

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member (Neighbourhoods and Streetscene) has received a written question from Councillor David Howarth as follows:

At the meeting of the council held on 26th September 2018, you were asked what is the life expectancy of a recycling bin and whether there is a rolling programme to replace stock across the borough.

In answer you gave a commitment to investigate and report back. As no answer has been forthcoming, could you now advise council –

i) Given that recycling bins sit outside in all weathers and in all temperatures and that eventually plastic becomes brittle, what is the life expectancy of our recycling bins?

ii) What guarantee or warranty is given by the suppliers as to the durability and after what period would they expect them to be replaced?

ii) What is the unit cost of a bin to the local authority, and how much profit is being made on the recharge to our local council tax payers for a replacement?

iii) The bin replacement policy states that a householder whose bin has been damaged, lost or stolen, is entering into a contract for a replacement. Given that the bins remain the property of the council, and that there is a statutory duty to empty them, what contract is being entered into as this is neither a purchase or provision of a service, and where can a written copy of the contract be found?

iv) Why when being charged for a replacement bin, are residents being asked if they want to “waive their rights” to enable them to receive a replacement within five days, after which they will not be entitled to any refund? How does this concur with your “pay first, investigate later” policy where every resident is deemed to be guilty until proven innocent by the council, which states that if it is subsequently found that our crews are at fault you will be refunded?

v) Why are residents who lodge a complaint being told over the telephone and in writing that if they are not happy, they should contact the “local Councillor for your area, as this was decided by them in 2017?” Something that is patently untrue. Seven members of the cabinet took this decision, which came to council to note. Forty-three councillors at that time were denied any vote on it, either for or against.

vi) Who has issued this instruction to Gateway staff, and are you content with the authority giving out incorrect information to members of the public to deflect the blame for what is the policy of your administration?