

St Albans City and District Council

Litter Bin Strategy

May 2023

1. The Service

St Albans City and District Council (SADC) is the designated Litter Authority, as set out in the Environmental Protection Act 1990. In this capacity it has responsibility for maintaining an acceptable level of cleanliness, installing, emptying, and maintaining litter and dog waste bins, on streets, in green spaces and parks for which it is accountable. This includes housing land.

Unless specified otherwise in this document, the supply, installation, maintenance (including cleaning), emptying, replacement or refurbishment of bins on land for which SADC is accountable, is the responsibility of SADC. The implementation of this responsibility sits with the Waste & Recycling Contractor (for Street Cleansing) and the Grounds Maintenance Contractor (Parks & Green Spaces). Any costs associated with this strategy are detailed in these contracts. However, some of these costs are in addition to the standard contract sum e.g., provision of new/replacement bins and installation at new locations.

This strategy 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. This strategy is applicable to litter, recycling and dog waste bins, and the term 'bins' refers to any of these.

Bin infrastructure in St Albans should prioritise litter hotspots. These are places that regularly have relatively high levels of litter either in existing bins, or dropped on the ground, compared to other similar sites. The scoring matrix in Appendix 1 will determine if an area is a litter hotspot.

In May 2023, there were 630 street litter bins and 225 litter and 115 dog bins in parks and green spaces.

2. National and local strategy context

We are waiting for the government to implement its Resources & Waste Strategy (RWS). The three main elements of interest in the RWS include Deposit Return Scheme (DRS), Consistency and Extended Producer Responsibility. DRS has the greatest potential for litter mitigation. We are unclear of the detailed implications at this stage, given that this is yet to be statute, but recognise that this could have a positive, incentivising, impact upon a "throwaway culture". There should be a move away from single use packaging in favour of reusable systems as it will directly incentivise consumers to keep hold of used beverage packaging made of metal or plastic (between 50ml – 3 litres) to redeem their deposits.

Once the RWS is implemented the council could sign post the public to make the best use of return points, especially at litter hotspots to deal with the relevant materials.

This strategy supports the following Councils Objectives:

- Combat the climate emergency,
- Support our local economy,
- Enhance the District's cultural offer,

2. Objectives

- The purpose of this strategy is to ensure litter bins are the right design and in the right location to support the intent of the national Resource & Waste Strategy
- To ensure that the provision of street litter bins is fair and necessary and meets a recognised need.
- Remove and reduce litter bins. Keep Britain Tidy has a range of anecdotal evidence to suggest that removing public litter bins from certain locations can have a positive effect on litter levels.

3. Reducing Litter Bins

Keep Britain Tidy and WRAP have a range of anecdotal evidence to suggest that removing public litter bins from certain locations can have a positive effect on litter levels.

- South Somerset removed all litter bins in a heritage site, Ham Hill County Park. They communicated with the public via a Facebook campaign that it was their responsibility to take litter home and recycle it. The trial was successful and litter levels reduced by 81% from 2018 to 2021.
- Keep Britain Tidy (supported by Parks for London) partnered with Ealing Council and Merton Council, in 2018, to trial the removal of bins across three London parks, with a view to identifying whether bin removal is an appropriate intervention for reducing litter. The trial concluded there was an increase in the amount of litter on the ground in all three parks in the month immediately following the bin removal, and this increase was sustained in two of the parks in the longer-term monitoring. However, the total amount of waste in each park decreased significantly from the baseline monitoring period following bin removal (by an average of 68% across the three parks) indicating that a large proportion of park visitors took their rubbish with them. Both partners felt that the amount of litter and fly-tipping had visibly reduced in their parks.

Source: <https://www.keepbritaintidy.org/sites/default/files/resources/LIF%20Bin%20Removal%20Experiment%20-%20Final%20Report.pdf>

- Broxbourne undertook a major reappraisal of the litter bin deployments with significant changes made.

- SADC has removed several bins where there has been significant and consistent littering and fly-tipping. The removal of these bins has reduced or eliminated the littering and/or fly-tipping. An example of this is the removal of the second bin outside St Dominic's School in Harpenden.

Using the scoring matrix in Appendix 1, SADC will undertake trials of removing and reducing bins. Officers and contractors will closely monitor litter, fly-tipping, and complaints at these locations. The bin will be re-installed if this monitoring highlights concerns.

4. Requests and Requirements for New Bins

4.1. Budget

SADC has a limited budget availability of £18k per annum for the supply and installation of street litter bins. However, there is no additional budget for bins within Parks and Green Spaces. The costs of litter bins vary depending on type and size but are in the region of £700 including installation.

4.2. Origin of Requests

The installation of new bins will come about through one of three routes:

- requests from the public and Councillors; or
- requests from Parish/Town Councils or other interested parties; or
- recognition from either SADC or its Contractor that additional bin facilities are required.

As there are on-going human and financial resource implications with the installation of any new bin, due consideration should be given to all requests for bins, using a scoring system to determine need and suitability of locations. This scoring system is shown in Appendix 1 and will be followed for each request or requirement for a new bin. At the end of the assessment, the scores should be added up to give an overall score.

Prior to assessment, the suitability of location will be considered. If SADC deems the location to be unsuitable for reasons of safety, such as stopping to empty a bin, proximity to housing, or installation difficulties, it may be declined prior to scoring. An alternative location may be suggested.

Once a decision has been made by SADC regarding the outcome of a request for a bin, that decision will not be reviewed for a minimum of six months following the decision being made.

4.3. Relevant Land

Bins will only be supplied, installed, maintained, or emptied if they are on land for which SADC has responsibility. This includes streets, parks, green spaces (including cemeteries) and housing land, but doesn't include private land such as schools, housing associations or riverbanks.

The zones referred to in the scoring system (Appendix 1) are as set out in the Waste & Recycling Contract and are based on the Environmental Protection Act 1990 Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse 2006 and relate to the level of use of areas. All areas in SADC for which the council holds responsibility as the Litter Authority have been zoned, and this information is available on request.

4.4. Recycling Litter Bins

Where deemed appropriate by SADC, dual litter bins with recycling facilities will be installed instead of, or in addition to, standard litter bins.

A review of litter collected in general waste litter bins will be undertaken to determine if triple bins would increase recycling rates.

4.5. Preferred Style of Standard Bin Design

Where a request or requirement for a new bin has been deemed successful using the scoring system in Appendix 1, a new bin will be installed. This bin will, as far as practicable, be a standard design and style which is consistent across the district. However, alternative designs of bin may be supplied in special circumstances e.g., conservation areas. All bins must be approved by SADC prior to installation and should include contact details for reporting problems with the bin.

Example Bin design (may be subject to change):



1. <https://www.recyclingbins-direct.co.uk/shop/Heritage-Square-Hooded-Litter-Bin-110-Litre-Black-details.html>

2. <https://leafieldrecycle.com/product/pioneer-litter-bin/>
3. <https://source.thenbs.com/product/synergy-recycling-bin/gbsubswJ4xowfXLtdnv9iP/scHSGaLaKeH6kvZtUUsEkb>
4. Standard Parks Bin
5. Dual bin for Parks and City Centre

4.6. Solar Compactor Bins

Solar Compactor Bins can provide great benefits in creating additional capacity, contain litter and intelligence from telematics. To benefit from this data, it is important to have multiple solar bins.

However, SADC has a limited budget of £18k per annum for the supply and installation of all litter bins. Therefore, without significant investment, this is not viable currently.

4.7. Timescales for Requests for Bins

Following any request for a new bin, irrespective of the origin of the request, consideration will be given to the request, following the scoring system in Appendix 1. This evaluation will be conducted by an Officer with a response made to the originator of the request within 10 working days of receipt of the request.

Should a request be deemed successful, installation of the bin will take place in line with the Waste & Recycling or Grounds Maintenance Contract specifications.

4.8. Responsibility for Installation of Bins

Responsibility for the installation of bins on land for which the Council is responsible sits with the Waste & Recycling Contractor for Streets and the Grounds Maintenance Contractor for Parks & Green Spaces. It is an additional cost within the Grounds Maintenance contract. In addition, SADC may, at the Council's discretion, install and maintain bins on other 'third party' land (such as Parish Council or private land).

4.8.1. Installation of bins on SADC Land

Third parties must not install bins on land for which SADC has responsibility.

4.8.2. Positioning of new bins

New free-standing bins should always be positioned out of the main line of travel or grouped with other existing street furniture, so that they do not present a collision hazard for people with sight loss or reduce the usable width of the footway for people using wheelchairs, mobility aids or guide dogs.

New post-mounted bins should not protrude into circulation space as a cane or guide dog could go underneath, leading their owner into the bin,

Bins should not be installed immediately adjacent to gates and benches.

4.9. Provision of Bins on Third Party Land

Should a third party (including Housing) request a new or replacement bin on their land, SADC will consider the request, and if approved, a standard bin will only be

supplied and installed at a cost to the third party. Crests or logos can be added to a standard bin, and non-standard bins can be supplied, both for an additional cost. The responsibility for emptying such a bin will be agreed prior to installation.

4.10. Requests for Temporary Bins for Community Events

The council's Events Team will liaise directly with the Waste & Recycling Contractor to ensure adequate temporary litter and recycling bins are provided, maintained, and serviced for council organised events.

For third party events on council owned land, event organisers are required to develop a Waste Management Plan to ensure there is adequate provision for waste and recycling, including removal of all litter from the event into an appropriate container. This should be agreed with the Events Team as part of the Event Application process.

All events on Council land should adhere to the Event Sustainability Policy to operate events as sustainably as possible including encouraging waste reduction, maximising recycling opportunities and the use of sustainable materials and the provision of temporary bins at events should support this.

5. Emptying of Litter Bin

5.1. Litter bins are predominantly emptied when they are no more than three quarters full although these vary depending on location/zone. The specifics associated with emptying and scheduling are detailed in the Waste & Recycling and Grounds Maintenance contracts.

6. Maintenance of Bins

Over time, bins are subject to wear and tear, accidental or wilful damage and will need to be either refurbished or replaced. This section looks at the process for assessing the condition of bins, who should take responsibility for their replacement or refurbishment, and the associated timescales for action. It also considers the maintenance of bins, including cleaning.

6.1. Responsibility for Assessment, Replacement, Repair and Refurbishment of Bins

Bins which have been supplied, installed, and emptied by SADC are included in the assessment, replacement, repair and refurbishment process.

Bins which have been requested by a Parish Council or other interested party, but have been supplied, installed, and emptied by SADC, will be included in the assessment, replacement, repair and refurbishment process.

Where bins included in this process are deemed to require repair, refurbishment, or replacement, this will be the responsibility of the Council's Contractor. Refurbished

bins should meet the same standard of quality as new bins. This would be an additional cost within the Grounds Maintenance Contract.

Bins which have been supplied and installed for a third party such as a Parish Council remain the responsibility of that third party and will not be included in the assessment, replacement, repair, and refurbishment process.

6.2. Frequency of Assessment of the Condition of Bins

The condition of bins is surveyed regularly as part of the council's contracts. This is set out according to the street cleaning zones laid out in the Environmental Protection Act 1990 Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse 2006.

6.3. Criteria for the Assessment of the Condition of Bins

During the Contractor's assessment of bins, the following criteria should be used to determine the need for repair, refurbishment, or replacement. Photographic examples of these criteria are available in Appendix 2.

Where a bin is deemed to have either of the following, no action to replace, repair or refurbish the bin should be taken:

- a) No damage, or
- b) Reasonable wear and tear, but bin still fully functioning.

Where a bin is deemed to have any of the following, the bin should be repaired or refurbished where possible. If the extent of the damage is too severe to warrant repair or refurbishment, a replacement bin should be installed:

- c) Slight damage, but still fully functioning
- d) Significant damage, compromising the function of the bin, or
- e) Severe damage, causing complete loss of function of the bin.

If the outcome of the assessment using the criteria above indicates that a bin should be replaced, repaired or refurbished, action should be taken by the contractor to refurbish, repair or replace that bin, as appropriate. Where possible, dog bins will be replaced with standard litter bins.

Regular monitoring of the decisions taken by the contractors on the repair, refurbishment and replacement of bins will be carried out, to verify the validity of the decisions being made. This monitoring will include joint inspections by SADC and contractors.

6.4. Timescales for Repair, Refurbishment or Replacement of Bins

Waste & Recycling Contract (streets)

When a bin is identified for replacement, this replacement should take place within 5 working days of the assessment being made.

When a bin is identified for repair or refurbishment, this process should start within 5 working days of the assessment being made and completed within a further 10 working days. Should a bin be taken away from its location for repair or refurbishment, an alternative bin of equivalent specification should be installed at the same location at the time of removing the damaged bin.

Grounds Maintenance Contract

Timescales for repair, refurbishment or replacement need to be arranged with the contractor as this is in addition to the standard contract.

6.5. Cleaning

All bins will be cleaned on a regular basis to maintain a high-quality public environment.

6.6. Repeated Vandalism

Where individual bins are repeatedly targeted with vandalism, a flexible approach to finding a suitable solution should be found. This may include using a different type of bin, moving the bin to a nearby location, or removing the bin entirely.

7. Removal of Existing Bins

If a member of the public, a Parish Council, other interested party or SADC deems a bin to be no longer needed in a particular location, an assessment will be carried out in accordance with the details in Appendix 1.

If the assessment shows the bin to be in a suitable location, it will remain in place. If the assessment shows the bin to be in an unsuitable location it will be removed. If it is deemed unsuitable due to its proximity to other bins a review will take place to determine if all bins in the area could be re-distributed, reducing the number of whilst improving provision.

An alternative location can be suggested for the existing bin, and an assessment will be carried out against the scoring system for a new bin.

If this shows that the bin is unsuitably located, it will be removed entirely, or moved to an approved alternative location.

8. Communication & Consultation

Public engagement is key to reducing litter within the district. Officers and contractors will continue to work with community groups, parishes, and residents to encourage volunteering and increase engagement.

All littering and enforcement action should be communicated via social media and local press.

This strategy does not suggest public consultation on the installation of bins in general. However, in some circumstances, it is recommended, such as when bins are proposed near houses or there is a high public interest.

We will actively continue environmental awareness campaigns in partnership with Hertfordshire Waste Partnership, our contractors, businesses, colleges, and schools to reduce litter and increase the recycling and re-use of street litter.

9. Sponsorship

Officers will explore sponsorship of litter bins. However, it is recognised, that this may be limited in the numbers of businesses who will be interested in this option.

In addition, we work in partnership with Town and Parish Councils, St Albans BID, community groups and Hertfordshire County Council. These organisations occasionally fund litter bins when there are specific issues.

10. Authorised Officer

Final decisions on all matters relating to bins, as outlined in this document, will be the responsibility of the Council's Authorised Officer. This is the Assistant Director – Public Realm or their nominated representative.

Appendix 1: Bin Installation Scoring System

Each request or requirement for a new bin should be assessed using the scoring system below.

Category	Options	Score
Street cleaning zone	Zone 1 – (High intensity use) - Includes town centres, shopping centres, shopping streets, major transport centres, central car parks and other busy public areas	10
	Zone 2 – (High intensity use) - Includes high-density residential areas (eg containing terraced housing and flats), busy recreational areas, where large numbers of people congregate, suburban car parks, transport centres and industrial estates with a high density of premises. Includes Layby's.	10
	Zone 2a - (High intensity use) - Small shopping precincts	10
	Zone 3 – (Medium intensity use) - includes low-density residential areas (containing detached/semi detached houses), other public car parks and other recreational areas.	5
	Zone 6 - includes strategic routes i.e. major trunk and de-trunked roads	0
	Zone 7 – (Low intensity use) - includes all other District and local roads/ lanes not included within categories 1, 2, 2A, 3 &6 above.	0
Proximity to existing bins	> 100 metres to any bins	10
	< 100 metres to 1 bin	5
	< 100 metres to more than 1 bin	0
Proximity to facilities	< 100 metres to schools	5
	< 50 metres to take away outlets	10
	< 50 metres to shops	5
	< 100 metres to sports facilities	2
	< 50 metres to bus stops	2
	< 100 metres to car boot sales	1
Number of requests for de-littering received within six months	< 100 metres to other public facilities such as pub, church, community centre	2
	0	0
	1-2	2
	3-5	5

	6-10	10
	Over 11	12
Number of requests for a bin received within a six month period	1	0
	2-10	10
	11-50	15
	51 or over	20

The overall score should be compared to the thresholds shown in the table below, to determine the success of the request.

Score	Outcome
0 – 40	Unsuccessful
41 - 79	Successful

Appendix 2: Assessment Criteria for the Replacement or Refurbishment of bins

Where a bin is deemed to have either of the following, no action to replace, repair or refurbish the bin should be taken:

- a) No damage
- b) Reasonable wear and tear, but bin still fully functioning



Where a bin is deemed to have any of the following, the bin should be repaired or refurbished where possible. If the extent of the damage is too severe to warrant repair or refurbishment, a replacement bin should be installed:

- c) Slight damage, but still fully functioning



- d) Significant damage, compromising the function of the bin



e) Severe damage, causing complete loss of function of the bin

