



Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	CABINET – 10 JANUARY 2022
Report Number	AGENDA ITEM 13
Subject	Approval of the Approach to Litter Bin Placement and Renewal Programme in Cotswold District
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Cllr Andrew Doherty, Cabinet Member for Waste, Flooding and Environmental Health Email: Andrew.Doherty@cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Scott Williams, Business Manager – Contracts Email: scott.williams@publicagroup.uk
Summary/Purpose	To update Members on the issues being experienced with litter and dog bins in Cotswold District and to seek approval for a bin placement review and renewal programme to be delivered over the next five years.
Annexes	None
Recommendation(s)	<p>That Cabinet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Notes the risks and financial implications relating to the provision and servicing of the current litter and dog waste bins;b) Approves the introduction of the set of principles for the placement of litter and dog waste bins going forward..c) Approves the proposal to complete a rationalisation exercise of the existing litter and dog waste bins to ensure that the coverage is suitable for the District and that bins are located in the most appropriate places and in line with the agreed set of principles referenced in b) above;d) Approves the principle that a charging mechanism is introduced for installation and servicing of litter bins in Town and Parish Council areas which are outside of the principles proposed in recommendation b;e) Supports the inclusion of an annual capital budget of up to £10,000 per annum over the next five years as part of the Council's budget setting process in February 2022 (up to £50,000 total), for bin purchases and fitting; and



	f) That officers work with Ubico to identify the revenue savings arising from this rationalisation and, by agreement, seek to reduce the contract value accordingly.
Corporate priorities	Responding to the challenges presented by the climate crisis
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	The following people have all been consulted on this report and the detail contained within: Councillor Andrew Doherty and Senior Council and Publica Officers.



I. BACKGROUND

- 1.1.** Under the Environmental Protection Act, Cotswold District Council is a 'Litter Authority' and is responsible for cleansing of the adopted highway within its district boundary, and may provide and maintain in any street or public place receptacles for refuse or litter (referred to as litter bins).
- 1.2.** The Council has an environmental services contract with Ubico Ltd, which includes the responsibility for street cleansing and litter/dog waste bin emptying within the district.
- 1.3.** It is the duty of a Litter Authority to make arrangements for the regular emptying and cleansing of any litter bins provided or maintained by them and the regular emptying must be sufficiently frequent to ensure that no such litter bin or its contents shall become a nuisance or give reasonable ground for complaint.
- 1.4.** To support this and as is commonplace in other areas, the Council has for many years provided a network of litter and dog waste bins to encourage responsible disposal of those waste types. The existing provision captures litter and dog waste, which has a direct benefit to the street cleansing function, in not having to manually pick items deposited in the bins from the adopted highway. This in turn then means that the street cleansing function has been able to concentrate efforts on other cleansing duties which are important to the Council in upholding its duty as a Litter Authority, and for the benefit of local communities.
- 1.5.** The Council has always aimed to provide a sufficient coverage of bins across the District, but in recent years, Town/Parish Councils have requested additional requirements which have been deemed as a nice to have, rather than critical to the service. As a result, the costs of the bin purchase and installation, has been paid for by Town/Parish Councils, but the District Council has taken on emptying them as part of the contracted works performed by Ubico.
- 1.6.** However, with the existing resources available, Ubico has now reached capacity on the numbers of bins it can effectively maintain and so this leaves the Council with two options – either increase the resources at additional cost to the Council, or look to rationalise the bin portfolio to ensure that it can be effectively serviced by Ubico within the current resources.

2. MAIN POINTS

- 2.1** Having conducted a recent evaluation of the bin portfolio, the Council currently has approximately 1,013 litter bins and 598 dog waste bins in place, which are in varying



- 2.2** conditions and have differing levels of usage. In many cases there are multiple bins in the same location and in some cases these are seldom used.
- 2.3** People expect bins to be accessible, easy to spot – but the logistics of managing a large bin estate, and making it work as effectively as possible, is far from simple. A visible, well maintained litter bin is more likely to be used than an overfilled rusty litter bin with holes, but the Council doesn't have a replacement programme for litter/dog bins and instead has always acted to replace them on a case-by-case basis. This unfortunately means that there is a risk that a significant number of bins have all come to the end of their usable life at the same point in time and so it is appropriate to undertake a review, introduce a set of principles to ensure that the coverage is suitable for the District, and have an annual replacement programme to avoid this occurring in the future.
- 2.4** Litter and dog waste now both go to the Energy from Waste Facility and so recently stickers have been placed on litter bins in certain areas informing that dog waste can also be placed in them. In addition, brand new bins which are being installed in areas close to dog walking routes also have the information attached.

3. BIN PROVISION PRINCIPLES

- 3.1** Bin positioning is important because litter bins need to be placed in prime locations such as along pedestrian pathways that are well used, commercial shopping areas and in places where littering and/or dog fouling is a problem. Litter bins near fast food restaurants, bus stops and train stations also help to catch some of the 'on the go food' users. Much of the research carried out shows that people often blame their littering on a lack of bins.
- 3.2** The changing lifestyle with people in a rush means that more people are eating 'food on the go'. Research carried out by Keep Britain Tidy showed that in 80% of sites surveyed, that there was some form of 'food on the go' litter present. With the pace of daily life increasing, more and more people eat on the go, resulting in the requirement for well positioned litter bins. Whilst the amounts of litter have been impacted upon by the Coronavirus Pandemic and associated lockdown measures, it's reasonable to assume that 'food on the go' will continue to result in litter with litter amounts increasing as restrictions are relaxed and society enters a new normal.
- 3.3** It is important to consider where the demand for the litter bins will be the greatest. By providing litter bins in areas which require them, for example near to a shopping area, can play its part in preventing the dropping of litter and encourage people to dispose of litter responsibly.



- 3.4 An experiment carried out by Keep Britain Tidy showed that when a litter bin was placed within a 50 metre strip outside a row of shops, there was 10% reduction in overall littering.
- 3.5 This demonstrates that by ensuring litter bins are placed where there is demand, it will play its role in helping to reduce litter being dropped on the streets and support the overall cleanliness of the District and reduce the cost of this service.
- 3.6 Recycling litter bins can be effective if properly designed and positioned however, it's common for the material captured to be of poor quality and contaminated with non-recyclable items, such as food waste. This then risks there being greater amounts of contamination in the recycling material stream and may result in a load being rejected by the re-processor, which would mean an increase in cost for the Council.
- 3.7 The high street has been changing for a number of years and whilst there is still a high degree of footfall in certain areas, a large proportion of shoppers are now electing to make purchases online and have home deliveries. This in turn means that the high streets are shrinking and their usage is reducing, so it is important to ensure that litter bins are provided in areas where they are most effective and not outside a vacated shop or a building that used to be a public house for example. In addition, it's important to recognise that bins must be accessible to all users including those with disabilities.
- 3.8 Within the district there are a number of examples of bins being located inappropriately or two bins being located very closely together or litter and dog waste bins next to each other, which is a waste of resource.
- 3.9 Litter and dog waste bins therefore need to be available, accessible and visible to be most effective.
- 3.10 It is proposed that the Council introduces a zonal system for the placement of litter/dog waste bins as follows;
- Zone 1 – Town Centres with large numbers of commercial shops, licenced premises and food outlets**
- Litter bins would be placed in prominent positions, with multiple bins only being located in very high footfall areas
- Zone 2 – Village Centres with smaller numbers of commercial shops, licence premises and food outlets**
- Litter bins would be placed in prominent positions
- Zone 3 – Bus stops and roads having smaller grocery type shops**
- Litter bins would be placed at key bus stops/sections of the road and in prominent positions



Zone 4 – Housing estates & outlying town/village areas

Single litter and/or dog waste bins in these areas would be strategically placed based on demonstrated need - on a recognised school walking route which goes past a local shop for example

- 3.11 Officers would review the location of the current bins and make a decision using the principles as a guide, together with an accessibility assessment, to decide whether they were providing good, limited or little benefit. (In certain cases using the principles may not be feasible and in which case a bespoke assessment including accessibility would be undertaken, but these instances should be in the minority and with the increase in budget provision, the necessary money will be available to support this should there be additional costs).
- 3.12 Consultation would then be had with the relevant Town/Parish Councils where bins were in locations offering limited or little benefit, including those which had previously been paid for by that Town/Parish Council, with the proposal that they be removed and providing they were in good order, used to increase the capacity in areas with a greater need or kept for a future replacement. Alternatively, where the Town/Parish Council were keen to see bins in a particular position, but they didn't fit into the zonal category, nor were they perceived to offer a significant support to the overall cleansing service, then that Town/Parish Council could pay for the bin installation and regular emptying.
- 3.13 A [report on determining the impact on litter levels when removing litter bins from locations across Herefordshire](http://www.wrap.org.uk/sites/files/wrap/Herefordshire_Council.pdf) showed that it is incorrect to assume that the removal of litter bins would automatically result in increased litter. With effective planning and the necessary Town/Parish Council consultation, the removal of certain litter bins could actually result in a reduction in litter, if similar results were seen in Cotswold District. The URL for the report is [http://www.wrap.org.uk/sites/files/wrap/Herefordshire Council.pdf](http://www.wrap.org.uk/sites/files/wrap/Herefordshire_Council.pdf)
- 3.14 Using the £10,000 capital budget provision, the bins in the worst state of repair would be replaced using the zonal assessment and a co-ordinated approach between the Council, Ubico and the relevant Town or Parish Council responsible.
- 3.15 This approach would also reduce the litter bin related complaints from residents and Town or Parish Councils.
- 3.16 Earlier this year West Oxfordshire supported the introduction of the same set of principles and has seen a reduction so far of 261 litter/dog waste bins with more to follow.



4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1** The Ubico provision required to empty the current litter and dog bins across the District is approximately £175k per annum – but these costs are built in to the overall street cleansing contract costs and therefore not itemised separately. If the recommendations within this report are supported, officers will work with Ubico to review the costs of providing the service annually and identify the revenue savings arising from this rationalisation and, by agreement, seek to reduce the contract value accordingly which would be factored in to the budget setting process.
- 4.2** Whilst a proportion of cost is already captured within the Ubico contract and supporting budget relating to existing resources, Ubico has estimated that it costs up to £150 to install a new litter/dog waste bin because of the complexities brought about by having to liaise with all service providers - gas, water, telecoms and electric prior to the works being undertaken with labour and the materials involved - postcrete, slabs, thunder bolts and fittings. Replacing existing bins where there is no need to install a new concrete base would be lower in cost due to less materials being required. In addition, commonly in that case there would not be the need to liaise with third party utility companies, so for the purposes of this review an average cost of £100 is assumed to fit each bin.
- 4.3** Officer's initial estimate is that a number of litter and dog bins can be consolidated and the number can be reduced by up to 25% without having any detrimental impact on service provision, In addition, there are a number of examples of bins being located inappropriately and offering little benefit so it is assumed that these could be removed. This reduction in the number of bins having to be serviced would equate to a saving on the current expenditure, but a large proportion of these costs are related to the pool of labour used to complete all of the cleansing activities in the district, which could not be reduced and are therefore non-cashable. If however 25% were removed, there would be cost reductions associated with a reduction in fuel, and so officers would work with Ubico to capture these savings and look at further efficiencies as part of the programme.
- 4.4** With a litter bin portfolio which reflects the needs of the district and provides effective coverage, it is anticipated that operational savings would be available in reduced time and fuel (as per 4.3). There would also be less Co2 produced, which would go towards supporting the Councils aspirations in tackling the declared climate emergency.
- 4.5** A budget growth of £10,000 capital is proposed for a replacement and fitting fund, and would allow for the purchase and fitting of approximately 40 (£250 each = £150 bin & £100 fitting) of the new style litter and dog waste bins.



- 4.6** At this stage it is not possible to estimate the likely demand from Towns and Parish Councils to empty bins which don't fall into one of the zones, but any revenue monies generated would go to offset some of the costs of providing the service.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1** The Council is legally required to cleanse the adopted highway under the Environmental Protection Act and as a 'Litter Authority', but there is no stipulation on the type and/or number of litter/dog waste bins which must be provided.

6. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 6.1** The Pros and Cons of rationalising the litter/dog waste bin portfolio and adopting a replacement programme for the next five years are set out below:

6.2 Pros

- Builds in an effective replacement programme using agreed parameters for bin placements.
- Provides effective coverage of litter/dog waste bins and limits wasted resources.
- Reduces cost of collecting litter/dog waste by Ubico and therefore the Council.
- Frees up cleansing staff for other duties.
- Reduces complaints / calls / press enquiries and potentially reputational damage.
- Reduces demand on ERS team in having to investigate littering with frequently no evidence present.

6.3 Cons

- Littering/dog fouling may increase in areas where a bin has been removed or moved however with effective communication with Towns and Parish Councils on any changes, it is believed that this risk is low.
- It's difficult to establish monetary savings from the UBICO contract, other than a reduction in fuel from litter bins emptying. Further work would be required on this but would be built in as part of the benefits realisation under the Environmental Services Innovation Programme (ESIP).



- Removal of bins provided by CDC may lead to criticism, but the communications needs to be clear that there is a strategic and effective provision of litter/dog waste bins for residents and visitors to the district, and that the programme future proofs the ongoing replacement requirements for the next five years.

7. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 7.1** Litter has direct financial, environmental and health consequences to individuals and communities. To aid in the prevention of littering, and to save the cost of street cleaning it is necessary to consider the positioning of litter bins, ensuring they are placed in key locations. It is important to remember that litter bins should be accessible, available and visible.
- 7.2** The recommendations within this report will have a positive effect on the different service users, customers and staff, because the Council will improve the network of litter/dog waste bins and have these resources in the right areas. In addition, the formalised replacement program will ensure that bins needing replacement will be actioned promptly.

8. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1** Having litter/dog waste bins strategically positioned will optimise the Ubico collections and should reduce fuel usage, which will have a direct carbon benefit in lower emissions and the CO₂ produced.
- 8.2.** Having a robust set of principles and replacement programme for litter/dog waste bins will ensure that they are fit for purpose and able to effectively hold litter and dog waste.
- 8.3.** If recycling litter bins were installed in appropriate locations and used correctly, then there would be a direct climate benefit, in diverting the material captured away from energy recovery.

9. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 9.1** The alternatives to implementing a litter/dog waste bin siting and replacement strategy would be to:
- Retain the current approach with the large number of bins, accepting that they are not all in the correct locations and Ubico will likely be wasting time and fuel in having to visit them;



- Accept that Ubico will not be able to install any further bins and have the ability to collect from all of them, and so additional resources would be required sooner than if the bin estate is managed by way of the replacement programme;
- Accept that without an agreed set of principles, the location of litter bins is likely to be decided upon with little evidence to support their effectiveness.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 None

(END)