

List of Public Questions for 20 March Environment and Community Scrutiny Committee – Regular Meeting

Question 1: Weekly Food Waste Collections - RARE Team

We are an environmental group based in Rostrevor on the shores of Carlingford Lough and we would like to table a question for the next Council Meeting (March 17th 2025) regarding the Re-Gen contract for transporting Cambridge Waste 400 miles to Newry.

There would appear to be a number of contrasting narratives coming from within Cambridgeshire Councils and we seek clarification on how the confusion was generated and which one is correct.

We note that in a Press Release published by Cambridge City Council on February 28th 2025 the public has been informed that

“The Re-Gen MRF is based in Newry, Northern Ireland, so initially this is where the blue bin recycling will be taken for sorting. However, Re-Gen say that, within the first half of this year, it will take over a MRF on the UK mainland. This will negate the need to transport the recycling to Northern Ireland.”

South Cambs Councillor Natalie Warren-Green, quoted above, goes on to say:

“It’s pleasing to hear Re-Gen is quickly advancing its plans for a MRF closer to us – which will minimise the amount of time that our blue bin recycling goes to Northern Ireland for sorting.”

In the same Press Release you are quoted as saying,

“The new contract does involve further haulage than the current operation – whether initially to Newry or, soon, to a facility closer to Cambridge.

However, on a Cambridge Radio Interview five days later (March 5th 2025) the narrative changed from "soon" to "five years" when you you made it clear that the waste would most likely continue going to Newry for five years and that Re-Gen’s statement that, “within the first half of this

year, it will take over a MRF on the UK mainland” was undermined when you stated that “Hopefully they are in the process of buying a new recycling in the Midlands” and that the waste would continue going to Newry for five years.

In order to evaluate how much of the Council’s expert decision-making involved taking the word of contractors in what you described on radio as the “strict rules...followed in the public procurement process” can you please explain the means by which you were informed of the new narrative and the date on which you first became aware that Re-Gen would not be taking over an MRF in the first six months of this year.

We would also be interested to know whether the February Press Release has since been corrected.

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Question 2: Public Questions – On the Verge

Can the city council please commit publicly to managing the large roundabout at the junction of Chesterton Rd and Elizabeth Way in the best interests of both highway safety and biodiversity? By this I mean leaving the majority of the roundabout uncut from spring all the way through to autumn but with a visibility cut around the outer perimeter of a meter or two for highway safety. The large area uncut would permit not only plants to flower to feed pollinators but also long grass for the many invertebrates that rely on that habitat for their life cycle. This management plan was promised in spring 2024 but the roundabout was cut again in summer. Now that the city council has declared a butterfly emergency, managing green space with insects in mind should be a priority for the ECSC. This is a very simple 'win-win'.