

LEISURE & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

22 SEPTEMBER 2020

RESPONSE TO RECYCLING PETITION

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 At the end of 2019 Newark and Sherwood District Council received a petition organised by a resident of North Muskham Claire Kay. Claire is extremely active in her local community and is a keen advocate of recycling and environmental issues and her concerns align with the council's stance on climate change.
- 1.2 Although the petition did not reach the required levels of support to be heard at full council we thought it was important to bring it to the attention of members as it does highlight some of the issues we face and the views of many residents.
- 1.3 The full text of the petition is included as an appendix to this report but we wanted to increase awareness of the actions that have been taken in response to the concerns raised. I've summarised the concerns below.

2.0 Plastic Recycling

- 2.1 The petition states that residents cannot recycle bottles and most plastics in the kerbside recycling bin. This is incorrect Newark and Sherwood residents can recycle bottles including cleaning products and shampoo bottles etc. within the silver bin.
- 2.2 It has been a long running concern that Nottinghamshire County Councils contract with Veolia does not allow for a broader mix of plastic collection; however we do appreciate their concerns that due to a lack of UK based recycling infrastructure there is low demand for pots, tubs and trays, therefore by sending them to energy recovery they remove the risk of them ending up as a problem in another country. It is hoped that the changes outlined in Central Government's Waste and Resources Strategy will help to tackle this and we will continue to work with both Nottinghamshire County Council and the wider Nottinghamshire waste Partnership to ensure the range of materials that can be recycled is increased.

3.0 Milk Cartons

Mrs Kay brought to our attention that many of the primary schools in the area who work with a company called Cool Milk were providing many key stage 1 children with individual milk cartons. Although recycling facilities for these cartons do exist within the district cartons are not recyclable through the Veolia contract. This is again a problem born from poor product design and a lack of infrastructure. Cartons are composite items typically formed from layers of cardboard metal and plastic and separating those layers is difficult. With Mrs Kay's assistance we have worked with Cool Milk to tackle this issue since it was brought to our attention. 14 schools had made the switch to reusable cups and recyclable

milk bottles (pre lockdown) and 46 schools have taken advantage of our schools recycling service.

4.0 Food, Glass and other items

4.1 Members may be aware from a previous report that Central Government issued the Waste and Resources Strategy in 2018 which has significant implications for local authorities from 2023. Among other things food, glass and mixed plastics will have to be collected kerbside and there are a number of other policy measures in development resulting from the Environment Bill which should contribute to the circular economy, these include taxes on non-reusable plastics and a deposit and return scheme.

5.0 Communication and Education

5.1 Recycling information has been sent out to households in the district on several occasions but we understand that more needs to be done to increase awareness both of what items can go into the recycling bins and where to recycle other materials around the district. Following the recent re-structure the Environmental Services Team now has the capacity and the roles to work with schools to improve recycling and environmental awareness.

5.2 We have seen a number of consultations from central government and now need to see some firm guidance. That's why as part of our environmental services strategy we will be lobbying Central Government for urgent details of the changes highlighted in the Waste and Resources Strategy 2018 so that we can use our resources to effectively manage and communicate that change.

6.0 Equalities Implications

6.1 None.

7.0 Impact on Budget/Policy Framework

None

8.0 Community Plan – Alignment to Objectives

- Protect, promote and enhance the district's natural environment
- Increase Participation with the council and within local communities

9.0 Recommendations

That Members note the petition and acknowledge the actions taken and that there is a desire within the community to improve recycling services.

Background Papers

Nil

For further information please contact Andy Kirk on Ext 5577

Matthew Finch, Director - Environment and Communities

Appendix – Original Petition Text

My name is Claire Kay I have lived in and around the Newark area for over 20 years, currently residing in North Muskham. My son attends the village primary school. I have recently set up a Facebook group, primarily due to my own concerns about climate change and what impact our daily lives have on the environment. The group is called eco worriers women for change and I have been overwhelmed by the response to my page in just under 2 weeks we have 2500 like-minded ladies sharing maintainable tips & ideas for the everyday lady who is a wife, mother and a generally concerned human, we have all made small changes thus far.

The overwhelming concern locally is the very poor recycling facilities kerbside to our homes. We pay above the national average in council taxes and yet we cannot even recycle bottles & most plastics in our recycling bins.

I myself, and I know I am not the only lady locally doing this, am collecting the milk cartons from the local school as they are currently being landfilled! that's 50 cartons every day being landfilled and that is just in one school in our area, how have they not got a recycling container at a primary school, when we are trying to teach our children the importance of our actions concerning the environment, we are at a critical stage. So I am taking them to my local recycling transfer station in Newark thus increasing my own carbon footprint.

I feel I have no alternative at the moment. Surely this is something to discuss & change sooner rather than later, we are so far behind in this area, a lot of local councils offer food compost bins, bottle collections alongside the usual paper & mixed plastics. I was amazed at how many ladies locally did not know exactly what plastic could be recycled and it's a minefield trying to find out the correct information. We need ACTION and WE NEED IT NOW. –

Please sign this petition so we can ask the council to update our bins, make the information clearer, give our schools adequate recycling facilities and teach the teachers and the children how to use them, I had to explain to the Headmistress of our school what can and can't be recycled. This is not good enough, we want a better world for our children. My group is nationwide now and we have members from all over the world too, we all want to do the right thing for our planet so please give us the facilities to do this.