

To consider any motions by Members under paragraph 20 of Part 2 (The Council and District Council Members) of the Constitution, notice of which have been duly given.

1. Motion from Cllr Leaman (Liberal Democrats)

Waste collection, re-cycling and value for money

This Council notes:

1. the Council's consistent and continuing failure to meet its target for the percentage of household waste sent for re-use, recycling and composting;
2. that, while SDC's re-use, recycling and composting rate is around 30-35%, many comparable District and Borough Councils achieve rates of 55-60%;
3. the November 2023 report for the Council prepared by the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE);
4. APSE's conclusion that "the service cannot continue as it is", drawing attention to its high cost as well as poor performance;
5. government requirements for the Council to collect food waste separately on a weekly basis and to collect glass from the kerbside from all households by 31st March 2026;
6. Defra's announcement (25th March) of a grant to SDC of £1,181,206 to assist with the transition to weekly food waste collection;
7. that the Council has not complied since 2015 with the regulatory requirement to carry out a TEEP (Technical, Environmental, Economic and Practical) assessment of its waste collection method;
8. that the Cabinet has yet to provide a detailed response to the request of the Scrutiny Committee of July 2023 to review the Council's performance on re-cycling.

This Council regrets:

1. that the Cabinet has so far failed to engage with members or local residents on the need to reform waste collection in the District;
2. that the recent cancellation of free black waste sacks for all went ahead without a thorough review of waste collection practices and a new strategy in place;
3. the risks to the Health and Safety of Council employees from existing waste collection practices;
4. that local residents are only informed of decisions after they are taken, and not engaged in consultation on the options before decisions are taken.

This Council resolves to:

1. adopt the following goals for a reformed system of waste collection:
 - A re-use, recycling and composting rate at least as high as the average of our closest neighbours;

- Separate collection of food waste as early as possible, as part of a wider strategy to reform waste collection in the District;
 - Improved value for money for residents of Sevenoaks District.
- 2 launch an open, structured and public debate and consultation on how to achieve these goals, engaging all members, experts, Council staff and the wider public;
 - 3 promote a sustained public information campaign to draw attention to the benefits of greater re-cycling and the costs incineration as well as landfill to the environment;
 - 4 provide a full explanation of the costs and benefits of options for change, with an analysis of the impact on the Council's budget for future years, together with a regular report to members on consultations with government and KCC.

2. Motion from Cllr Manston (Green Party)

Ceasefire

Council resolves to:

1. Recommit publicly to zero tolerance of antisemitism, islamophobia, or any form of hate crime and remind residents of how to report hate crime to the Police and how the Community Safety Unit at Sevenoaks District Council can support anyone affected by hate crime.
2. Explore how the council can enhance its support and facilitate events for people of all faiths and none, where they can come together and express solidarity and sadness in response to the tragedies in Israel and Palestine.
3. Write to the Secretary of State, asking him to encourage the UK Government to;
 - a) call for an immediate, permanent and lasting ceasefire between the Israeli Government and Hamas and, until this happens,
 - i) suspend all arms export licences and military collaboration with Israel, including allowing Israeli use of British bases and RAF intelligence flights over Gaza.
 - ii) suspend Israel from International sporting and music events,
 - iii) withdraw all public money from funds with investments in Israel; and end beneficial trade agreements with Israel (in the same vein as measures rightly taken against Russia following its invasion of Ukraine).
 - b) call on the Israeli Government and Hamas to create safe routes for humanitarian aid to protect aid workers and support civilians
 - c) call for the safe release of all hostages
4. Request that FIAC examines and reports on council investments in order to ascertain the degree to which these funds are invested in companies directly implicated in providing material support for the Israeli military, and to take steps to trigger divestment from these funds.

Council notes:

Sevenoaks District Council has shown unwavering support for Ukrainian refugees and has taken a proactive role in organising events to assist them in settling in our District. The war in Gaza could lead to further refugees and the Council can play an important role in creating a supportive environment ahead of this.

The war in Gaza is affecting people across Sevenoaks and Kent and hate crimes relating to Jewish and Muslim communities have risen sharply, having detrimental consequences for social cohesion and community safety.

The continuing rising death toll, displacement and devastation to homes, infrastructure and environment in Gaza and the continuing threat of escalation beyond Israel, Gaza and the occupied territories.

That the International Court of Justice interim ruling in January* stated that Israel must 'take all measures within its power' to prevent all acts contravening the genocide convention and must immediately improve the humanitarian situation in Gaza.

That the court also called for the immediate, unconditional release of all hostages.

That the UN General Assembly gave overwhelming backing to calls for a ceasefire and for parties' compliance with international law and the release of all hostages**.

That to-date, around 70 percent of those killed have been women and children***.

Council believes:

Residents in our district/area are rightly concerned about the situation in the Middle East, its impact directly on people in our communities and upon community relations, and the rising tide of incidents of both anti-semitism and islamophobia****.

That the UK, and communities within the UK have the right and the duty to speak out and to take steps that can bring pressure to bear towards a ceasefire, the release of all hostages, the free flow of humanitarian aid and creation of space for dialogue towards a lasting settlement.

References

* <https://www.icj-cij.org/node/203447>

**<https://press.un.org/en/2023/ga12572.doc.htm#:~:text=Israel%20is%20not%20above%20international,regarding%20the%20protection%20of%20civilians> .

*** <https://apnews.com/article/women-children-gaza-war-victims-un-inequality-f0f89a724543b99c2c22439e7af09405>

Council – 23 April 2024

*** <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-67836607>