

Public Question Time

Cabinet – 6 September 2021

A. Mr Mennell to ask the following question of the Operations and Traded Services Portfolio Holder, Councillor Miss Lawrence:

“In view of the Climate Emergency and the need to consider the impact that waste has on the environment and the importance of reducing the amount of waste that has to be disposed of, can the Portfolio Holder explain what measures she intends to take to encourage residents to reduce and re-use waste materials. Also what measures will be taken this summer to encourage a reduction in litter and flytipping?”

Councillor Miss Lawrence, Operations and Traded Services Portfolio Holder, to respond as follows:

“Can I firstly thank you for raising this important question.

I am acutely aware of the need to ensure that we all play our part in minimising waste and ensuring that waste is dealt with in a responsible and sustainable manner. This is essential in addressing the Climate Emergency and also in ensuring that our Borough remains a place which we all take such great pride in.

As Portfolio Holder for Operations and Traded services, I have committed that these matters should be dealt with as a matter of priority and have held detailed conversations with the relevant service managers at the Council to progress our plans.

In relation to litter, I will be bringing forward scheme which recognises the many volunteer litter pickers who give up their own time to help address the issue of litter in our Borough. Not only will this seek to recognise the extraordinary efforts of existing litter picking groups and individuals, but it will seek to engage new volunteers who are keen to support us. I am particularly keen to engage with young people through schools and programmes such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme so that we can encourage responsible behaviour from an early age. These proposals will be finalised in the coming weeks.

In addition to highlighting the positive contributions which people make, the Council will be increasing efforts to engage, educate and enforce against poor behaviour. I am already working closely with my colleague (the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Regulation and Safety) to ensure that all enforcement options relating to litter and flytipping are investigated and where appropriate implemented. In addition to enhanced patrols and surveillance, he has brought forward proposals for innovation, for example through the use of drone technology.

In relation to recycling, I am working with officers to ensure that this Council is doing all that it can to support residents to manage their waste as set out within the Waste Hierarchy. In doing so, we are keen to work with residents to prevent waste by considering more sustainable options in the first place. Where this is not possible, we will support residents to re-use items to prevent them from entering into the waste stream. It is inevitable that there will be some waste that does not fall into these first two categories and in these cases - we will support our residents to recycle as much as possible.

I consider these areas to be amongst the highest priorities for my portfolio and I know that this Council is absolutely committed to working with our residents to address them together. I look forward to sharing more details in the very near future.”