



Lewes District Council

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Dr Therese Coffey MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
Department for Environmental &
Rural Affairs
Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London SW1P 3JR

(By email to [REDACTED])

16 August 2017

Dear Dr Coffey

Recycling Rates

Thank you for recent correspondence regarding recycling rates at Lewes District Council (LDC). This is very timely as my administration shares your concern about current low levels of participation in recycling.

In terms of waste reduction objectives, residual waste per household is below average in our district (LDC is 512kg/household with the England average at 564kg/household), and total collected household waste per person is one of the lowest in the country (10th lowest in England in 15/16, at 286kg/person, with the average being 365kg/person).

Nevertheless, we know our recycling rates must improve.

One of the lessons from high-performing local authorities is that behaviour change comes with simpler collection and so we are about to move from a complicated 'kerbside sort' method to fully co-mingled recycling. This follows a survey last autumn which provided clear feedback that residents would like to be able to recycle more materials and would prefer a simpler collection system.

I will shortly be able to announce the award of a recycling disposal contract and the roll-out of a new recycling service across the district to be completed by May 2018. I would welcome any opportunity for advice and support in this endeavour. As part of this roll-out we will provide a 240 litre wheeled lidded bin as standard (with variations for property types where this would not be suitable). These will keep materials clean and dry and allow a greater capacity for material than the current mix of bags and boxes. We will be able to pick up a wider range of materials for re-processing, including pots, tubs and food trays, thus diverting more waste from the residual stream.

This disposal contract is to 2019 with the option of extending by a year. It is deliberately short-term in order that Lewes District Council can potentially fall in with the arrangements of the other waste collection authorities (WCAs) in East Sussex when their current joint contract ends in June 2019. In the interim, Lewes District will continue developing options

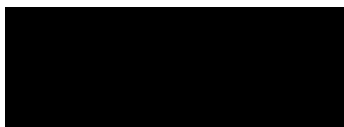
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in partnership with East Sussex County Council, as waste disposal authority, to improve the recycling disposal offer to the WCAs. Having certainty in our local recycling disposal infrastructure is important, given the high costs of collection and fluctuating commodity markets.

In addition to a new dry mixed recycling service, due to start this autumn, my administration has introduced chargeable garden waste collections over the last two years, which are proving popular with customers. This new stream of recyclable material collected doubled to 1% of total household waste from 2015/16 to 2016/17 and looks set to increase over time as more residents sign up.

Alongside the weekly residual waste, LDC offers a weekly food waste collection service. Despite creative food recycling promotions and campaigns, food waste accounts for only approximately 3% of recycling and most food waste still goes into the household bin bound for the incinerator. This service tends to be more popular when residual waste is collected less frequently than once a week.

Yours sincerely



Cllr Andy Smith
Leader of Lewes District Council