

COUNCIL MEETING – 11 DECEMBER 2018

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

Question from Councillor Mrs C. Brooks to the Chairman of the Leisure & Environment Committee:

At the Full Council Meeting held on 10th April 2018 the following motion was carried unanimously:

“Newark and Sherwood District Council as a waste collecting authority:

- Support the growing national campaign to highlight the dangers of single use plastics to our environment especially our oceans;
- That we commit to work with our waste management partners, Nottinghamshire County Council and Veolia, to maximise the amount of plastic and other materials which can be recycled;
- We review and reduce our reliance on single use plastics throughout the Council’s services and encourage others to do the same and to use alternative materials wherever possible;
- Agrees that a paper is bought to the Council’s Leisure and Environment Committee on how we progress these objectives.”

Could we have a report on what measures have been taken to action the above, and what progress if any, has been made against each of these objectives?

Reply from Councillor R. Jackson:

The Council issued a press release to all local media in April of this year on the motion adopted by this authority to maximise the amount of plastic and other materials which can be recycled and to work and support the growing national campaign to highlight the dangers of single use plastics to our environment, especially our oceans. This was also communicated internally to all our staff and our companies, Newark and Sherwood Homes and Active4Today.

We have further utilised the reach of social media, namely Facebook and Twitter, to emphasise messages around the subject and constantly look for opportunities to convey these messages to our customers and residents. Recently, the Council provided information to every household in Newark and Sherwood to further increase the understanding of the importance of household recycling, and to reduce bin contamination and improve recycling rates, including plastics. Such messages have also been put on all our website and through the publication of our residents’ magazine, the Voice.

Working with the County Council, we supplied a joint response to HM Treasury’s consultation on single use plastics and ‘on the go’ plastic waste. Off the back of this consultation, it was announced in the budget that the Packaging Recovery Note (PRN) system is to be reviewed as well as a tax to be implemented on single use plastics containing less than 30% recycled plastic.

It is important that we lobby for food and carton manufacturers to use only recyclable, reusable or compostable materials in their products, as some manufacturers are doing after public pressure.

In relation to the relationship with Nottinghamshire County Council, who are the waste disposal authority, and Veolia, we are unfortunately tied to the contract NCC has with Veolia, which runs until 2032. Unless the National Waste Strategy, which is due to be published imminently by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, provides a significant incentive for change, it is unlikely that this input specification will be altered. We have been working with NCC, Veolia and other Nottinghamshire authorities to increase the participation rate in our existing recycling services. The new household guidance, delivered as part of the Cleaner, Safer and Greener campaign, details what can be recycled and encourages the recycling of commonly missed items such as shampoo bottles.

Internally, recycling facilities are available throughout Castle House and the Brunel Drive Depot, whilst multiple water fountains are available for employees to encourage the use of re-fillable bottles. Through the Council's contract procedure rules, procurement policy and guide to sustainable procurement, officers are required to consider the social, economic and environmental impacts when procuring goods, services and works on behalf of the Council.

A report was brought to the November meeting of the Leisure and Environment Committee updating members on the work to date on the Cleaner, Safer and Greener campaign. As well as updating members on a number of issues contained in this reply, the report was also noted that almost 33 per cent of the 45,000 tonnes of waste collected by the Council is recycled. This is up four percentage points from 2015/16 and is the highest figure achieved by the Council.