

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 28/4/2020

Liberal Democrats call on Conservative administrations to reopen waste and recycling sites and restart garden waste collection

Liberal Democrat Councillors across West Sussex are calling on the Conservative administration of West Sussex County Council to reopen Household Waste Recycling Sites (HWRSs) and are asking Conservative-controlled Mid Sussex District Council to restart garden waste collections. This follows an increase in flytipping being reported by district councils across the county and the anecdotal reporting of increased numbers of bonfires by residents.

West Sussex residents are now in the sixth week of not being able to dispose of waste at HWRSs and it is three weeks since the green waste collection service was suspended in Mid Sussex.

Following today's request from Secretary of State Robert Jenrick for councils to work to reopen HWRSs, some councils are planning to do so from early next week but West Sussex County Council has not yet committed to a timetable. Meanwhile Mid Sussex District Council is one of only 28% of councils not offering a garden waste collection¹ and is the only council in West Sussex not running this service. Mid Sussex has seen an increase of 71% in reported flytipping compared to April 2019².

Cllr Dr James Walsh, Liberal Democrat Group Leader at West Sussex County Council, said "The Liberal Democrat group has raised concerns about the impact of closure of the HWRSs on residents since before the lockdown. The impact of bonfires on those suffering from respiratory illnesses is bad enough but it is particularly worrying that Council policies are exacerbating this during a crisis causing severe respiratory illness. The costs and staffing required to deal with flytipping is a further impact on our already stretched districts and boroughs. We call on the Conservative administration to listen to residents and the Liberal Democrats, and to heed today's request by the Secretary of State to work to reopen all sites as safely and quickly as possible."

Cllr Alison Bennett, Liberal Democrat Group Leader at Mid Sussex District Council, said "I have asked Mid Sussex District Council to set out their plans for reinstating the green waste collection service, but so far they have not given any specific details. This is not good enough. I stand with my County Council colleagues in asking the Conservative administrations to listen to residents and councillors and work to safely open these services up."

Cllr Kirsty Lord, West Sussex County Councillor for Hassocks and Burgess Hill South, said, "I have today written to the Cabinet Member asking her to consider the early reopening of the HWRSs in Burgess Hill and East Grinstead so that they can trial procedures and processes to protect operatives and the public in a small number of sites while providing a much needed service to those Mid Sussex residents suffering a double whammy of HWRS closure and no garden waste collection."

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FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

Councillor Kirsty Lord, West Sussex County Councillor for Hassocks and Burgess Hill South

NOTES TO EDITOR:

1. Association of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport (ADEPT) Covid-19 waste impacts survey 20th April 2020
2. Mid Sussex District Council are reporting 53 reported cases of flytipping up to 24th April 2020 compared to 31 in the full month of April 2019.