

Leaders Report for Council 25th February 2019

Government Consultation on plans to overhaul the waste system.

On February 18th the Government announced plans to overhaul the waste system in England. This Council looks forward to participating in the consultations announced as some of the proposals could have far reaching effects for our residents and businesses.

As well as making businesses and manufacturers pay the full cost of recycling or disposing of their packaging waste, householders may see the existing recycling system simplified so that consumers will know with clarity what items they can recycle. There is a proposal for a Deposit Return Scheme for cans, plastic and glass bottles which I personally welcome.

There may be implications for this Council and its householders in the areas of food waste collections and charging for collecting garden waste. We need to understand fully what is to be proposed and how this Council can position itself to be ready for any changes that may be coming in the proposed legislation. I can assure Members this Council will be fully engaged in the consultation process.

Kibworth

Continuing on the theme of improving our environment, I welcome the District Council's investment in a new air monitoring station at Kibworth Harcourt. The monitor will be used by the Council to analyse hourly trends and test, more accurately, against air quality standards set by the Government. This will help inform the Kibworth Air Management Action Plan as we seek to improve the air quality along this small stretch of the A6 in the village.

X3 Bus Service

A number of representations have been made to me about the changes Arriva announced with regard to its X3 bus service particularly about the withdrawal of its service from the southern estate of Market Harborough between 10am and 4pm. It is a matter of deep regret that Arriva did not extend the courtesy to the Council of its intentions until the announcement was made so close to the date when these changes are to come into effect. It leaves little time to do anything to relieve the disruption to our residents that use this service.

We have been in touch with Neil O'Brien MP over this matter and he has had talks with Arriva. I have discussed the matter with the Cabinet Member at the County Council who has responsibility for the provision of bus services in the County. CC Blake Pain is acutely aware of the disruption and is working on a number of scenarios that in the medium term may offer some help to our residents.

The actions of Arriva only give impetus to this Council's desire to set up a Strategic Public Transport Partnership for the District to prevent such precipitous actions being taken by our public transport providers in the future. I am meeting Neil O'Brien MP on Friday this week asking for his support for this Partnership as well as to get a briefing on his latest discussions with Arriva.

Tourism Update

I wish to update Members on some changes in the way in which the District promotes the many tourist attractions we have. The District's partnership with Leicestershire Promotions ends this March and I wish to give thanks for all their help and support over the last few years. Leicestershire Promotions came into partnership with the Council when the Council was just finding its way with promoting tourism in the District so I am grateful for their assistance.

Happily HDC have now developed the capability of boosting tourism in-house and we are unveiling new plans next month demonstrating the Council's continued commitment to boosting tourism in the District with such events as the Classic Car Show, bringing in more coach parties to the District, taking advantage of the opportunities of a revamped Market Harborough train station to attract visitors from London and the North as well as to work closely with local festival organisers. A new tourism website is to be launched to promote local attractions and businesses as well as a new tourism guide.

Alberto Costa MP and myself have also both written independently to Highways England asking for the provision of a heritage sign near to Junction 20 to advertise the heritage assets in Lutterworth and elsewhere in the District.

Broughton Astley

Being a former member of the Parish Council in Broughton Astley I am always pleased to see improvements in this well run village – which is the third largest settlement within the District. Very recently HDC have agreed the transfer of some open space land to the Parish so that it can be enhanced as the Parish have plans for a bus shelter and Notice Board for this land. HDC have recently installed an

electric car charging point on our car park in the village; we will be installing new and updated litter bins in the village, we have taken effective enforcement planning action in the village and we are currently engaging in a very productive and constructive way with the Broughton Astley Open Space Society who have some really good ideas about working in partnership with the District on how to further improve the many open spaces the Council owns in the village.

Cllr Neil Bannister
Leader
21st February 2019