

Committee: **Place Scrutiny Committee**

Date of meeting: **5th December 2023**

Report Subject: **Adoption of Litter & Dog Bin Policy**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr. Helen Cunningham – Deputy Leader / Cabinet Member – Place & Environment**

Report Submitted by: **David Watkins – Team Manager - Street Scene**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Governance Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Cabinet	Council	Other (please state)
14/11/23	16/11/23	23.11.23			05/12/23	03.01.24		

## 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The report is to seek support from Scrutiny Committee for the adoption of a new Council Litter Bin Policy as identified within the outcome objectives of the Fly-Tipping Strategy 2021-2026.
- 1.2 The Litter bin policy is applicable to litter, recycling and dog waste bins, and the term 'bins' refers to any of these.

## 2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 This report provides information on the rationale, relevance, and benefit that a Litter Bin policy would have to support the Council in the effective, efficient, and consistent operational management of litter across the County Borough.
- 2.2 As a result of being awarded Welsh Government funding through the Keep Wales Tidy (KWT) "Caru Cymru" scheme, the Council appointed an independent consultant in 2020 to support the drafting of an objective Litter & Fly Tipping Strategy for Council to consider for adoption.
- 2.3 Following a thorough and diligent process, including a service review and consultation with ward members and all stakeholders affected by the impact of litter and fly tipping, the Litter and Fly Tipping Strategy 2021-2026 (appendix 1) was formally adopted by Council in April 2021.
- 2.4 The strategy outlined a number of key objectives that would deliver recognised environmental improvements to ensure Blaenau Gwent realises the shared vision *"To radically reduce litter and fly-tipping so we can improve our natural habitats as well as our wild and urban landscapes, increasing pride and awareness of our local heritage and desire to keep it litter free."*

- 2.5 To achieve the objections and realise the shared vision, an operational Strategy Action Plan (appendix 2) was included that set out key actions to be undertaken during the lifespan of the strategy 2021-2026, these are set out under four themes, as follows.
- Influence
  - Engage
  - Adopt Best Practice
  - Empower
- 2.6 The timelines associated with the key actions within the action plan are set out as follows.
- short-term – one to two years
  - medium-term – two to three years, and,
  - long-term – three to five years
- 2.7 Within the short-term timeline of “Adopt Best Practice” was the implementation of a Litter Bin Policy and protocol to allow for a more efficient, effective, and consistent approach to the management of the council’s litter bin stock. Unfortunately, this has been delayed primarily because of the Covid pandemic.
- 2.8 Subsequently, a Litter bin policy has been drafted (appendix 1) that, sets out the procedures and requirements for the installation and maintenance of new bins, and the replacement and refurbishment of existing bins. It also looks at the protocol for responding to requests for bins.
- 2.9 The scoring matrix within the proposed policy will allow for a far more efficient and consistent method of assessing bin requests that will result in a successful or unsuccessful outcome.
- 2.10 Currently the Council has 622 litter bins and 491 dog waste bins at various locations across the County Borough. The cost to install or replace a bin on average costs £275.00 each. Between April 2022 to November 2023 there were 114 requests for a bin to be replaced or an additional bin to be installed. There are currently 63 outstanding requests to be actioned on the system. The allocated annual budget for a damaged bin replacement or requests for a new bin at a new site is approximately £12,000.
- 2.10 The scoring matrix has separate categories, each allowing for a score to be appropriately allocated:
- Street Cleaning Zone (NB covers tourist hotspots and lay-bys) as defined with the National Code of Practice on Litter & Refuse (2006)
  - Proximity to existing bins – How far is the nearest bin
  - Proximity to facilities – Schools, shops, takeaways, bus stops, sport, and public facilities.

- Number of requests for de-littering received within six months.
- Number of requests for a bin received within a six-month period.

2.11 The total overall score is compared to a threshold table that determines the success of the request:

<b>Score</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
0-40	Unsuccessful
41-79	Successful

The matrix methodology allows for objective assessments that removes any ambiguity.

### 3. **Options for Recommendation**

#### 3.1 **Option 1 (preferred)**

*To support the adoption of the proposed Litter Bin policy as attached at appendix 1.*

#### 3.2 **Option 2**

*Not to support the adoption of the proposed Litter Bin policy.*

### 4. **Evidence of how this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

### 5. **Implications Against Each Option**

#### **Benefits**

- Adoption of the Litter and Fly-tipping Strategy has seen Blaenau Gwent as one of only two Local Authorities in Wales to have a specific litter and fly-tipping strategy providing a strategic direction that supports its aim to improve the local environment quality to the benefit of the community.
- As detailed with 2.7 the proposed policy supports the Litter & Fly Tipping Strategy outcome objectives to “Adopt Best Practice.”
- With increasing budgets pressures, the proposed policy will allow for more efficient and effective management of the councils Litter bins stock.
- Utilising the consistency of the scoring matrix with the policy, the proposal will remove the existing ambiguity and subjective nature of the existing process of allocating new bins.

## **Dis-benefits**

- Initial Challenges on Decision, particularly where threshold scores are near to threshold barrier.

### **5.1 *Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)***

- 5.1.1 The service reviews and subsequent Litter and Fly Tipping Strategy has been funded by Welsh Government.
- 5.1.2 It is anticipated that the policy will be delivered within existing revenue resources.
- 5.1.3 The budget allocation for the replacement of is £12,000.

### **5.2 *Risk including Mitigating Actions***

#### Risks Option 1

- Challenges to decisions made on litter bin allocation.
  - if approved, the policy would allow consistent justification against challenges made.

#### Risks Option 2

- Budget pressures on existing budget with no policy to support decision making.
- Inconsistent approach across borough
- Not support the outcome aims of the Litter & Fly tipping strategy.
- The council would have no strategic document to use as a basis for securing external funding opportunities.

### **5.3 *Legal***

Enforcement is a key area of work within the new Litter and Fly-Tipping Strategy and will require ongoing legal support from the Council's Environment, Legal and Estates teams.

### **5.4 *Human Resources***

NA

### **5.5 *Health and Safety***

## **6. *Supporting Evidence***

### **6.1 *Performance Information and Data***

Littering across all local authorities in Wales is monitored through the Welsh Government's Local Environment Audit and Management System (LEAMS). LEAMS records two issues in the street scene environment.

Firstly, street cleanliness and secondly it records Adverse Environmental Quality Indicators (AEQI) - this would include flyposting, graffiti, dog fouling, vandalism, weeds, and detritus. Audits have been published on an annual basis since 2007.

## 6.2 ***Expected outcome for the public.***

6.2.1 Public consultations and litter champion surveys have identified that the impact of litter has a detrimental impact of the perception of the local environment. With the adoption of the Litter and Fly Tipping Strategy the outcome aims and policies of the strategy will put systems in place to improve the environment to the benefit of the whole community.

6.2.2 As one of the short-term outcome gains in adopting best practice, the community will benefit from a fair, consistent, and transparent decision-making process.

## 6.3 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***

Extensive consultation was undertaken through a Street Cleansing review to provide the necessary information needed in the drafting of the Strategy, and its subsequent outcome aims including the proposed litter and dog bin policy. This included engagement with the following:

- Elected Blaenau Gwent Member Engagement
- Keep Wales Tidy
- Litter Champions
- External partners/Community Groups
- Welsh Government
- Departmental officers

## 6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***

6.4.1 The five-year action plan has been developed identifying key actions to be undertaken on a short-term, medium-term, and long-term basis over the lifespan of the strategy 2021-2026.

6.4.2 The litter and dog bin policy has been identified as one of the key actions within the short term “adopt best practice” element of the strategy.

6.4.3 As detailed in 2.7 the policy will allow for a more efficient, effective, and consistent long-term approach to the management of the council’s litter bin stock.

## 6.5 ***Preventative focus***

6.5.1 During the preparatory process of the strategy the appointed consultant undertook a fundamental review of the Street Cleansing service.

- The findings of the review formed the basis of the strategy and identified the key objectives, and actions including the adoption of

the litter and dog bin policy as a means to adopting best practice to meet the needs of the community in an efficient manner.

- There will be a need both corporately and operationally to adopt to adapt to the proposed changes to ensure it is fit and fair for residents, visitors and sustainable going forward.

## 6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working.***

6.6.1 As detailed in 6.3 extensive collaboration and consultation was undertaken in the preparation of the strategy that resulted in one of the key outcome objectives being the implementation of a litter and dog bin policy.

6.6.2 There are opportunities to work with other internal service areas, housing associations, community groups, local businesses and keep Wales tidy to work in collaboration to achieve the objectives of the policy across the borough.

## 6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***

The content of this report has been considered across several services including: Education, Environmental Services, Community Services, and Community Safety.

## 6.8 ***Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions***

6.8.1 The policy will allow for bins to be allocated more effectively and has the opportunity for operational practices to be more efficient in how fleet vehicles are used to service the bins.

## 6.9 ***Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)***

Attached appendix 4.

## 7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 The policy will be monitored through Scrutiny and the Executive with performance reports being submitted together with analysing the annual LEAMS report being submitted.

### **Background Documents /Electronic Links**

Attached to this report:

- Appendix 1 – Draft Litter and Dog Bin Policy
- Appendix 2 - Litter Strategy 2021-2026
- Appendix 3 – Litter Strategy Action Plan 2021-2026
- Appendix 4 - IIA