

Councillor Len Gregory
Cabinet Member for Transportation & Street Services:
The Council House
Victoria Square
Birmingham
B1 1BB

Date: 13th December 2006
Our Ref: OTH/C0774/AR

Dear Len,

I enclose copies of a recent Oral Parliamentary Question I asked on waste recycling and a follow-up letter from Ben Bradshaw, Minister of State at the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

I note that the Minister says he “does not expect authorities to commit themselves to providing fixed volumes of waste to an energy recovery facility at the risk of limiting future recycling” and that he would expect authorities to explore opportunities to divert other waste streams from landfill, such as from neighbouring authorities or from commercial sources, in order to use any surplus incinerator capacity resulting from increased waste recycling.

I enclose a copy of a ‘core letter’ that I was sent by Jeremy Shields on 22nd March 2006 on the subject of plastics that are collected for ‘recycling’. This letter says that the plastics collected are not recycled but are burned at Tyseley. In his accompanying email, Mr Shields acknowledged the following!:

Please find attached a draft response which sets out my views in this matter. As I have not been advised that the draft has been approved, at this point, it represents my perspective only, and is not to be seen as City policy. (See attached file: Draft, Plastics Recycling.doc) Thanks. Jeremy Shields; 0121 303 6190

I should therefore be grateful if you could tell me whether this situation still pertains and whether it *is* BCC policy, notwithstanding BCC’s stated adherence to principle of “The Waste Hierarchy” in its *Municipal Waste Management (MWM) Strategy) 2006-2026*. If this is not the case, please could you provide me with information about what is being done with the plastics that are collected from 100,000 households in Birmingham.

As the Minister observes (in his 6th paragraph), “a great deal of plastics in the Municipal Waste stream come from packaged goods”. As I note from the *MWM Strategy* (Appendix 2: Policies for specific waste streams p10), that only “a glass and paper recycling service is currently offered by the BCC commercial waste service”, I should be grateful to know what plans BCC has to offer a plastics recycling service to businesses.

With reference to the Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) Regulations 2005, the Minister says, in paragraph 8 of his letter, that “Producers will ... increasingly need to work with local authorities to ensure that packaging materials are collected by local authorities for recycling, particularly where producers’ needs extend beyond the local authorities’ own recycling obligations”. The *MWM Strategy* (Appendix 2, p14) states that “The City Council will explore ways of dealing with [... their role in helping producers to implement the Packaging Waste Regulations 1997] through discussions with its contractors, other local authorities and the waste management industry in general. I would have thought there was a need for BCC to talk to producers themselves and should be grateful if you would let me know what discussions BCC has had and intends to have in future with local businesses on this issue.

Yours sincerely

LYNNE JONES MP