

Cllr. Les Hamilton,
Chair Overview and Scrutiny Organisation Committee,
Kings House,
Hove

30th. January 2004

Dear Les,

Re. Consultation of Trial of Communal Bins

I am writing to request that OSOC undertakes a review of the consultation process that was used prior to the introduction of communal bins in three wards of the City.

It has become increasingly apparent that since the pilot scheme was first announced that residents have been particularly aggrieved by what they perceived was a totally inadequate and flawed consultation process. Leaving aside the resistance to this scheme anyway, the main complaint has been that few residents felt that had been made fully aware of the scheme or involved in any meaningful way in contributing comments that would have assisted CityClean in the early stages of implementation.

At its meeting on 31.07.03 the Environment Committee approved an experimental traffic order to site communal bins on the highway subject to consultation with residents. Section 4 of the papers 'Consultation' stated 'It is recognised that without the support of the residents the trial will not be successful'.

A further meeting on 12.12.03 agreed that 'areas for these trials will be based on information gathered from residents during the review'.

Only one site was identified for residents to view the bins which meant that a large number of people were unable to see what was being implemented. A leaflet was distributed to all properties but given the nature of houses of multiple occupation, many residents never saw that information leaflet. Only one public meeting was held and that was at the instigation of one political group.

A proper consultation involving all parties would have prevented some of the recent demonstrations such as at the last Council meeting and the Environment Committee. The majority of these residents do not have a problem with the collection of rubbish and this would have become apparent if meaningful consultation had occurred. This would perhaps have influenced the decision regarding which roads should be included in any pilot scheme.

If this pilot proves successful it will be the intention to roll the scheme out across the City. It is important that we ensure that any future consultation is carried out in such a way as to ensure that the views of residents are taken into consideration well in advance of implementation and thus to eliminate the possibility of the many changes and modifications which have become necessary to the current scheme. This will only be achieved if we review carefully the methods used in the run up to this pilot and make the changes which will ensure a smoother implementation of any subsequent schemes.

It is my contention that the consultation with residents as agreed at the meeting on 31.07.03 was not satisfactorily undertaken and that as a result the Council is in breach of its stated consultation process.

Yours sincerely,

Dawn Davidson