

County council working hard to cut landfill

JEAN Locker, writing on behalf of Thakeham Village Action (Letters, March 19), is wrong to say the county council is wedded to landfill. Nothing could be further from truth.

We are working very hard to reduce the amount of household waste going to landfill to protect the environment and to ensure our residents will be subject to as little by way of landfill taxes as possible.

But we only have power to do this for the municipal waste for which we are responsible, just 20 per cent of the total waste. We have no powers over commercial or industrial waste including construction waste going to landfill, which is not subject to the same penalties we face.

I am sure Ms Locker will be asking MP Nick Herbert to lobby central government to level the playing field.

A wide variety of initiatives, many of them award-winning, have been launched in partnership with our district and borough council colleagues in recent years. They have seen recycling rocket in West Sussex from 22 per cent to 35 per cent, which is above the national average.

Reclaim West Sussex – our waste-handling contract – has led to most of our



FLASHBACK: Cllr John de Mierre, fourth from left, with members of the Ford Liaison Group at the start of work on the processing plant

household waste recycling sites being rebuilt or refurbished, making them modern, safe and resident-friendly. And last month, work began on a new multi-million-pound state-of-the-art plant at Ford that will revolutionise the way recycled rubbish is handled in West Sussex.

It will be in operation by 2009, processing the recyclables currently collected from households in the county, including glass and Tetrapaks.

We have also set up Better Tomorrows, a community

interest company, to involve the community, local authorities and waste contractors to develop joint innovative and collaborative waste-reduction programmes across West Sussex.

As Ms Locker also knows, the county council will be signing a multi-million-pound contract for a waste-treatment facility that will divert from landfill rubbish that cannot be recycled and turn it into a resource, such as gas or electricity.

We are also working hard to argue against the dumping of London landfill here.

All will play a key role in reducing the amount of rubbish we put into our dustbins and ends up in landfill.

I do hope Ms Locker and her action group will ensure their campaigning is equally directed towards central government and supporting all types of waste minimisation.

Cllr John de Mierre

Cabinet member for strategic planning
West Sussex County Council

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