

East Lothian councillors vote by majority to shut recycling centre

East Lothian councillors backed a decision to close a recycling centre for good at a private meeting this afternoon after being told it was 'surplus to requirements'.

Nearly 2,000 people signed a petition demanding the Macmerry centre was reopened after it was mothballed a year ago.

However councillors were asked by officers to shut it down with a saving of around £62,000 a year estimated from its closure. The local authority has three other sites at North Berwick, Dunbar and Musselburgh.

Discussions over the proposal were held in private due, the council said, to 'commercially sensitive' information surrounding the disposal of the site.

Following the decision, which it is understood was passed by a majority of 17 votes to three with Conservative councillors opposing the decision, council leader Norman Hampshire said: "This was a very tough decision to take."

He added: "East Lothian receives one of the lowest funding settlements per head of population in Scotland. With rising costs and less money available to us overall, the council has had to look at ways of reducing costs in the face of an

extremely difficult financial climate.

“We are grateful to residents for their understanding since the site at Macmerry was mothballed. Although I know that many people would have preferred to see the recycling centre at Macmerry stay open, we continue to operate facilities elsewhere, in addition to our household uplift services including the weekly recycling collection service.

“We hope that the ultimate disposal of the site within the industrial estate will result in benefits for the local economy.”

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter