

Date: 30 August 2017

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Dr Therese Coffey MP
Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs
Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London
SW1P 3JR

Dear Dr Coffey,

Brighton & Hove City Council Recycling Rates

Brighton & Hove City Council Recycling Rates

Thank you for your letter of 31 July 2017 in regards to our recycling service.

In response to your questions we would like to share with you the continuing developments within our service including the adoption of a new waste strategy, to further improve our recycling service.

“*City Clean*” is the in-house Brighton & Hove Council waste & recycling service that is innovative, ambitious and creative and able to rise to the immense challenges faced by one of the country’s largest and most vibrant cities. We have challenges around HMO growth, high density of residential landscape and a high student population. In addition we have a significant number of high rise flats, which raises challenges in collection methods and logistics to encourage recycling.

The financial challenge – as with all other local authorities – has been difficult with a 30% reduction in budget over the current 4 year financial plan period the harsh reality of a challenging financial landscape. This financial backdrop makes the service improvements even more impressive.

The key aspects of the new waste strategy include:-

- A chargeable Garden Waste service was introduced in May 2016. With an easy to market and creative £1 a week charge, we now have 6500 customers, generating an income of around £300,000 and is estimated to add upward of 1% to recycling rates. With a satisfaction level of 83%, customer feedback has been extremely positive.

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- Wheeled bins for recycling. Following a successful trial, and a £1 million business case agreed by Elected Members, a roll out of 60,000 wheeled bins for recycling commenced in June 2017. This is estimated to add upward of 3% to recycling rates. This rollout is currently being progressed with approximately 70% completed.
- Textile Collections. The Council now has full control of the textile recycling within the city and is able to better track recycling rates and generate income. We now have over 70 recycling banks in prime locations across the City, including schools. The biggest winners are our communities - with 40% of income received going to local community based projects, we now have £25,000 of income ready to be donated back to the community.
- Mechanical Sweeper recycling. All wastes from our fleet of 10 mechanical sweepers are now processed for re-use and recycling. This is expected to add upward of 1% to recycling rates.

During the last year, Cityclean has realised an exceptional range of service improvements and cultural change that have fundamentally transformed the fortunes of the service for our residents as evidenced in the upturn in customer satisfaction levels from 44% to 66% in only two years.

In terms of staff engagement, the results from the last staff survey in 2016 are very impressive – 19% more staff now believe there is a clear sense of direction in City Clean compared to 2014. There has also been a 19% improvement in the number of staff who are clear about how changes that are being made will work. There has been a 22% increase in the number of staff who understand why changes are being made and an 18% increase in the number who are proud to work for City Clean. These dramatic increases reflect the work being done to engage and talk directly with our staff.

To date the above changes to our service, and for the first time in 5 years, has meant that the recycling rates in the city are increasing – Recycling rates have increased by nearly 3% in the last years to around 27% - still too low, but as evidenced above newly introduced waste projects will see this rise above 30% for the first time ever.



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For recycling rates to increase further a nationally branded awareness and incentive campaign would be beneficial for all local authorities and encourage further recycling amongst our communities.

in terms of contractual status, in partnership with East Sussex County Council, boroughs and Districts, Brighton & Hove City Council is contracted to Veolia as part of the 30 year PFI contact that was awarded in 2003. There are therefore 17 years of this contact remaining. Veolia will only take limited types of materials as they state they cannot find a guaranteed end market for products that can be recycled, such as certain types of plastics. Whilst other Councils can and do recycle these kinds of materials, the B&HCC is contractually obliged under the terms of the PFI agreement to provide all waste materials, whether residual or recyclable to Veolia. We have raised this anomaly with Veolia on a number of occasions, but they are not willing to change their position on this. In terms of review of the PFI contract, you will be aware that the Joint Waste Partnership Board have been working with government and Local Partnerships, including representations from DEFRA as part of this review.

We trust that the above service improvements show our continued commitment to improving our recycling rates and would be happy to answer any further questions you may have.

Yours sincerely,

