



Daventry District Council

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Chief Executive: Ian Vincent B.A. (Hons) Arch, Dip Arch, RIBA

7 October 2016

Chris Heaton-Harris MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Team:
Please
respond to:
Direct Line:
E-mail:
Our Ref:
Your Ref:

Chief Executive's Office
Ian Vincent

Dear Chris

RE: REFUSE COLLECTION

Thank you for taking the time to make us aware of your constituents' concerns regarding the proposals for the new waste service, and please accept my sincere apologies for the delay in responding to your letter.

Firstly, you may wish to remind your constituents that the service design is a matter for the District Council, with the decisions made by elected councillors. The contact details of all district councillors can be found on the Council's website at <http://cmis.daventrydc.gov.uk/daventry/councillors.aspx>. This includes a postcode search function if people are not sure who their local district councillors are.

The changes to our refuse collections were agreed at full Council on 28 July 2016, but will not be implemented until June 2018 when the current contract expires.

In terms of answering most of the concerns raised I think it is advisable to refer to the report approved by Council, as it is fairly self explanatory. Full details of the report are displayed on our website at: www.daventrydc.gov.uk/wasteoptions2018

You will see that it outlines the entire consultation process undertaken and the results received. The response rate was one of the highest received by Daventry District Council. It also outlines the reasoning for the recommendation of the 1-2-3 service and the process taken in getting to this stage. All comments and feedback have been taken into consideration in finalising the proposals and constituents' comments have not been ignored, but it is impossible to provide a service that everybody will agree with. Consultation was very widespread and thorough, and this option has been chosen as it is the option that will result in the least additional costs to running the service.



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The report also covers concerns about fly tipping and the evidence about this to date, so hopefully this will allay these concerns.

By way of background, it would be helpful if you explained that the District Council has to make difficult choices to ensure that the regular income it has is sufficient to deliver services, including waste and recycling collection, whilst keeping its part of Council Tax within the referendum threshold set by Government. It would probably also assist if you reminded your constituents that the District Council's share of the local Council Tax is only a small part of the total. It is currently 9% of the bill, or £132.93 for an average Band D property, about £2.56 a week. For more information on the breakdown of the bill, please see <https://www.daventrydc.gov.uk/living/council-tax/about-your-council-tax/>.

As you will probably be aware, councils are under great financial pressure arising from large scale reductions in core Government grants (with their intended complete abolition by 2020) and a limit on raising Council Tax by more than the higher of 2% or £5 per year (without having a referendum). The Government's projections assume that DDC will raise its Council Tax by as much as is permitted, but still show DDC having less income by 2020 than it has now. In these circumstances it is unsurprising that DDC has to consider all possible ways of balancing its budget.

The current costs quoted for the delivery of the new service are those provided by industry models, and again as the Council report explains the next steps will be to determine which option is the most economical to deliver, be it in-house, by a shared service or via an external contractor. Findings to date have illustrated the most economical design of service not the final delivery method. A similar exercise is currently being undertaken for all our other ancillary services and again the report mentions why waste was dealt with first.

As far as the proposed three-weekly collection cycle is concerned the evidence from other places, both urban and rural, is that a three-weekly collection cycle for residual waste is perfectly manageable for people. Your constituents should also be made aware that the District Council will continue to provide weekly food waste collections, and is exploring the possibility of separate disposable nappy collections as well. The recycling boxes would also be replaced by using a wheelie bin, with an 'insert' for glass. This should make it easier to recycle, as well as reducing wind-blown rubbish on bin days.

Additionally, other comments from residents have been taken on board and those in more urban areas will have the option to have smaller bins where storage space is limited.

With regard to the current service, concerns regarding the standard of service delivery provided by EMS are addressed at the highest possible level, and the appropriate action taken to drive up the standards of service.

With reference to concerns regarding charges for garden waste collection, it is understood this is a sensitive point, but it is increasingly widespread, with

Harborough District Council now operating such charges, for example. The reason is twofold. Firstly, not all residents want or use the garden waste service, either because they have home composting facilities or they do not generate sufficient garden waste to feel the need. The Council will be seeking to assist people starting composting. Some will be able to accommodate their garden waste within their black bin. Some will take garden waste to the NCC household waste recycling centres. Others will use the new DDC service. Thus charging those who use the service is fairer on those who do not. Secondly, the measure is necessary to manage the financial pressure the Council is under. This is certainly not the only step the Council is taking, but it is a necessary one amongst the others.

With regards to comments about working with NCC to increase facilities at the HMRC's, DDC has indeed spent a lengthy amount of time exploring with NCC all possibilities. This has been subject to an additional report but findings have not determined any viable alternative options. Work is on going to try to identify potential savings with NCC in both the delivery and disposal of waste.

Finally, please do remind your constituents that the changes will not come into effect until 4th June 2018. There will, therefore, be plenty of time to prepare for the new system. The Council will make sure that people are well informed about what to do before it starts.

I trust this provides the information you need in order to respond to the issues raised.

Yours sincerely



Ian Vincent
Chief Executive



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