

From: "Neill, Alistair" <Alistair.Neill@herefordshire.gov.uk>

Subject: FW: The council's responsibility for litter

Date: 6 March 2015 11:30:36 GMT

To: "macsinhk@gmail.com" <macsinhk@gmail.com>

Dear Ms Macfarlane,

Thank you for taking the time to raise your concerns regarding the matter of litter along the A40 especially around the vicinity of the VOSA inspection facility outside of Ross on Wye.

I would like to assure you that we are aware of our responsibilities related to the cleansing of the A40 trunk road within our boundaries and do take the matter of littering seriously.

We face challenging times and have to make difficult decisions on how we maximise the impact of what are very substantial reductions in our grant from government. For our council this amounts to a reduction of available funds for services by around £70 million - with the expectation that this reduction may become greater following the May national elections. As with most councils, a greater proportion of our reduced funding is spent on keeping vulnerable young and vulnerable old people safe and well. These services require the majority of our resources. The impact of these matters on other services is significant, and we have had to consider litter picking within this context: we are only able to carry out a planned litter picking activity twice a year on main roads such as the A40. I have spoken to our service provider BBLP, on this matter and am assured that the next full litter pick will be undertaken by the end of March on the A40. Our colleagues are liaising with the Highways Agency to co-ordinate our activities.

In addition to arranging the next litter pick, our service provider, BBLP, have contacted the Local Elected Member who will work with the parish council to review options available, including the increased ownership of the littering issue by the community and Parish Council.

I also note your concerns regarding the matter of overflowing litter bins in general. Again the limited resources that are available to us means that we operate on a reactive response where litter bins are emptied on a needs basis, with local litter picking around the vicinity of the bins. In reality this means that those bins that are used the most are emptied more frequently.

Across the country, the regions are adjusting to the new funding realities in which we as councils find ourselves. We can only do what our resources enable us to do. The reality is of course that the responsibility for litter is fundamentally with the individual who drops it. If we had less litter to pick from the streets, we would be able to direct those litter picking resources towards higher frequency of litter bin emptying. As with all other regions working with a great deal less resource, we must do everything possible and within our resources, to raise in our communities a change in this fundamental sense of responsibility. It is clearly neither acceptable nor sustainable that some people simply discard litter in our streets and roads and expect local authorities to pick it all up. One might describe this as a cultural problem, one that has developed among some, over a great many years. As a proud county with wonderful communities, we are endeavouring to play our part in sharing this message.

I would like to thank you for your community spirited approach by carrying out voluntary litter picking in your neighbourhood, if there were more like minded residents, we could work together to make those small iceberg tips into a more meaningful activity. We do encourage communities to work together to take an ownership of their locality and our service providers have historically provided some support to arrange co-ordinated activities such as litter picking. If you would like to find out more about this , I would encourage you to liaise with your parish council who could liaise with your Locality Steward to explore options.

Kind regards,

Alistair Neill
Chief Executive