

Council responds to Department of Infrastructure's consultation on municipal waste management

Douglas Borough Council has responded to the Department of Infrastructure's consultation on alternative means of municipal waste management service delivery.

While agreeing there needs to be fundamental changes to the way in which the service is delivered the Council considers the consultation document and process to be flawed, as they reflect neither the aims nor the spirit of transparency enshrined in the principles of the government's Scope of Government report.

Central to the Council's concerns is the Department's failure to consult fully with all stakeholders ahead of placing three options before the Council of Ministers.

Council Leader Councillor David Christian MBE JP said: 'The Council is wholly committed to waste management reform. We would welcome the opportunity to enter into full and open discussions with the Department of Infrastructure to arrive at an equitable solution that reflects the shift towards devolving greater powers to local authorities and is mindful of the need to contain the financial burden on ratepayers.

'Regrettably the consultation process to date has not, we believe, provided suitably robust evidence-based information on which to develop an efficient, sustainable and cost-effective waste management system.'

Chair of the environmental advisory committee Councillor Ritchie McNicholl said: 'The matter of the Island's future waste management provision – with all its associated environmental, cost and staffing issues - is too grave a subject for the Department to be handling so peremptorily.

'The Council has already undertaken a comprehensive internal review of its waste management services and restructured and consolidated posts to create real savings and increase efficiency. In addition, the Council is working in partnership with fellow local authorities on waste collection and re-cycling methods which, in turn, have provided savings.

'The Council largely supports the aims of the Government's waste policy and strategy. It also has a responsibility to create a cleaner, safer, greener capital, so is committed to review and reform. This can only be achieved, however, through a forensic, fully transparent review process with all stakeholders.'

Councillor Christian concluded: 'The Council has submitted a detailed response, its arguments fully supported. It is hoped that the Department will now follow by example by withdrawing the existing inadequate consultation and re-commence in a proper fashion by employing auditable information that will stand up to expert scrutiny and drive a consultation process for service reform that more amply reflects the aims and objectives of all parties.'

The Department of Infrastructure's consultation document and the Council's response may be viewed in full at douglas.gov.im.