

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

**EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S
REPORT TO ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

17 December 2020

Report Title: Litter Bins – Provision and Servicing

Submitted by: Head of Operations – Roger Tait

Portfolios: Environment and Recycling

Ward(s) affected: All

Purpose of the Report

To respond to a request from the Chair of the Committee for information on the current approach to litter bin provision and servicing in the Borough

Recommendation

That the Committee receive the report and note the current operational approach to litter bin provision and servicing

Reasons

To ensure members are aware of the Council's current approach to litter bin provision and servicing.

1. **Background**

The Chair of the Economy, Environment and Place Scrutiny Committee has requested a report on litter bin provision and servicing in the Borough.

A meeting was held with the Chair on 17th November 2020 to agree the scope of the report. It was agreed that the report would provide information on the current approach to litter bin provision and servicing and consideration of any known additional current or future demand.

2. **Issues**

The Council is a Principal Litter Authority and has a statutory duty to keep specified land clear of litter and refuse under the Environmental Protection Act 1990. The Council carries out a range of activities in order to fulfil this duty, including:-

- Cleansing of streets, highways and footpaths to remove litter
- Promoting and educating the public not to drop litter
- Provision of litter bins in which the public are urged to deposit litter

The Council currently provides over 1000 litter and dog waste bins at a variety of locations in the Borough, including:

- Town/village centres and shopping areas.
- Adjacent to bus stops
- Adjacent to take-away food premises
- Areas around schools
- Rural villages
- Subways

- Highway lay-bys
- Parks and recreation/leisure areas and in car parks.

Litter bins are emptied on appropriate frequencies. The frequency is determined by practical experience and is adjusted to ensure that in normal usage the bins never become more than 90% full. Emptying frequencies range from daily in town centres, to weekly in areas of lower use such as highway laybys.

Dog faeces is statutorily defined as a category of “litter”. The value and role that the provision of dog waste bins can play in preventing dog fouling of footpaths, parks and open spaces is well recognised. There are currently 505 dog waste collections provided per week and individual locations are serviced at a frequency determined by normal usage. The Council has received around 15 requests for additional dog waste bins over the last 2 years (7.5 per year) but this is perhaps due to residents being unaware that bagged dog waste can be deposited in litter bins. If this was more widely known, it appears that there would be less demand for further separate dog waste bins.

Also, in common with other local authorities the Council has recently introduced a number of dual waste bins to suitable locations in parks and open spaces. This encourages residents to dispose of either litter or bagged dog waste at one location, rather than two separate receptacles. The Council has installed 20 dual waste bins to date which has reduced the pressure on emptying capacity by a small amount.

The Council receives sponsorship for bins and also charges businesses and parish councils where agreed for the servicing of bins on land not in the ownership of the council.

The emptying of litter, dog waste and dual waste bins is undertaken by 5 operatives. One operative services Newcastle town centre, 5 days per week, utilising an electric cart, emptying bins up to three times per day. There are approximately 90 bins within the town centre.

Four operatives are engaged full time on a Monday to Friday basis, each utilising a caged vehicle to service approximately 120 locations per day throughout the borough. A further bin run is accommodated on Saturdays including additional servicing to the A500 bin locations.

The current bin emptying schedule is at capacity with all 5 operatives fully engaged on this task, and there is no spare capacity at present to increase the number of bins or the emptying frequencies.

Operatives are required to provide regular feedback to supervisors, identifying bins which are regularly over-full or significantly underutilised, with this feedback being used to adjust collection rounds and collection frequencies. Current feedback from operatives suggests that there is generally adequate provision of bins and that the emptying frequencies, which are periodically reviewed and adjusted, appear to be meeting current demand.

This ongoing, operational review is continuing where resources allow, with a view to driving potential efficiencies in relation to the servicing regime and ensuring bin locations and sizes are appropriate to respond to need. Two pilot study areas have been completed as part of the review process, both of which have demonstrated a higher than Borough average provision of bins as set out in the table below.

The next logical step in this pilot would be to rationalise and consolidate the number of bins and emptying frequency to better align with actual demand, allowing some capacity for future increased use should new developments create higher demand. Officers will continue to work with planning colleagues to explore the possibility of developers providing additional “binrastructure” in appropriate locations should this be needed.

However, in reality the Council receives very few requests for additional litter bins. In the last 2 years, only 9 new litter bin requests have been made (4.5 per year).

Some requests are received to relocate bins to more appropriate or higher demand locations, and the Streetscene team work with local Members, residents and businesses to successfully resolve any localised issues.

Therefore, it appears that the current approach is largely successful in managing the provision and servicing of the Council's litter and dog waste bin stock, and has sufficient flexibility to respond to current demand and localised issues. It also appears that there is some capacity within the existing bin stock in certain areas where provision is higher than average, to accommodate higher levels of use which may be generated from new developments. However, should capacity become an issue in the future, and where it cannot be accommodated by realigning existing resources, members may wish to consider the possibility of increasing resources to both provide and service bins where higher demand can be demonstrated.

There is not sufficient capacity within the Streetscene team at present to undertake and complete a comprehensive and effective review of litter bin provision and servicing across the entire Borough, and there does not appear to be an urgent need to do so, based on the pilot study and current successful and flexible approach, and taking into account other service priorities.

To carry out a comprehensive review there would be a requirement for a dedicated staffing resource, software and hardware purchase for route optimisation and hardware installations to vehicles. It is anticipated that a review would take at least 6 months to complete, and further time to test and embed.

The associated costs are estimated to be:

<i>Project Officer:</i>	<i>£17,000</i>
<i>Bartec in cab units</i>	<i>£2,000</i>
<i>Bartec software</i>	<i>£4,000</i>
<i>Office monitoring system</i>	<i>£3,000</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>£26,000</i>

There is no budget identified at present to fund such a review, and no business case which would suggest that there are anticipated efficiencies which would be generated to justify an investment of this amount.

There is no identified budget for the provision of additional litter bins should the need for such be identified following a review.

Bin Comparator Chart

	Newcastle Borough	Madeley	Audley
Population	129,441	3,989	5,927
Number of Streetside bins including dog waste	Litter 845 Dog Waste 310	Litter 38 Dog Waste 18	Litter 48 Dog waste 19
Average number of bins per	8.6	14.03	11.30

1,000 population			
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*Comparator Local Authority responses from:

Local Authority	Average number of bins per 1,000 population
Caerphilly	17.6
South Lanarkshire	10.0
Nottingham	8.3
Knowsley	5
Angus	7.8
South Gloucestershire	4.8
Swansea	5.9
North Warwick	9.7
Doncaster	20.0
St Albans	1.2
Calderdale	6.3

Average across participating authorities = 8.78 bins per 1000 population

3. **Proposal**

That the Committee receive the report, note the current operational approach to litter bin provision and servicing

4. **Reasons for Proposed Solution**

To ensure members are aware of the Councils current approach to litter bin provision and servicing.

5. **Options Considered**

Options for operational service provision are detailed in the report.

6. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

As a principal litter authority, the Council has a statutory duty to keep specified land clear of litter and refuse under the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

7. **Equality Impact Assessment**

No significant impact identified.

8. **Financial and Resource Implications**

There are no financial implications arising directly as a result of the recommendations of this report.

However, if a full service review was to be undertaken, the estimated cost of this would be approximately £26,000. There is no current identified budget for this work.

There is no identified budget for the provision of additional litter bins should the need for such be identified following a review.

9. **Major Risks**
None

10. **Sustainability and Climate Change Implications**
No significant impact identified.

11. **Key Decision Information**
No key decision is required.

12. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**
None

13. **List of Appendices**
None

14. **Background Papers**
None