opportunities.
2. **Designate Hollingdean Depot as a regeneration priority site** in the updated Local Plan.
3. **Engage Homes England and DLUHC** to explore co-funding for relocation and housing.
4. **Launch public consultation** in Brighton and regional authorities to co-develop relocation principles.

Conclusion

Relocating the WTS and MRF from Hollingdean is a **catalyst for social, environmental, and regional progress**. It enables vital urban regeneration, protects communities from pollution, and lays the foundation for a smarter, more resilient waste system fit for the future of a unified Sussex.

Return to https://roundhill.org.uk/main?sec=planning&p=Hollingdean_Depot