

RUGBY BOROUGH COUNCIL

QUESTION PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 10

COUNCIL – 22 SEPTEMBER 2021

QUESTION E

Councillor Sandison to ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Lowe:

“This council has a contract with its residents to deliver a paid for green bin service. Due to staff shortages this service has been erratic and sometimes cancelled at short notice. Will the council be compensating householders for failed or late collections like any other business offering a paid for service?”

Councillor Lowe, Leader of the Council, to reply as follows:

“It is regretful that Garden Waste services have been disrupted over recent weeks and I would like to offer my sincere apologies for the inconvenience which this has caused residents of the Borough.

I would like to thank our customers, who have been extremely understanding and sympathetic to the difficulties which we have faced. Difficulties caused through a combination of factors including: staff sickness; staff self isolation requirements; accrual of annual leave over the last 18 months and the much publicised national labour shortage, in particular relating to qualified HGV drivers.

These challenges have equally impacted on numerous businesses, both within the Borough and further afield. You will be aware that a great many Councils across the country have suffered disruptions to their waste collections, often suspending them entirely for prolonged periods of time.

You will also be aware that the same issues have led to supply chain disruptions, for example leading to retailers being unable to stock their full range of products. These are issues that do not have a short term solution, but I would like to assure residents that measures are being put in place to ensure that our services are as resilient as they can be in these challenging times.

The garden waste collection service is a subscription service for an annual payment of £40 per bin. Following internal legal advice the Council has been advised that disruption caused by matters outside of our control and COVID-19 will result in no strict entitlement to compensation.

We are, however, sympathetic to the difficulties which the disruptions have caused customers and on this basis we will be setting aside funds from reserves to ensure residents are appropriately compensated. Where any individual or household feels that they have been significantly inconvenienced or disproportionately affected by the service disruptions, we ask that they contact the Council directly so that officers can investigate their particular case. In such instances, we will seek to agree an appropriate remedy which may include additional collections to remove any backlog of waste, when capacity allows

or where appropriate a pro-rata refund.

Finally, I would like to thank our workforce, and I'm sure that all Councillors would join me in doing so, for their efforts in keeping any such disruptions to an absolute minimum throughout the pandemic.

I am aware of refuse collectors completing collections over and above their scheduled rounds, working beyond their scheduled hours and coming in on weekends to complete the less visible aspects of the service. It is clear that our staff take great pride in their work and have genuinely worked tirelessly to ensure minimal disruption. Again, I thank our staff for this and invite Councillor Sandison to do the same.”