

## **COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 17 September 2021**

**Statement from: Councillor D McNally - Waste and Trading Standards**

### **WASTE AND RECYCLING SERVICES**

The Covid-19 pandemic has significantly impacted waste management, creating issues for all contractors and members of the Waste Partnership in how waste is collected and disposed of. However we have continued to work closely with partners to ensure that services continue seamlessly in extremely challenging circumstances.

The largest areas impacted have been the Household Waste Recycling Centres which have remained open during the last 12 months. The restrictions we introduced at the start of the pandemic have gradually been relaxed as we have learnt to deal with the issues associated with Covid-19. Recently, the decision has been made that from 1st September the recycling centres will operate without a booking system, as society returns to a certain degree of normality. This decision was taken to allow as many customers to access the sites as possible, as the booking system was at its capacity and there were concerns that working people did not have as many opportunities to access the centres.

We have recently received planning permission to build our own recycling centre at Tattershall which will replace a privately owned facility. The new facility will create a better environment for residents of the Horncastle area to dispose of material. When the construction is complete in early 2022 it will become the eleventh facility which we own and operate and will create a long term cost saving.

The issue of fly tipping has become more of a problem during the last 12 months across the country. We are therefore working closer with the District Councils and Environment Agency to create initiatives whereby communities are provided with the necessary resources to carry out local litter picks. There are also challenges with enforcement and education which we will focus on in the coming year.

The countywide partnership project to introduce separated collections of paper and cardboard continues to progress. New bins have been provided in Boston and are currently being rolled out in North Kesteven, before the project continues across the rest of the county. This initiative creates a financial saving and improves the quality and quantity of material which can be recycled which has an environmental benefit.

Significant national changes in waste will be occurring in the next 5 years driven by the new Environment Bill. The Government's Resources and Waste Strategy consultations have recently taken place on the future of waste management and the outcome should be released later in the year. It is expected to say that separate weekly food waste collection will be mandatory and garden waste will also be required to be separately collected. This will have significant implications on our contracts and infrastructure and we may have to provide new sites such as anaerobic digestion facilities. The capital spend could be up to £20m and during the next 12 months we will be looking to develop a delivery strategy based on the government requirements.

## **TRADING STANDARDS**

Trading Standards Officers have visited cold calling hotspots around the County to speak to businesses and residents about their rights and responsibilities during this year's Operation Rogue Trader. In June a joint operation, saw officers from Lincolnshire Trading Standards and Lincolnshire Police visit five areas in the county where residents had raised concerns about doorstep crime. The incidents reported included allegations that rogue traders attempted to charge for unnecessary work, damaged property deliberately in order to obtain money, left work unfinished and used intimidating behaviour.

The purpose of the visits was to make sure any businesses operating in these areas were aware of what paperwork they legally needed to provide to their customers, and the customers' rights, including the 14 day 'cooling-off' period. Teams visited Spilsby, North Hykeham, Spalding, Grantham, Gainsborough and their surrounding villages and spoke to 30 businesses. Twenty-two of those were not fully aware of their responsibilities and were provided with advice and guidance.

Further partnership work has been undertaken with Lincolnshire Police in support of Operation Vigilance. This project aims to tackle child sexual and criminal exploitation in the county and the sale of illegal cigarettes is directly linked to organised crime in our area. As well as undertaking joint enforcement visits to shops identified as selling illicit tobacco, the service also successfully applied for a closure order from the Magistrates Court to support a landlord in his efforts to evict tenants using his property. The order makes it a criminal offence to enter the premises within the period of the notice. The landlord had successfully evicted the tenants after Trading Standards had notified him that they were engaging in criminal activity from his premises. They had forced entry after the eviction and were continuing to trade in illicit tobacco products.

Trading Standards Officers have also seized 360 boxes of unsafe bangers, known as Thunder Snaps. These products were subject to a withdrawal notice issued under the Pyrotechnic Safety Regulations for not meeting the correct physical description of a throw banger and exceeding maximum sound levels. The products had been a source of anti-social behaviour in the area and a cause for concern, particularly when used around animals due to the noise levels created when thrown down.