

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

31<sup>st</sup> August 2018

Dear Chris,

## **DAVENTRY NORSE**

Thank you for your letter dated the 13<sup>th</sup> of August. Firstly, please accept my apologies for the service issues, and the subsequent concerns of your constituents.

Daventry Norse, a jointly owned partnership between Daventry District Council and Norse Commercial Services, commenced operations on June the 4<sup>th</sup>. The services delivered via the company on behalf of DDC include refuse collection, street cleansing, and grounds maintenance.

The first few months of the refuse collection service have been undoubtedly challenging. Whilst we have utilised additional resources since the service began, in anticipation of some initial disruption, we continued to face some challenges.

Firstly, we have implemented a new collection regime for DDC:

- Weekly food waste collection
- Alternate weekly collection for recyclables, and garden waste (which changed from a free service to a paid for service)
- Three weekly residual waste collection

In order to implement this new service it has been necessary to re-design all collection routes. Whilst we have tried to minimise confusion for residents by keeping the same collection day each week they have always had, some bins were collected later than usual or the next day whilst crews settled in to the new regime and associated workloads. We have implemented mobile technology in collection vehicles to help crews understand the new routes, and also requirements on those routes (e.g. households requiring assisted collections for elderly / disabled residents). Unfortunately the previous contractor had split some work to the North of the District out to its other contract in Northampton, and this has also led to some confusion for crews as it has now come back into their collection area. Collection crews are now routinely completing their rounds successfully each day.

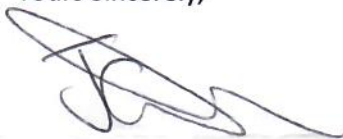
The new collection regime relies upon residents using wheeled bins for residual, recyclable, and garden waste, and a "caddy" for food waste. However, upon service commencement it became clear that many residents did not have all necessary containers. Since June, Daventry Norse has delivered several thousand bins. This is far higher than we or DDC could have reasonably assumed would be required. Demand has been mainly due to poor performance of the previous contractor, who should have delivered such containers up until the point the services transferred to Daventry Norse. We have worked hard to clear the backlog of residents awaiting a new bin, utilising specialist logistical software and additional staffing to run dedicated delivery rounds. The backlog of requests has been cleared now, and residents should expect to wait no longer than 10 working days for a new bin delivery.

We have also implemented a new paid for garden waste collection service. Uptake for the service has been very high. Typically, such schemes enjoy an uptake rate of around 45% of households within a district. Administrative arrangements around our scheme were initially scaled for a lower uptake, on the basis that subscription levels would rise during the 1<sup>st</sup> year of service. However, by the time services commenced at the start of June, resident subscription levels had already surpassed 45%. This put pressure on our ability to register residents, and issue subsequent garden waste collection permits (stickers). We responded to this by employing additional administrative staff to help process and manage subscriptions. Furthermore, many residents also requested a new garden waste bin. This caused additional resource pressures on bin delivery teams, due in part to poor performance by the previous contractor. We have used the resources previously outlined to clear the garden waste bin backlog. Residents should now wait no longer than 10 working days for delivery of a new garden waste bin.

In summary, we have worked hard to try and mitigate some initial issues as we implement the new service. As this letter has outlined, we have responded to these issues by utilising various additional resources. Service levels are now beginning to stabilise, and we remain committed to delivering a consistent, high quality service.

I hope this addresses your concerns, but please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any further questions.

Yours Sincerely,



Justin Galliford BSC (Hons) MSc MBA DipMC  
Group Director of Operations

Sent for and on behalf of Dean Wetteland, Group MD