



Portsmouth
CITY COUNCIL

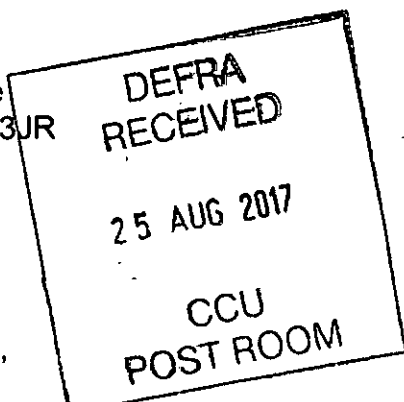
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Our Ref: DJOUTTBC

Date: 22nd August 2017

Dr Thérèse Coffey MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
Department for Environment, Food &
Rural Affairs
Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London SW1P 3JR



Dear Thérèse,

RE: Household Recycling

Thank you for your letter dated 27th July, and subsequently [REDACTED] letter dated 31st July which was sent to the Waste Manager, regarding the recycling rate for Portsmouth City Council. I have set out below the City's current progress and challenges as requested.

What is working well?

As part of Project Integra, Portsmouth disposes of its collected waste at an Energy recovery facility (we have one of the lowest landfill use rates).

We are the most densely populated City outside of London and therefore do not include as much green waste in our recycling as more suburban areas.

We operate a weekly refuse (sack) collection and fortnightly recycling (container) collection service, with a network of bring banks for glass, textiles, books, etc. across the City. Our waste collection contractor also operates a Green Waste Club (2013) which has over 7000 members.

As a collection and disposal authority we are motivated to reduce waste and improve recycling capture as we are responsible for all of the costs for these services. As such, we are currently working with our collection contractor and experimenting with changes to collections to reduce waste tonnage and improve recycling rates. These trials include limiting waste capacity using a wheelie bin, or reusable sack. We have 2 trials underway - both of which are delivering a substantial reduction in waste tonnage along with increases in recycling.

We have 5 further trials to deliver over the next 6 months where we hope to deliver similar improvements. The collection contract is 8+2 (started in Oct 2011 and runs for 8 years with a 2yr extension option).

We have recently made changes to how we monitor contamination to recycling and hope to see less contaminated materials collected going forward.

Are there any particular reasons affecting waste and recycling locally to you?

There are challenges in adding materials into the recycling stream - Portsmouth is part of a Hampshire wide disposal contract - infrastructure (including Energy recovery facilities, material recovery facilities) were commissioned in 1997 based on sustainable markets at that time - this was one of the first projects in the Country and did lead to substantial Landfill diversion.

Since the start of the contract we have added in:

- Aerosols (kerbside collection)
- Streets sweepings

As part of Project Integra, we are currently reviewing options to see if we can improve our infrastructure to target more materials. Feasibility of this is dependent on costs and sustainable markets.

In Portsmouth we have a large student population which is transient in nature with students coming from all over the world where recycling services may vary. This is an issue, although there are approx. 3100 new purpose built student units being built in the City with a further 2500 expected in the next 5 years. This may address some of these issues.

Are there obstacles outside your authority's control that may affect the recycling rate?

- Limited opportunities to add other items into the stream - cost prohibitive to retro-fit infrastructure
- Packaging
- Hampshire wide contract - long term contracts (waste disposal contract ends 2030) requiring massive investment at the outset - difficult to make changes as markets and technology change
- (Incinerator Bottom Ash) IBA - This is a by-product of incineration which is recycled in that it is reprocessed to be used as an aggregate. This aggregate is used in construction projects across Hampshire. If this was also included in the calculation of the recycling rate this would add approximately 10% to the Hampshire wide rate and we could expect a similar increase in Portsmouth
- Lack of useful enforcement powers related to waste - previously had section 46 of EPA 1990 which enabled us to penalise people who regularly disregarded the waste presentation guidance (early waste, side waste, waste types) in the City. The replacement is section 46a which reduces the burden on the householder and increases the burden on the local authority at a time when staff numbers have been reduced. It is an onerous process which does not quickly address the issues that incorrect presentation produces - such as split bags from early waste which impacts on residents and street cleansing. Whilst our emphasis is always on engagement

and education, we feel that the 46a is of limited use in helping to address such issues.

- Instability of the markets - this is always a concern for existing targeted materials but also a concern when considering large capital projects. For example: inclusion of PTTs - we do not currently target this material. The markets for this are a concern in ensuring we have a sustainable market ready to receive this product.
- Money to invest in capital projects.

Over the longer term, what are the biggest challenges and opportunities you see in driving recycling improvements locally?

- Lack of infrastructure in the UK - the UK has a lack of Refuse Derived Fuel (RDF) plants and the only Tetrapak processing plant in the country is in Halifax - Haulage makes accessing these plants cost prohibitive.
- There is a lack of a coherent waste strategy in England guiding local authorities to where we need to get to.

I hope this gives you an overview of the current situation in Portsmouth and what we are doing to try and improve it. We are committed to increasing recycling rates across the city. We continue to use a variety of methods to encourage recycling including various campaigns and incentivised competitions. We hope the trial of black wheelie bins (to replace black sack collections), proves popular. We have made clear to residents that the cost of retrofitting lifts on waste collection trucks can only be paid for by the cost savings of incinerating less household waste and generating more income from recycling rates increasing. Numerous neighbours across the city have requested the black wheelie bins as it reduces foxes ripping black sacks, so there is a real incentive to drive change in behaviours.

I will keep you updated on trials and the improvement in recycling rates in Portsmouth.

Yours sincerely,



Councillor Donna Jones
Leader of the Council

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