

Subject:	Communal Bins		
Date of Meeting:	September 2008		
Report of:	Director of Environment		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Jan Jonker	Tel: 29-4722
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Key Decision:	Yes	Forward Plan No. CAB 2193	
Wards Affected:	Brunswick & Adelaide, Central Hove, East Brighton, Goldsmid, Preston Park, St Peters and North Laine, Queens Park, Regency, Rottingdean Coastal, and Westbourne.		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE**1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:**

- 1.1 Cabinet is asked to agree an extension of the communal bin scheme in central parts of the city following consultation with residents, ward councillors, the Conservation Advisory Group etc.
- 1.2 The current black sack refuse collection service results in litter strewn streets as sacks are ripped open by wildlife including seagulls. Containment of refuse has been identified as a priority by the Audit Commission and in the Council's CPA assessment of 2004. Communal containers are the most suitable form of containment in high density housing areas, resulting in cleaner streets and a more efficient and safe collection service.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (1) That the Cabinet approves the introduction of a communal bin scheme in the central areas of Brighton and Hove as defined in Annex 1.
- (2) That the Cabinet notes the following historic squares and terraces be excluded from the scheme:
- (i) Sussex Square, Lewes Crescent, Chichester Terrace and Arundel Terrace
 - (ii) Brunswick Square and Brunswick Terrace
 - (iii) Adelaide Crescent / Palmeira Square

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 The collection of refuse in sacks presents major problems in the city, especially in central areas. Many households in these parts of the city have little space on their property for storing waste in between collections. Sacks placed out for collection are prone to being ripped open by seagulls and other wildlife, resulting in streets looking unsightly for residents and tourists.
- 3.2 Cityclean has been working to contain all refuse by providing households with storage solutions. Wheelie bins are the preferred containment option for households where possible. However, wheelie bins are considered unsuitable in high density housing areas due to lack of accessible storage space or insufficient footway space.
- 3.3 As an alternative, in 2004 Cityclean carried out a trial with on street 'communal containers'. As part of the trial containers were placed in 24 streets in central parts of Brighton, including some streets in conservation areas. During the trial users were surveyed and:
- 89% thought their streets were cleaner since the introduction of communal containers
 - 93% found the containers quite or very easy to use
 - Most people found the visual impact of the communal containers acceptable, and considered that the benefits of the containers outweighed any harm caused to the local street scene
 - Opinion on loss of parking space was evenly divided.
- 3.4 Based on these results the pilot scheme has been judged a success. Street cleanliness has dramatically improved with sacks of household waste no longer left on the public highway for collection. This has prompted residents in other parts of the inner city to request the same system.
- 3.5 An extension of the communal bin system is proposed, and households in the area under consideration have been invited to comment on the proposed siting of containers and express their preference for either the communal container scheme or the existing black sack scheme. The results have been analysed and the results are summarised in the consultation section below.

- 3.6 After consideration of the responses to the consultation, an extension of the communal bin scheme is recommended for the greater part of the area under consideration as indicated in Annex 1. The scheme has to be rolled out on an area by area basis, rather than a street by street basis to realise the benefits of communal bins in terms of street cleanliness and in order for the scheme to be financially viable. Running two services in one area (communal bins and black sacks) is not practicable.
- 3.7 Due to the unique setting and architectural significance of Lewes Crescent, Sussex Square, Chichester Terrace, Arundel Terrace, Brunswick Square and Terrace and Palmeira Square and Adelaide Crescent it is proposed that the application of communal bins is deferred to allow for a review of the means to minimise the visual impact of any proposed containers. These areas can be excluded without affecting the viability of the rest of the scheme.
- 3.8 Where the scheme impacts on other historically significant buildings or areas, the council will endeavour to minimise the visual impact on key views and the setting of key groups of listed building through careful siting of the containers, and through future adjustments, where appropriate, in the number of containers within the streets.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 465 streets and 23,285 households were consulted
- 4.2 In total 6790 questionnaires were returned – a 29% response rate
- 4.3 Of the total responses: 56% of households were in favour of communal bins, 36.5% were against, 6.5% had no strong view either way and 1.5% of the responses were returned with no comment.
- 4.4 Of the total responses: 53.5% of households were happy with the proposed locations of the bins, 38% against, 6% had no strong view either way and 3% of responses were returned with no comment.
- 4.5 When looking at the data on a street by street basis, rather than households, the majority of streets were in favour of the proposals at 64.3%.

- 4.6 Areas that do not support the introduction of communal containers are also areas where the highest percentages of respondents said that “bins would not be in keeping with the area”. The reverse of this is also true in that the areas with the highest level of support for the introduction of communal bins showed the lowest percentages of those who said the bins would not be in keeping with the area.
- 4.7 Meetings were held with Ward Councillors before and after the consultation process to discuss the principles behind the proposals and any particular issues or concerns within their wards.
- 4.8 The proposals were discussed at two Conservation Advisory Group meetings before and after the consultation process. At the first meeting the principles of the proposals were explained and at the second meeting the group was updated on the outcome of the consultation and general questions on the scheme were answered.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

5.1 *Financial Implications:*

Total Investment of £615,000 is needed for the scheme. A breakdown of this figure is shown below;

Additional Vehicle	£157,000
Communal Bin containers	£383,000
Implementation & Consultation costs	<u>£ 75,000</u>
Total	£615,000

It is proposed that this investment will be met from the Waste PFI reserve, which stands at £24.2m as at the end of 2007/8. The savings generated by the introduction of communal bins will then reimburse the reserve for the sum of £615,000.

Savings will arise as a result of fewer staff being needed to provide a refuse collection service to the city centre. Currently, a refuse vehicle collecting black sacks requires a driver and four collectors. A communal bin vehicle requires a driver only.

The full impact of these operational changes, after the repayment of the capital investment, is estimated to be a saving of £0.97M over a 7 year period. A breakdown of these savings per annum is shown in the table below:

Year	Operational Saving £ pa	Capital Repayment £ pa	Saving £ pa after capital repayment
2009/10	£158,000	£123,000	£35,000
2010/11	£224,000	£123,000	£101,000
2011/12	£229,000	£123,000	£106,000
2012/13	£235,000	£123,000	£112,000
2013/14	£241,000	£123,000	£118,000
2014/15	£245,000	£0	£245,000
2015/16	£253,000	£0	£253,000
TOTAL	£1,585,000	£615,000	£970,000

Finance Officer Consulted: Mark Ireland

August 2008

- 5.2 *Legal Implications:* The council has powers to specify and provide the types of receptacles to be used for depositing waste for collection and may also require particular locations, including the highway, to be used. There are no adverse Human Rights Act implications to be taken into account.

Lawyer consulted: Elizabeth Culbert on 6 August 2008

- 5.3 *Equalities Implications:* A rapid impact assessment was carried out which identified a number of groups who may be affected by the communal bin scheme. The assessment identified that negative impacts of the scheme have been mitigated through reasonable adjustments, either through Cityclean assisted collections or other council services that work with the group being identified as summarised below;

- The Federation for Disabled People feel assisted collections are a reasonable adjustment.
- Asylum seekers who may not speak English as their first language are housed in B&B's where there will be someone present to assist in dealing with waste
- Partially sighted/blind residents – The mobility officer feels the 1 meter minimum space on pavement between bin and walking space is a reasonable adjustment

- Temporary housing – Due to the turnover of residents in temporary housing they will need to be informed of refuse collection arrangements. The changes will be communicated to the Temporary Housing Manager to be advertised in each building
- In line with our policy on assisted collections these will be provided where residents suffering from mental health issues are unable to use the communal bin service, as recommended by Mental Health Services.

5.4 *Sustainability Implications:* A number of the city council's strategic sustainable priorities are likely to be affected by the proposals. These are outlined below:

- 5.4.1 *Sustainable Consumption and Production:* Like black sack collections, communal bins alone do not directly support reduction, re-use or recycling of waste (small wheeled bins per property do encourage recycling but are not suitable in this area). This is because there are no limits on the amount of waste a single residence can dispose of (within reason). However, all properties have access to recycling services including a weekly kerbside recycling, and bring banks for recycling. Initiatives for reduction and reuse will support the scheme are being proposed in the Council's waste management strategy.
- 5.4.2 *Climate Change and Energy:* An extension to the communal bin scheme could assist in reducing city pollution levels by a marginal amount. There will be fewer vehicles on the road at any one time which improves traffic flow. There will be less stopping and starting of the vehicle as there will be set points of collection and therefore a potential reduction in associated city pollution levels when compared to the current refuse collection from each property.
- 5.4.3 *Natural Resource Protection and Environmental Enhancement:* As waste will be contained and collected up to six times per week this will result in cleaner streets and an improved environment.
- 5.4.4 *Sustainable Communities:* Cityclean have engaged with the community to ask for its view on the proposed solution to improving local environments within the city centre in regard to waste collection and storage. The solution will reduce environmental degradation in the city centre, creating a tidier and cleaner environment for residents and visitors.

- 5.5 *Crime & Disorder Implications:* A cleaner environment will improve the area and contribute towards reduced crime and disorder.
- 5.6 *Risk & Opportunity Management Implications:* The risks associated with the proposals are considered to be low as this type of service has been successfully trialled in the city.
- 5.7 *Corporate / Citywide Implications:* The proposals will improve street cleanliness and environment in the central parts of the city, which have a high footfall and are essential to the economy of the city as a whole. It will also result in efficiency savings within the refuse service.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 There are no feasible alternative options for the area in question, other than the current service of black sacks. The options considered were:
- (the current) sack collection service – no change
 - wheelie bins – there is not enough outside storage for each property to have a wheelie bin
 - Binvelopes – they are a short term solution and are not ideal in areas of high density as they have to be stored within the household in between collections
 - underground waste storage – not financially viable and there is a lack of space underground due to street works
- 6.2 Communal bins have many advantages for this section of the city:
- Convenient for the householder
 - No more waste would be strewn across streets from ripped bags
 - There will be no missed collections as bins are in situ 7 days a week, 24 hours a day
 - Residents will not be required to store waste in their property as it can be placed in the communal bin 'little and often'
 - Communal bin collections are more efficient, resulting in collection cost savings
 - Manual handling is virtually eliminated with communal bins, making it a safer form of refuse collection
 - Savings will arise as a result of fewer staff being needed to provide a refuse collection service to the city centre. Currently, a refuse vehicle collecting black sacks requires a driver and four collectors. A communal bin vehicle requires a driver only

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 Communal bins have had a successful trial and have been generally well received.
- 7.2 The full impact of the operational changes, after the repayment of the capital investment, is estimated to be a saving of £0.97M over a 7 year period.
- 7.3 Street cleanliness has been seen to dramatically improve in areas where communal bins have been placed.
- 7.4 The consultation provided positive feedback from residents.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Consultation Area

Documents in Members' Rooms

1. Detailed ward by ward maps of the consultation results
2. Detailed ward by ward maps of the proposed locations of the containers
3. 2008 Communal Bin Consultation – Report of findings (by road and by area with comments)

Background Documents

1. 2008 Communal Bin Consultation – Report of Findings

