

Transport and Environment Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 12 October 2023

Litter Bin Siting Policy

Executive/routine
Wards

Executive
All

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 Transport and Environment Committee is asked to approve the revised Litter Bin Siting Policy (Appendix 1).

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Litter Bin Siting Policy

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report proposes revisions to the existing Litter Bin Siting policy in response to Elected Member feedback on the original policy.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Litter Bin Siting Policy is the tool which officers use to determine the most appropriate location for litter bins to be placed. It sets out the criteria that will be applied where litter bins might be sited and also where bins might be removed subject to usage levels.
- 3.2 On 18 May 2023, Committee were presented with the suite of [Waste and Cleansing Policies](#) as part of the annual assurance review process. Elected Members raised some concerns with regard to the litter bin siting policy in its current form and approved it for a three-month period, requesting that a workshop with Committee members be held to review the concerns raised.
- 3.3 A workshop was held on 25 August 2023, at which all political parties were represented. The output of the workshop in the form of a revised policy is attached at Appendix 1.

4. Main report

Feedback on the existing policy

- 4.1 There is a general perception that the current policy is weighted towards existing and possible locations being more suitable to the service than from a customer perspective.
- 4.2 The main concerns, and areas for improvement, related to three specific areas:
- 4.2.1 In parks;
 - 4.2.2 On the core path network; and
 - 4.2.3 At bus stops (including transport hubs).

Revised policy

- 4.3 The revised policy is primarily data led, utilising information from: litter bin sensors; Local Environmental Audit and Management System (LEAMs) (cleanliness data); Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD); Code of Practice for Litter and Refuse (CoPLAR); and where possible, (and particularly in the case of bus stops) using patronage information to better determine where litter bins should be provided. In attempting to address the three main areas of concern arising from the workshop, the updated policy proposes the approaches set out in the following paragraphs.

Parks

- 4.4 The principal reason that bins are located at the entrance and exit of parks is to reduce any risk of vehicle/pedestrian conflict. Reducing vehicle movements in parks also avoids damage to path networks and greenspace as paths are not typically wide enough, built to appropriate standard or designed to allow for vehicle turning (without cutting corners and having a detrimental impact on grass or shrub beds).
- 4.5 Where the path network could accommodate vehicles safely, the unit will need to be within a 20-metre distance of where the vehicle can park so that manual handling for operatives is within reasonable tolerance. In addition, if the park is near an existing street care barrow route or depot, litter bins can be sited within the park boundary.
- 4.6 Where bins cannot be provided within a park boundary, they will continue to be located at the entrances and exits. In these cases, it is proposed to introduce clear signage directing patrons to where the bins are located.
- 4.7 In the future, if additional funding becomes available, it may be possible to introduce on-site teams to work in specific locations, primarily Premier Parks, and to install a more traditional style of litter bin. In this scenario, the on-site team could not only be responsible for regular checking and emptying of litter bins but could also undertake a range of other tasks relating to opening, closing, and maintenance of parks toilets (where appropriate). These teams may also be able to support general grounds maintenance tasks.

Core Path Network

- 4.8 Similarly, the Core Path Network can pose challenges from the perspective of bin servicing. All types of bins of a reasonable capacity require to be emptied by a vehicle (either 3.5 tonne or more commonly 7.5 tonne).
- 4.9 The network is designed to limit or prevent access to anything other than wheeling, walking or cycling. While some of the network is wide enough to accommodate vehicular access, other parts are inaccessible. Where vehicles can be accommodated, there may be conflicts with pedestrians or those wheeling or cycling. In addition, there may be difficulties manoeuvring a vehicle on the network.
- 4.10 Where vehicular access onto the network is not achievable, a litter bin will only be placed within a 20 metre pull distance from the bin to the vehicle.

- 4.11 A review of existing provision on the network needs to be undertaken to better identify access and egress points and existing litter bin usage levels. This will be undertaken in advance of the next Policy Assurance review (May 2024).

At bus stops and transport hubs

- 4.12 Officers will undertake a review of provision at transport hubs and bus stops. In the absence of available data on bus stop patronage, the number of bus services stopping at that location will be used.
- 4.13 Any bins provided will be located within five (5) metres of the bus stop. The type of bin provided will be a minimum of 140 litres where the width of the footway supports this. There is a clear correlation between lower cleanliness scores and areas of higher deprivation so bus stops in these areas will be the initial focus for review.
- 4.14 Where a bin already exists, data from litter bin sensors will be used to determine whether capacity needs to be increased or, where a larger bin is not suitable, servicing frequency needs to be increased. In some cases, sensor data will show where a bin is not being used or clear signs of being used for domestic or trade waste disposal. This would typically be demonstrated by a bin becoming full to overflowing in a very short period of time. Where a strong case exists for removal of a bin, Ward Councillors will be advised of the reasons for removal before any bin is moved.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 If approved, the revised policy will be implemented immediately.
- 5.2 Officers will proceed with a review of existing provision in the three areas highlighted in this report.
- 5.3 Litter bin removals will cease until the reviews have taken place and recommendations made.
- 5.4 The review will be carried out between now and the next report on the Neighbourhood Environmental Services policies assurance which is due to be reported to Committee in May 2024.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 There are no financial impacts arising from the proposed changes to the Council's litter bin siting policy.
- 6.2 However, the outcome of the recommended reviews and any future revisions to the policy may highlight additional costs. As noted above, on-site teams in parks could only be established with additional funding.

7. Equality and Poverty Impact

- 7.1 The revised policy has been developed in consultation with Elected Members and, as such, has not been subject to a full integrated impact assessment. However, as one of the aspects for review focuses on areas with higher levels of deprivation and the policy seeks to enhance the service in those areas, it is believed that the policy impact would be positive from this perspective.

8. Climate and Nature Emergency Implications

- 8.1 As a public body, the Council has statutory duties relating to climate emissions and biodiversity. The Council

“must, in exercising its functions, act in the way best calculated to contribute to the delivery of emissions reduction targets”

(Climate Change (Emissions Reductions Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019), and

“in exercising any functions, to further the conservation of biodiversity so far as it is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions”

(Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004)

- 8.2 The City of Edinburgh Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and committed to work towards a target of net zero emissions by 2030 for both city and corporate emissions, and embedded this as a core priority of the Council Business Plan 2023-27. The Council also declared a Nature Emergency in 2023.

Environmental Impacts

- 8.3 The revised policy deals only with the siting of litter bins to better protect the local environment from litter. As such there are no implications, either positive or negative, from a climate perspective. The siting of litter bins does not contribute to a reduction in resource consumption or a reduction in climate change, or towards adaptation to deal with the climate change impacts that are already under way as a result of historic behaviours.
- 8.4 The better siting of litter bins, however, will contribute to better local environmental quality resulting from better containment of litter.

9. Risk, policy, compliance, governance and community impact

- 9.1 The report and revised policy outline changes to the existing long-standing policy, taking account of feedback from Elected Members on behalf of their communities.

10. Background reading/external references

- 10.1 None.

11. Appendices

11.1 Appendix 1 - Litter Bin Siting Policy (Revised)

Litter Bin Siting Policy

Background

This policy is designed to:

- Outline the principles which will be followed in selecting and reviewing where litter bins are located across the city;
- Inform decision making for future litter bin sites; and to
- Assist with decision making around existing litter bin sites with the ultimate objective of locating the correct size and type of right bins in the right place, reflecting demand and helping to alleviate litter issues.

The Council's capacity to provide litter bins is finite. It is likely that the demand for litter bins will, at certain times or locations, exceed the capacity to provide the service. Therefore, litter bins will be targeted towards locations where data demonstrates a clear need.

The criteria outlined in the policy should assist with managing litter bin provision. In addition, no review process currently exists to ensure that litter bin locations continue to match the expectation when it was sited, taking into account changes to usage patterns, and external factors such as vandalism, etc.

A range of bin types may be deployed across the city taking into account the following:

- Available litter bin stocks;
- Size of litter bin versus usage and demand;
- Type of location.

It is intended that future litter bin sites and servicing frequency will be selected and reviewed by using data led principles. These will include (but are not restricted to):

- Cleanliness audit scores (LEAMS);
- Scottish Indices of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD);
- Usage patterns derived from bin sensor data;
- Health and safety considerations associated with the servicing of the litter bins; and
- Links to other policies, e.g. planning and streetscape issues including in particular Edinburgh Street Design Guidance.

The type, size and location of litter bins are all linked to how litter bins are used by the public, and in particular how frequently they require to be emptied, and how much litter is collected. These are the key determinants which need to be matched to service delivery and flexibility in terms of servicing frequency and the ability to route services effectively and efficiently.

Usage and efficiency

Changes to the ways in which litter bins are managed will be governed by two factors: how they are used by the public, and how efficiently they can be serviced.

The use of routing software, coupled with resident feedback and data from litter bin sensors will help to improve the efficiency and responsiveness of Waste and Cleansing services, but will also be used to better target the siting of the bins to maximise their efficiency.

Prioritisation Criteria

It is very difficult to define specific sites which will and will not receive litter bins. However, the following areas will normally be viewed as high priority to receive litter bins:

- Main arterial routes and other high footfall and through route areas;
- Main areas of commerce and retail;
- Key routes in relation to secondary schools, and routes to and from schools;
- Near fast food and takeaway retailers;
- Public transport hubs (e.g. Bus stops and similar areas) where large numbers of people stand for periods of time, particularly in central areas;
- The 'core' path network; and
- Entrances to or locations within parks and significant public spaces.

The following areas will not normally be viewed as high priority for litter bin placements, or may in some cases be ruled out for litter bin placement:

- Exclusively residential areas, except where these become high priority due to one of the reasons above;
- Locations where the litter bin would be sited in close proximity to a household waste bin (i.e. the communal bins which are sited on street in tenemental areas, and are provided for the disposal of household waste AND litter); and
- Locations where the litter bin is being abused, including: inappropriate disposal of household or commercial waste which has not been resolved by engagement or enforcement; sites which are continually subjected to arson or vandalism to the point the bin is unusable.

Other Siting Criteria

Siting with regard to wheeling and walking

Care must be taken to ensure that litter bins do not impede pedestrian flows and take into account the particular needs of people who use wheelchairs and prams. A minimum footpath width of 1.5m must be maintained.

The location of bins should be located in such a way that minimises the need for vehicles to travel on the core path network and should not exceed 20m for the operative to move a bin to the vehicle.

Public events

The provision of temporary litter bins may be considered at specific locations to reflect increased pedestrian flows and litter generation at certain times, e.g. during public events.

Other criteria with regard to safe siting, or whether or not to provide a separate recycling service should be taken into account when siting these bins. Event organisers must put in place separate arrangements for the segregation of commercial materials for recycling and disposal of commercial waste in compliance with the Waste (Scotland) Regulations and other pertinent legislation.

Parks and other similar public spaces

The siting of bins in public parks and greenspaces presents some particular challenges in terms of efficiency, capacity and safety. It is usually viewed as beneficial to encourage park users to take their waste to strategic locations, usually at entrances and exits, so that the litter bin can be serviced safely without having to drive into or around the greenspace. **Where bins are located at entrances and exits, there will be messaging used at points within the park to highlight this to users.**

Therefore, as facilities are upgraded the following principles will be adopted:

- Litter bin locations will be moved from throughout the park or public space, to key locations e.g. Leith Links;
- The maximum capacity must be provided; and
- The facilities should be designed to take account of the usage of the sites, with dedicated facilities being provided as appropriate for barbecue waste, specific appropriate recycling streams, etc.

Recycling

Scottish legislation, and the Council's Waste and Cleansing Strategy, both assume or require that waste should be segregated and separately collected as close to source as possible to maximise recycling and the recovery of materials.

The Council also takes a pragmatic view of the effectiveness and efficiency of such measures, and the Council's strategy acknowledges the particular challenges associated with collecting litter as a segregated stream for recycling while maintaining the relevant high standards of quality required, as well as the small quantities involved and the likely impact of **forthcoming legislative change**.

Therefore:

- Recycling bins for litter are NOT required at every location, but can be considered at key locations where there are sufficient quantities of the relevant recyclates;
- Any segregated litter bins MUST consider following;
- How the bins will be emptied- under no circumstances can segregated recycling bins be mixed with other waste;
- Which materials it is most appropriate to target (e.g. cans and plastic bottles in parks, newspapers on main arterial routes and bus stops and termini?);
- Bins must be labelled appropriately for specific target materials, and not labelled just "recycling";
- Contamination risks (which can be offset by appropriate design);

Specific Waste Streams

Barbecues: consideration will be given to the siting of dedicated litter bins or containers for the safe disposal of hot waste at locations where there is a history of barbecue usage during good weather, etc.

Dog waste: the Council's policy is to maximise efficiency by collecting bagged dog waste alongside general waste. No dedicated dog waste bins will be provided. This will be reviewed should it undermine the separate objective of sorting mixed waste for recycling.

Litter Bin Siting Policy Appendix 1: Factors for consideration:

- LEAMS data
- Bin density (how far do people have to walk?) Bin size
- Bin type?

- Location type (e.g. high priority areas as outlined in the policy)
- Usage/ demand derived from bin sensor data
- Safety (public and staff)
- Bins creating litter (whether due to capacity, misuse or location).
- Vandalism and arson
- Terrorism

- Design for recycling
- Proximity to household waste (communal) bins which can perform same function.
- Parks, greenspaces, civic areas, squares, plazas, etc.

Note: for Committee, yellow highlights denote proposed changes from the current policy.