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By email:

Waste & Resource Management

0300 555 1389

December 2016

My reference EIR 11568

Your reference

Email environment.foi@hants.gov.uk

Enquiries to

Direct Line

Date

Dear Mr,

Information Request

Thank you for your request for information, which was received on 21 November 2016.

In response to your request, in which you sought the following information, to which we have responded below.

Please note that the majority of your request, with the exception of question 2, is not asking for recorded information and by way of advice and assistance to you under Regulation 9 of the Environmental Information Regulations, we have responded to each of your questions below:

I recently contacted my M.P. Suella Fernandes about the problem that was being observed with the disposal of refrigerators and freezers and she very kindly replied with the attached letter. In the letter it is suggested that I contact you if I needed more information.

As this matter is now getting on for a month old could you possibly let me know what the current situation is with regards to this matter particularly:

1) Has the problem now been resolved? i.e. are we now back to a sustainable and budgeted situation.

On Monday 21 November 2016 Hampshire County Council removed the restrictions that had been in place since October 17 2016 for the disposal of fridges and freezers in Hampshire.

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As you have previously noted there is a national issue related to processing capacity, alongside a significant increase in the number of units being disposed of by residents that caused a back log and required the restrictions to be put in place.

There has been a big push by the Producer Compliance Scheme (PCS) and its collection contractor to clear the Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) and Transfer Stations and we now have sufficient capacity at all sites across the network to now return to a normal service.

The efforts to clear the backlog on sites have enabled the waste collection authorities to recommence kerbside bulky waste bookings from Monday 21 November 2016 and this Council to remove the restrictions that had been in place at the HWRCs. The underlying national situation in terms of the processing capacity, whilst improving, still exists within the UK and the concerns about the targets and financial structures within the WEEE system remain. With this in mind there is some concern remaining for the County Council that there is a risk that the situation may arise again and as a result the County Council is still maintaining temporary contingency arrangements to mitigate this in the future.

2) *Has this particular hiatus involved Hampshire County Council in extra cost over and above that which was originally budgeted and if so how much?*

Yes there has been additional cost to cover the transport and storage of fridges and freezers to another site. The cost of this is £20,000.

3) *If the answer to the previous question is yes have any steps been taken or are going to be taken to recoup this cost from the powers that be who should have been policing the system and ensuring that this did not happen?*

We are continuing to discuss the issue with regards to cost apportionment with our Producer Compliance Scheme (PCS), as well as DEFRA. Currently no firm agreement has been reached on this or any future incident.

4) *Have any steps been taken to ensure that it does not happen again to either these particular devices or indeed to any other equipment subject to regulatory disposal operations and handled by H.C.C?*

The producer responsibility legislation sets out the mechanism for capturing and processing all WEEE and the system is delivered by the Producer Compliance Schemes and over seen by the Environment Agency and DEFRA. The County Council and its contractor Veolia have been lobbying DEFRA and the EA both locally and centrally to highlight the issues that exist and to try to ensure that changes are made to improve the system and its reliability. We have also secured additional temporary storage as a contingency option should the situation with fridges and freezers occur again.

We hope you find the information useful.

Yours sincerely

Paula Shergold
Project Officer (Waste and Resource Management)

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within 40 working days of receiving our response, and should be addressed to: Head of Information Compliance, Corporate Services, The Castle, Winchester, SO23 8UJ or emailed to foi@hants.gov.uk.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.