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ENVIRONMENT: MP calls for end to dumping rubbish in landfill

WEST Sussex must find better ways of dealing with waste – and the practice of dumping rubbish in landfill sites must stop.

That's the view of Arundel and South Downs MP Nick Herbert, and campaigners who are trying to stop the designation of two new landfill sites in his constituency agree.

They say better ways of dealing with waste must be found as a matter of urgency.

Mr Herbert gave his views from the Smallmead waste-management facility in Reading when he spoke about the issue on The Politics Show on BBC One last week.

He has also fully supported the efforts of campaigners who are trying to stop the designation of new landfill sites at both Rock Common, near Washington, and Leybrook Brickworks, between Thakeham and Ashington.

Rock Common has been the subject of a

long-running planning application, originally submitted by Veolia Environmental Services in January 2007. It met with fierce opposition from the community who, since then, have been in limbo while Veolia has been considering its response to a number of objections from the Environment Agency.

Two years on, a revised planning application from Veolia will be considered by West Sussex County Council's planning committee on February 10.

The application for a new landfill site at Laybrook Brickworks near Thakeham may be available for public consultation within the next two weeks, and the proposals, drawn up by Cory Environmental, have been greeted with dismay by residents, councillors and campaigners from Thakeham Village Action.

With a new state-of-the-art waste recycling plant planned for Warnham near Horsham,

the county council has confirmed in meetings with Mr Herbert that it will not need extra landfill capacity for the county's household waste. Instead, the council is planning new landfill sites for the disposal of commercial and industrial waste, along with 10 per cent of the waste exported from London.

Mr Herbert said on The Politics Show he was pleased that London Mayor Boris Johnson was focusing on the problem of the capital's waste, but he added: "I represent a county, West Sussex, where we're going to have to take 2.6 million tonnes of waste from London over the next 20 years, which may mean that we have to landfill in West Sussex, in beautiful parts of the countryside, where otherwise we wouldn't have to.

"It's just not acceptable in this day and age to go on landfilling like this and, actually, the landfill sites are going to run out anyway.

"So the future must lie in reducing waste. I think that does mean 'responsibility deals' with producers and businesses. They've got to accept their share of the responsibility and it also requires us as consumers to realise that we can all save a lot of money if we reduce food waste. Four hundred pounds a year is wasted by families on food that they chuck out and I think that if we can get that across that will help the situation.

"I think everyone can be a winner here. Consumers can save money and businesses could save money too if they find ways to reduce waste and reduce packaging. There are lots of pilot studies showing that, and the environment does matter too.

"It does matter that we produce less CO2, which is a major contributor to climate change, and if we go on doing things such as landfilling we're not helping that situation."



MP Nick Herbert