

## NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

15 MAY 2019

**STATEMENT OF THE OPEN TO BUSINESS PORTFOLIO HOLDER COUNTY COUNCILLOR ANDREW LEE (INCLUDING GROWTH, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PLANNING, WASTE MANAGEMENT, TRADING STANDARDS AND BUSINESS RELATIONS)****Resources and Waste Strategy – consultation documents**

In February the government published the first four consultation documents that will help to implement the recently published Resources and Waste Strategy. The consultations outline proposals for consistent waste collection arrangements; extended producer responsibility for packaging; a deposit return scheme for drinks containers; and a plastic packaging tax.

The consultation documents signal major changes in the way we deal with waste and resources in England, including significant changes to the services provided by local authorities. Broadly speaking we welcome the proposals and support Government's ambitions but have taken the opportunity to respond to the consultations to advise Government of our concerns and potential impacts for North Yorkshire.

The consultation on consistent collections proposes that a standard core set of dry recyclable materials is collected from every household, and that every household has a separate weekly food waste collection. It also proposes that councils provide a free garden waste collection service, and considers minimum standards for waste and recycling services as well as non-binding performance indicators. The Government recognises that many of these obligations will represent new burdens for local authorities and therefore a commitment is given that additional costs will be met centrally.

We must welcome any commitment to additional funding but the formulae for distributing funding is unknown at this stage so we are lobbying to ensure that the outcome is transparent and fair. We do not support proposals to legislate for free garden waste collections as this is contrary to the principle that the polluter pays, increases the amount of waste we have to deal with and increases costs on the public purse. Similarly, we have advised Government that mandatory collection of food waste within North Yorkshire is not cost effective.

The consultation on reforms to the ways packaging waste is managed will extend the responsibility of producers so that they become liable for the full costs of dealing with packaging from cradle to grave. This includes proposals to make producers responsible for local authority costs incurred in collecting packaging waste for recycling, as well as disposal of packaging waste not recycled, and the costs of dealing with packaging waste included in litter or fly tipping. These proposals are welcome with further detail to follow on how local authorities will be incentivised to collect recyclables, and how funding will flow to local authorities, including any conditions that may be attached.

It is proposed that a deposit return scheme (DRS) would see consumers pay an up-front deposit on a drinks container at point of purchase, which is redeemed on its return. A DRS is proposed as a way to change the behaviour of consumers to improve recycling and to reduce litter. Two options are proposed based on either an 'all-in' model applicable to all drinks containers, or one targeted more at smaller containers.

We have significant concerns about how a DRS will operate in rural areas, and that the economic case for a DRS is not convincing. We are recommending to Government that a DRS be postponed pending the implementation of the extended producer responsibility proposals in order to better understand its potential effectiveness and costs, and how it will operate in rural areas. However, if a DRS is introduced we have recommended that it be limited to smaller containers only, with larger containers left for more cost effective kerbside collection by local authorities.

Finally, the packaging tax consultation proposes to tax plastic packaging that has less than a 30% recycled content. It is proposed that this will provide a clear economic incentive for businesses to use recycled material in the production of their plastic packaging, which will create a greater demand for recycled plastic and then stimulate increased levels of collection and recycling of plastic waste. This tax complements the proposed reforms to the producer responsibility regulations and is supported.

Further consultations are expected later in the year and we will continue to engage formally and informally fully in the process to ensure our views and concerns are put across and the interests of residents in North Yorkshire protected as far as we are able.

## **Trading Standards**

### **Food Farming and Health - Developments on the use of Drones**

Officers have recently been working with our Highways & Transportation colleagues to provide video footage of the land areas for the potential route of the Harrogate relief road. The specialist officer trained to fly the drone took video footage of the area after engaging with the local landowners. The film footage has then been edited in the NYtech lab to provide a very professional video which can be used as part of the consultation process for the relief road.

The next phase for the development of the drone usage is for the TS officers to look at areas such as inspecting poor roofing work by a rogue trader, flying over open land looking for livestock carcasses following a complaint or inspecting sites in relation to breaches of planning controls that the county council enforces.

The county council currently owns one drone which was bought in December last year at a cost of £1,958. The drone is licensed by the Civil Aviation Authority.

## **Planning Services**

Following the Examination Hearing Sessions into the Minerals and Waste Joint Plan in February-April 2018, the Inspector decided that two additional Hearing Sessions should happen to discuss further matters relating to fracking and potash safeguarding. These took place on 24 and 25 January 2019 and the Inspector requested further information be provided by the Authorities and Industry. Having provided the Inspector with additional information an updated Schedule of Main Modifications is being produced; however, after a recent judgment handed down in the High Court in March, consultation on those Main Modifications may well take place later towards the summer.

ANDREW LEE