



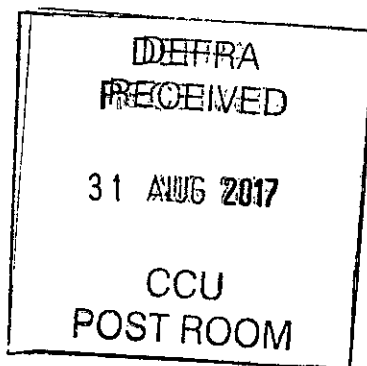
GOSPORT

Borough Council

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DEFRA
Dr Therese Coffey MP
Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London
SW1P 3JR



Councillor Mark Hook
Leader of the Council

Ref: Household Recycling

24 August 2017

Dear Dr Coffey

Re: HOUSEHOLD RECYCLING

I refer to a letter received from DEFRA dated 27th July 2017 regarding Gosport Borough Council's recycling rates.

The Council is a member of Project Integra, Hampshire's local authority waste partnership. Through close working between Hampshire's waste collection and disposal authorities which led to development of a suite of waste infrastructure, we have one of the best landfill diversion rates in the England. In 2016-17, Hampshire sent just 6% of municipal waste to landfill, making a significant contribution to the UK meeting its targets for diversion of Biodegradable Municipal Waste.

By disposing of waste at an energy recovery facility, the council is helping to generate electricity for 52,000 homes.

Although it is difficult to accurately compare with other authorities outside of Hampshire, cost modelling that has been completed by Project Integra suggests that the average combined service cost for Hampshire councils is below the average cost per household for England.

In January 2016, a MORI satisfaction survey revealed that, overall; Hampshire residents were more satisfied with their waste and recycling services than the UK average. In particular, the percentages of residents satisfied or very satisfied with the reliability of services was very high. Gosport achieved a 90% satisfaction rate from its residents.

When considering the amount of total waste produced in Hampshire households, Hampshire authorities perform well. For example, in 2015/16, all Hampshire district

councils were ranked in the top 60 authorities out of 228 in England with comparable data. Gosport was ranked 8th.

The recycling services provided by the Council consist of

- a fortnightly co-mingled kerbside collection for paper, cardboard, cans and plastic bottles for all households
- a chargeable fortnightly kerbside collection of garden waste
- recycling banks located throughout the Borough for glass, paper, textiles, shoes, books, dvd's and CD's
- small number of on street recycling bins located next to on street litter bins

Material collected by street sweepers is also now being recycled and will be reflected in the 17-18 data.

A change of collection method used for garden waste collections planned for February 2018 will see the introduction of a wheeled bin for residents to use. Residents will pay an annual subscription rather than purchasing individual sacks as at present and it is hoped this will encourage greater participation in the scheme, impacting positively on our recycling rates from 2018 – 2019 onwards.

There is a desire to introduce a kerbside glass collection however the cost of doing so has to date been prohibitive to the authority. The current low price for glass makes investment in a kerbside collection less economical.

The waste disposal authorities in Hampshire have a long term integrated waste disposal contract which currently handles the disposal of residual waste and the processing of collected recyclables. The contract length and cost of investment in infrastructure is such that it can be difficult to pursue some opportunities as markets and technologies change. However, the contract has been extended to 2030, which creates an opportunity to look again at the type and configuration of waste infrastructure that we have, with view to both reducing costs and increasing recycling. Feasibility of this is dependent on costs and sustainable markets.

Hampshire's Energy Recovery Facilities produce a by-product known as Incinerator Bottom Ash (IBA). This material is recycled as a building aggregate and used in construction projects across Hampshire. Current recycling rate definitions do not allow us to include this material in measures of recycling rate, but if they did, this would add to recycling rates, Gosport Borough Council's amounted to 14.22.

Instability of the markets - this is always a concern for existing targeted materials but also a concern when considering large capital projects. For example, the inclusion of plastic pots, tubs and trays (PTT) in recycling. Despite inclusion of PTT in WRAP's recent consistency framework, we are not clear that there are currently viable end markets for the bulk (c.75%) this material.

A significant proportion of Hampshire waste is packaging, much of which can be recycled. However much of it is material that cannot be recycled in an economical way – in particular, new types of hybrid materials (e.g. cat food pouches that are a mix of aluminium and plastic) that have no established route for recycling. Packaging trends can change quite quickly, which doesn't align with the time frames for developing or altering waste collection and disposal infrastructure.

WRAP's recent annual report on waste facility gate fees showed another increase in gate fees at Anaerobic Digestion (AD) facilities. Hampshire's early adoption (in the 1990s) of a landfill diversion strategy has led to a cost-effective method of recovering value from residual waste, and the economics of food waste collection and disposal are not conducive to separating this out for separate processing.

A vital element of any scheme is promotion and education to encourage correct participation. Past experience has proven where resources were available, targeted communications and visiting properties yield positive responses and increased recycling rates. Unfortunately this financial commitment to the service cannot be maintained due to budget restrictions and the reduction of staff numbers in this service area has made these tasks more difficult, if not impossible to perform.

The UK's devolved Governments, in particular Wales and Scotland, have provided councils with a clear and coherent strategy for future management of waste and resources and funding with which to deliver it. This has helped to develop relevant infrastructure and incentives for Councils to improve performance. England would benefit from a similar approach.

Balancing the investment required in new services with the need to balance council budgets and maintain high quality local services to our residents.

Further infrastructure development is needed – for example, the processing capacity for plastics is limited, and without a viable market this makes it difficult to justify collecting a wider range of materials. This situation would be helped by introducing drivers to incentivise producers to include recycled feedstock (secondary raw materials as opposed to virgin) in next generation products.

Split responsibilities for waste management over two tiers of local government doesn't always allow for a full "Whole System Cost" approach.

Yours sincerely

