

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 10 DECEMBER 2021

Statement from: Councillor D McNally, Executive Councillor for Waste and Trading Standards

WASTE AND RECYCLING SERVICES

Waste Services has continued to deliver services despite the challenges of Covid-19 and driver shortages. Both our contractors and district council partners have had staff shortages, but we have all worked well together and supported each other in these difficult times. The most significant impact for us has been our haulage contractors who have not always been able to service the containers at Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs). This has led to some materials being refused at busy periods at certain sites. In September following the discontinuation of the booking system, HWRCs were particularly busy and the combination of this and the national driver shortage meant containers could not be emptied at sites such as Spalding HWRC. This type of issue is always a possibility with national staff shortages, but we now have more proactive monitoring and reporting set up with our contractors to identify potential problems sooner. We also have a better protocol for communicating such issues with the public via the Comms Team. Thankfully we appear to be over the worst of this current problem, but we are now better placed to deal with future issues.

The overall picture of how much waste we have to dispose of is not significantly different to expected levels. More people working from home might be contributing to a slight increase in how much material is collected at the kerbside compared to predictions. Conversely, we appear to be having less material presented at HWRCs and it will take time to establish how much behavioural change has taken place with residents.

Even though we have had some difficult issues in the last year we have also had some real successes. The partnership project to introduce separate collections of paper and cardboard continues to progress, it has been a real success in Boston and is now being rolled out in North Kesteven. There are plans to continue this in West Lindsey in the new year and then other districts will follow. The separation of this material at kerbside will improve recycling and as contamination is reduced financial savings will be made. One of the keys to this success has been the positive engagement carried out by our Officers who have been on the ground talking to residents about what needs to be put in each bin.

The principles and experience developed with this separate collection of paper and card will be critical in meeting the demands of the proposed Environment Bill. The Bill will require separate food waste collection and our Officers will have to work with residents to create behavioural change. We will also need to adapt our handling and processing to service this new demand. To this end we are currently modelling how this affects our Waste Transfer Stations where we may need to invest to make the required alterations. We will also need to deliver a food waste treatment solution which can service the whole county. These changes will need investment but should create long term financial and environmental savings.

The project to provide a new HWRC at Tattershall has faced some obstacles due to environmental concerns raised by local residents. These concerns stem from the fact that the

site is a closed landfill and has required us to provide a detailed remediation strategy for the Environment Agency which has delayed the project. However, we are now in a position to start site construction at the end of November and the works should be completed in May 2022 which will provide a better facility for the residents of the Horncastle area.

TRADING STANDARDS

Over the summer the Trading Standard's Service has been actively promoting the changes to the law in respect of the labelling of allergens for food that is prepacked for direct sale. These changes are also known as "Natasha's Law", following the death of teenager Natasha Ednan-Laperouse in 2016 from an allergic reaction caused by a prepacked baguette which, at the time, did not require allergen labelling.

The service has used social media and issued press releases to raise awareness of the new requirements and promoting the Food Standards Agency prepacked for direct sale toolkit. In addition, Trading Standards have written directly to a number of businesses providing advice and guidance, as well as delivered a presentation to school cooks to explain how the changes will impact school meals.

Trading Standards have conducted a review of all incidents of non-compliance with Bovine Tuberculosis testing and identified several premises requiring interventions. The service is working in partnership with the Animal and Plant Health Agency and an action plan has been produced, including joint inspections, to those premises causing the greatest concern. This has included work with one premises placed under restrictions for failing to carry out TB testing. Whilst the testing has now been completed, Officers are continuing to work with the business to address other areas of concern before those restrictions are lifted.

Primary Authority is a means for businesses to receive assured and tailored advice on meeting environmental health, trading standards or fire safety regulations through a single point of contact. This ensures start-ups get it right at the outset and enables all businesses to invest with confidence in products, practices, and procedures, knowing that the resources they devote to compliance are well spent.

Over the summer Trading Standards entered into a partnership agreement with Korbond, providing a comprehensive assessment of a large selection of their product inventory. The Service has also provided advice to a national firework wholesaler who took over retail concessions in all Morrisons supermarkets.

The work we undertake with our Primary Authority partnership businesses has been recognised by the Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) who exercise the statutory responsibility for the operation of Primary Authority. They have showcased the work we undertake with two of our businesses as case studies to promote the benefit to them as a business and as an example of a Primary Authority partnership with a BAME business.