

Bin Strategy – Preliminary Notes

Introduction

The Parks and Cleansing Commissioning Review identified a need to consider how litter bins are provided and serviced (emptying and disposing of the waste) throughout the City & County of Swansea given that available resources are being reduced as part of the proposed savings. Whilst it is difficult to quantify the extent of savings that would be achieved (in terms of Full Time Equivalents), clearly there are a number of proposals which could reduce the burden to mitigate the reduction in resource or best use the resource we retain in other areas.

The Environmental Protection Act 1990 and associated legislation places a duty on Local Authorities to ensure that their land (or land for which they are responsible) is, so far as is practicable, kept clear of litter and refuse. Litter bins can assist in helping achieve this overarching duty, or conversely have an adverse effect on litter through creating an expectation that waste generated outside can be left outside and not taken home..

Current Position

It is estimated that the total number of litter bins located on the adopted Highway network and within Parks is currently around 1450 (627 within Parks). So far as those located on the adopted Highway are concerned, the bins were originally sited on the basis of perceived need at the time, local knowledge etc. Many litter bins are concentrated in areas of high footfall (such as shopping areas) and near to schools, colleges and the like. Litter bins within the main urban areas including the City Centre are normally serviced on daily basis. This also includes weekends. Litter bins outside the main urban/shopping areas are generally emptied on a weekly basis or more regularly as required and can be dependent on seasonal variations. For example, litter bins at the far end of Gower (including Rhossili, Port Eynon, Horton etc.) are serviced daily throughout the summer/holiday period.

Proposals for consideration

- *Presumption that an existing litter bin will be removed where evidence of misuse.*

Misuse of litter bins is often from being used to dispose of household and commercial waste in the form of black bags, carrier bags etc. being rammed into the bin itself and/or bags being left in the vicinity of the bin. This in the knowledge that the bin will be emptied and therefore the additional waste will be removed. Once a bin is regularly misused it ceases to be used as intended (i.e. for litter) and in some instances the misuse can be a daily occurrence. In the absence of local intelligence to target offenders, removal of the bin is the most viable option. The continual emptying of a misused bin is not sustainable. Relocating the bin in the local area where warranted could be considered as an alternative option;

- *Remove litter bin where complaints received from the public/local ward members.*

This relates to bin misuse as above. Any request to remove any litter bin via complaints received from the public or local ward member would require careful consideration. Requests due to misuse etc. would be considered taking account of specific service requests (Flare) previously received over a given period, together with Operatives/ Supervisor knowledge etc.

- *Remove litter bins where evidence of vandalism/antisocial behaviour*

This has been standard practice for some time although there is a tendency for it to be more problematic with dog fouling bins rather than litter bins. Renewal of litter bins where there has been a history of vandalism and antisocial behaviour has often been counterproductive with replacement bins falling to the same fate. Continual monitoring is not possible and, in the absence of local intelligence, prosecution of offenders for criminal damage is highly unlikely. Future cases should be assessed on their individual merits with PCSO input where appropriate.

- *Remove litter bins in outlying areas/laybys etc.*

Consideration should be given to removing bins in isolated/outlying areas where use is limited, including laybys. Some laybys are currently provided with bins some are not. There is an argument to say that the removal of bins from laybys can reduce the overall amount of litter on the highway as laybys with bins often have more litter than those without bins. In the absence of shops etc., these bins are often used by people to empty their vehicles or for general litter that responsible persons would otherwise find an alternative method for disposal (e.g. take litter home). Increased targeting by Enforcement (3GS) could be used in laybys where there is evidence that litter is being dropped. Litter bins in laybys also tend to encourage flytipping adjacent to the bins for the reasons as mentioned above. Consideration should be given to piloting some areas to see what effect the removal of bins would have.

- *Retain bins in key sensitive areas.*

Areas of high footfall including the City Centre and other shopping areas should retain a certain number of bins for litter disposal. Whilst there may be the opportunity to rationalise bins in some of these areas, there is and should be an expectation that the public can access litter bins in such areas. Similarly, bins should be retained in other sensitive areas outside schools, colleges and takeaways. In some circumstances there may be a justification to *increase* the number of bins in such areas.

- *Retain bins where installed and funded by Councillors/Community Councils etc.*

Local ward members often enquire about the provision of additional litter bins by using their Community Budget. Any bins that are approved for a minimum period of 3 years should clearly be retained for the agreed period. Once the funding period has elapsed further funding by the Councillor should be sought. If funding is not renewed then the likelihood is that the bin would be removed. Requests for additional bins should be assessed on a genuine need taking account the proposed bin strategy.

- *Feasibility of Smart bins (solar, Belly bins etc.)*

There is a possibility to consider the use of so-called 'smart bins' in areas of high demand or outlying areas. Many run on solar power and work by compacting waste. This has the advantage that they can retain more waste before emptying is required. Using technology the bins also have the ability to 'alert' operatives when full thus reducing the frequency that the bins are emptied and also ensuring resources are targeted when required. High initial outlay costs could be offset by savings in the long-term and potential for sponsorship.

- *Continual review*

Our litter bins infrastructure would be continually reviewed to assess the impact of any changes, and the need for removal or introduction of bins in line with the proposed strategy.