

Governance, People and Performance

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Councillor Deborah Urquhart
Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change
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Dear Deborah

Recycling Support Payments

In light of the recent DEFRA announcement regarding the mandatory requirement for weekly food waste collection, I am writing to highlight the importance of West Sussex County Council working in partnership with districts and boroughs as waste collection authorities in seeking continuous and further improvement in recycling rates across the County. This letter also follows from a request by Crawley Borough Councillors, in a motion agreed at their last Full Council meeting relating to recycling rates, to write to you expressing their strong views on the need to reinstate recycling credit payments.

The specification for our waste and recycling service in Crawley was developed within the context of recycling credit payments being available to support revenue costs associated with this service. In particular, procurement of our waste collection contractor in 2014 incorporated core requirements for the contractor to engage with residents to inform and educate about recycling. Specifically, the contractor was tasked to:

- Produce and analyse data (down to street level) on the quality of recycling material collected highlighting areas where contamination is greater,
- In response to the data collected, inform and educate residents about materials which could and could not be recycled as well as promoting the reduce, reuse, recycle waste hierarchy.
- To monitor the impacts of the direct education work and to continue to reinforce messages in priority areas.

In addition to this core work, the Council working with our waste collection contractor implemented a range of specific projects targeting communities and localities where recycling rates are lower, most notably working with residents in flats and communal block to respond to the particular circumstances for residents in such accommodation.

All of the above work required revenue resources which, with the support of recycling credit payments, was sustainable despite competing budget demands. Over the 5



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years from 2014 when the work noted above was initiated, Crawley's recycling rate improved by 6%.

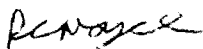
You will be aware that in 2019, the County Council decided to cease the recycling credit payments to waste collection authorities across the County. For Crawley, this saw payments reduce from £690,000 in 2018 to zero by 2021. This has had a significant impact upon our ability to continue with our preventative recycling work in Crawley and forced amendments to our service to reflect the available funding. It is notable that despite the continuous improvement in the 5 years to 2019, we have seen an improvement of just 1% in recycling performance in the four years following the removal of recycling credit payments.

As we move into a period where waste collection authorities will be reviewing and restructuring our collection services, it is vital we are working in partnership with the County Council as waste disposal authority. You have said that you want to work together, but that requires action as well as words. Within this context, I would request that the County Council

- (i) Re-introduce the recycling credit payments to ensure support for pro-active recycling education programmes.
- (ii) Give a clear and early commitment to passing through to waste collection authorities, the revenue benefit which will derive from lower disposal costs achieved as a result of the introduction of separate food waste collection. This early commitment is essential to enable districts and boroughs to plan the restructuring of services with a better understanding of the revenue impacts and to ensure resources are sustained to support proactive recycling education programmes.

I look forward to your response.

Your sincerely



Councillor Bob Noyce
Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services and Climate Change.