



Neuadd y Sir / County Hall, Llandrindod, Powys, LD1 5LG

QUESTIONS AT ANY TIME TO CABINET PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

Response by the Portfolio Holder:

Without knowing the details of the business in question it is difficult to compare the services offered by ourselves and the alternative provider. We are able to offer a tailored service to businesses, so would ask that they contact us to see what we can do for them.

Whilst it may seem that the Council is providing a service that should be able to compete directly with the private sector, we do operate under different criteria. Under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, Councils have an obligation to arrange for trade waste collections when asked to do so and recover reasonable costs, which includes the costs of disposal and processing of recyclable material. Private contractors are under no such obligation and are free to 'cherry pick' customers from whom they can make a profit, which is generally in the towns.

Whilst we are able to be flexible in our pricing, it is essential that the Council provides an equitable service to all businesses across Powys and it would be unfair to charge actual costs to the more rural areas where collection costs are very high, whilst charging a much lower rate in the more built up areas close to our depots.

A further consideration is that many private companies will collect recycling as a mixed load as they have their own sorting facilities to process this material. The Council collects recycling in the same separated streams as the household collections, which is in line with the Welsh Government's preferred 'blueprint' collection method. This is also more compatible with Circular Economy aspirations, and there are plans for legislation which will compel businesses to have their recycling collected separately in segregated streams. This legislation will allow the Council to operate on a more level playing field with the private sector.

It is of course imperative that the emphasis of the trade waste service is on recycling as all the material that we collect from businesses counts towards our reportable tonnages and hence must contribute positively to our recycling targets to help avoid Welsh Government fines. Again this is not something that affects the private operators. This is why we have recently rebranded as 'Commercial Recycling Services' and will be positively marketing the service on this basis. The pandemic has curtailed this activity, particularly as many businesses have unfortunately had to temporarily close, but we hope to be able to get this activity back on track in the very near future.