

COUNCILLOR QUESTIONS TO CABINET – 28 APRIL 2022

Question 1

From: Cllr Shaw, Bromyard Bringsty ward

To: cabinet member, commissioning, procurement and assets

Does the Cabinet member responsible agree with the Environment Minister Jo Churchill when she says:

“When it comes to fly-tipping, enough is enough. These appalling incidents cost us £392 million a year and it is time to put a stop to them.

I want to make sure that recycling and the correct disposal of rubbish is free, accessible and easy for householders. No one should be tempted to fly tip or turn to waste criminals and rogue operators.”

Is the Cabinet member pleased that households will no longer have to pay to get rid of DIY waste under plans set out by government to change the rules that currently allows some Local Authorities to charge for DIY waste from households. Under the proposals, household DIYers would not be charged to get rid of waste including plasterboards, bricks and bath units.

Response

I strongly agree that enough is enough and that we need to put a stop to fly-tipping which is an irresponsible and illegal activity that costs the taxpayer and causes significant environmental harm.

Here our trading standards team are working closely with the Police Crime Commissioners on a new project to further reduce fly-tipping in the county.

The disposal of any waste costs money and there is a long held principle that the polluter should pay for this. As you may be aware we have a new savings target about the policy choice regarding the cost of disposing non-household waste such as soil, rubble and DIY waste and whether this should be met from general council tax or a specific charge so that the producer pays. To be clear, the consultation outlines the criteria where DIY waste will be acceptable and includes it not being more than 300 litres, so no more than an average car boot load and not delivered to an HRC more frequently than once per week. Currently we do not have these restrictions in place but fly tipping is still an occurrence, indicating that those carrying out the fly-tipping do so because the waste has resulted from a commercial activity for which the HRCs cannot be used to dispose of this waste.

One thing we are very clear about is that the cost of disposal is not an excuse for law breaking and damaging the environment. I'm unclear on your question somewhat as it

infers to me that there is a suggestion that we should provide a free service subsidised by the council tax payer because people might break the law?

Supplementary question

I thank the Cabinet member for her answer.

Page 10 of Appendix A of the Medium Term Financial Strategy as published in February details £345,000 of income in 2024/25 from introducing charges for household DIY waste at Herefordshire's household waste centres.

At the time that this was announced members including myself were concerned that this would lead to more fly-tipping and suggested that enforcement would need additional resources if our country side was not to be blighted. Arguably Herefordshire residents are already paying to dispose of their household waste, the introduction of such charges for home projects would suggest that this administration intends that they should pay twice.

Will the cabinet member explain how they now intend to meet the £345,000 annual black hole in the MTFS as the authority is now likely to be prevented by legislation from making these charges?

Response

The cabinet member explained that the response to the original questions made clear this was a proposal being worked up and that it was not yet certain that this legislation would be approved. A detailed written response would be provided.

The following response was provided after the meeting.

Whilst the current government consultation proposes that local authorities do not charge for DIY waste, it is important to note that this is still under consultation, has not been confirmed and that numerous local authorities already make a charge for this.

We will closely monitor the outcome of the consultation whilst we further develop this proposal, and if this is not possible then alternative saving proposals for 2024/25 will be considered.