

Mayor quizzes supermarkets on policies

COPELAND'S Mayor has written to the borough's supermarkets to seek assurances over their environmental commitments.

Mike Starkie has sent letters to the managers of Copeland's nine largest supermarkets to ask what measures they are taking - or plan to take - towards protecting the local environment.

Mr Starkie's letter comes as Copeland Council revises its own Environmental Policy and has been sent to Tesco, Morrisons, Aldi, Asda and Iceland in Whitehaven; Co-op in Egremont; Co-op in Cleator Moor; and Tesco and Co-op in Millom.

He is asking the managers about their stores' policies on single-use plastic bags, recycling facilities for carrier bags, and the manufacturing and stocking of difficult-to-recycle packaging including plastic film and polystyrene.

He also asks whether the stores have - or are considering - refillable container options, and for those that run a café, he asks whether they offer paper cups and straws - as opposed to plastic - and if they have a deposit scheme for glass and plastic bottles.

Mr Starkie said: "It's well-known that a lot of the waste produced comes from supermarkets. I'm aware however that supermarkets are already proactively introducing a lot of measures to counter this problem, and I'm keen to hear about the how this is being adopted in Copeland's branches.

"Our recycling rates have increased significantly over the past 18 months and, as a result, the amount of waste going into residents' refuse bins has decreased by well over 1,000 tonnes in that time period.

"But we are still encountering issues over things that cannot be recycled by us and people are left with no choice but to put them in their refuse bins, namely plastic packaging and straws, carrier bags, black plastic, tetrapak and polystyrene.

"I believe that if we can tackle the production and sale of these items at source, the amount of waste our residents are putting in their refuse bins will continue to decrease. We're keen to work with supermarkets to help make this happen."

Once a response has been received from the larger retailers, Mr Starkie will extend his letter to the borough's smaller supermarkets and convenience stores.



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