

SCRUTINY

A REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW
AND SCRUTINY LITTER BINS
TASK AND FINISH GROUP

1. PURPOSE OF THE REVIEW

- 1.1 A scrutiny form was completed by an Elected Member who raised concerns about litter bins in the Borough. It was agreed by the Policy Development Overview & Scrutiny Meeting on 20 July 2006 that this matter be taken forward for review through a Task and Finish Group.
- 1.2 It was also agreed that this would be a 'light touch review' as Members were conscious of other pieces of work within the programme that were still to be undertaken.

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE TASK AND FINISH GROUP

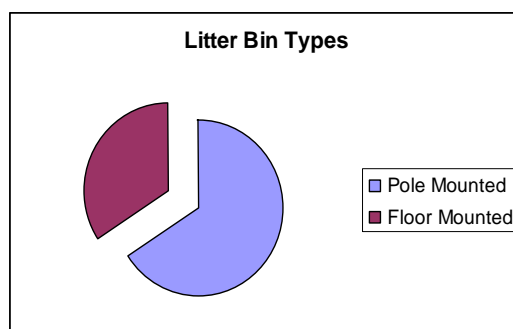
- 2.1 The Group's objective was to look at the varying styles, sizes and number of bins within the Borough and the need to ensure that the approach was consistent and to;
 - i) Determine the criteria for provision of litter bins
 - ii) Determine the most appropriate type of provision
 - iii) Identify means of encouraging local businesses to take responsibility for litter generated as a result of their activities

3. METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 The Group discussed how to take this work forward and agreed that, as the Council had an existing database of all the litter bins in the Borough, a survey examining the location and condition of the bins would be the ideal way to commence with this project.
- 3.2 All Elected Members were given the opportunity to participate and were asked to go out into their particular ward with the list of identified litter bins within the ward and complete a questionnaire.

4. FINDINGS

- 4.1** Rossendale Borough Council provides litter bins in all major towns, district centres and streets in the Borough as well as parks and open spaces.
- 4.2** There are currently 467 litter bins in Rossendale of which 306 (65.5%) are pole mounted and 161 (34.5) floor mounted. The capacity for pole mounted bins is 50 litres as opposed to 100-120 litres for floor mounted bins.



- 4.3** The capacity of litter bins impact directly on maintenance costs as smaller bins need to be emptied more frequently. The cost of provision of pole mounted as opposed to floor mounted bins is approximately 60%.

The maintenance costs for the servicing of pole mounted bins is double the cost of that for floor mounted bins in general, due to the requirements to service. As such, as a high proportion of litter bins in the Borough are pole mounted, the maintenance costs are disproportionately higher.

- 4.4** One of Rossendale's priorities is improving the street scene and an objective of the Task and Finish Group was to seek an improvement in the visual street environment by reviewing existing provision of litter bins.
- 4.5** The current budget allocation of £5,000 per annum for the replacement of bins has previously been utilised for the procurement of new bins which primarily have consisted of the post mounted variety.

Future procurement for the 'Glasdon Heritage' range (photograph attached as Appendix B), is recommended by the Group. This model is a Victorian style litter container, manufactured in Durapol material with a textured finish and Zinc coated steel liner with a capacity of 110 litres. This particular model with fixings costs in the region of £210 per unit plus fixings on site at the approximate cost of £40 per unit (£250 total costings)

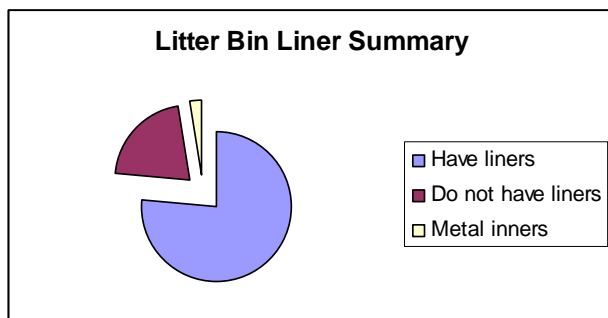
- 4.6** That during site visits concern was raised by members in relation to the amount of dropped chewing gum on the pavements and roads in the Borough.
- 4.7** The Council aims, where possible, to empty all town centres litter bins daily and all other litter bins at least once a week Monday to Friday. Town centre bins are also emptied Saturdays and Sundays. No street cleansing duties are carried out on Bank Holidays. Businesses are encouraged to provide and service litter bins within the curtilage of their premises.
- 4.8** Over the last year the Council has removed some of the most damaged bins and replaced them with larger floor mounted bins. Thirty bins have been replaced.
- 4.9** Members discussed the possibility of sponsorship from local retailers to advertise on the litter bins. This would enhance the 'working in partnership' presence with the community.
- 4.10** A comparison was undertaken with neighbouring authorities in terms of numbers of bins relative to the population and these are below:-
- Rossendale with a population of 65,900 have 467 bins = 0.007
 - Pendle with a population of 90,000 have 1323 bins = 0.0147
 - Burnley with a population of 89,500 have 500 bins = 0.006
 - Hyndburn with a population of 81,600 have 670 bins = 0.008

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1** Of the 14 wards within the Borough a total of 11 were surveyed and **388** litter bins were reviewed with **39** bins either missing or having been re-sited.

142 were free standing litter bins
207 were pole litter bins

267 of the litter bins had liners
73 did not have liners
9 of the bins had metal inners



- 5.2** Colours of litter bins were in either black (108), yellow (113) or green (101), with the occasional bin being either grey (9), silver (5) or orange (1).
- 5.3** There are two types of bins, pole mounted and free standing and it was apparent that there are more pole mounted bins, which as far as maintenance is concerned, is less cost effective.



Councillor Gladys Sandiford and Councillor Peter Starkey, examining a bin in Greenfield Park

- 5.4** Litter bin provision is an important Council service which has a positive effect on improving the Borough's environment.
- 5.5** The existing budget allocation for this service appears to be inadequate in that it is not possible to provide a service that adequately responds to demand or to repairs and maintenance requirements.
- 5.6** Agreement should be reached to establish criteria for the placement of new litter bins, with NEAT officers taking the lead within their local areas.
- 5.7** The current budget allocation (£5,000), for the replacement of bins would only allow for the purchase of 20 bins per years, with no consideration given to liner replacement or provision of replacements bins due to damage/vandalism. This also does not allow a pro-active provision of

bins, together with a stock of spares and does not reflect the Council's commitment to achieving a clean, safe environment in Rossendale.

- 5.8** Given the Council's commitment to increasing recycling rates, the possibility of introducing alternative types of bins with separate compartments for cans and bottles should be encouraged.
- 5.9** The opportunity to introduce dual litter/recyclate bins in retail areas should be considered so that people can recycle on the move. Specific models of litter bins, in keeping with existing street furniture in retail areas and district centres should be procured with a view to re-siting existing bins in outlying areas.
- 5.10** Within Crawshawbooth, it was felt that there was not a need for additional bins, but the bins that already exist should be emptied more often. Alternatively, replacements of pole mounted with floor mounted bins would solve this problem.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1** That the process of emptying, repair and maintenance of litter bins be the subject of a detailed operational review.
- 6.2** That the NEAT teams remit be extended to include repairs and maintenance of the Borough's litter bins, thus developing their role and building on their recent successful introduction.
- 6.3** That consideration be given to exploring the idea of sponsorship from local businesses to maximise opportunities within budget limitations. Working in partnership with elected Members, Council Officers make contact with local businesses to encourage them to promote anti-littering messages and to reduce packaging, in addition to promoting the adoption of voluntary codes of practice that may assist them to maintain cleaner and greener environment.
- 6.4** That based on the information collated by Members through their site visits, litter bin locations be reviewed against uniform criteria for the siting of bins, which should be approved by Ward Members.
- 6.5** That future bins should be uniform in colour, size and type and that free standing 110 litre capacity bins be provided in the most appropriate location to minimise servicing costs and that the use of plastic, post mounted bins be discontinued.
- 6.6** That the Council should consider purchasing dual litter/recyclate bins in retail areas and these should be specific models of litter bins, in-keeping with existing street furniture in retail areas and district centres.

- 6.7 That provision be made in the Capital Programme for a rolling schedule of replacement bins in the Borough, as the current budget of £5k is inadequate to respond to repairs and maintenance requirements.
- 6.8 That the Council consider looking at a coding system so that litter bins can be easily identifiable.
- 6.9 That bio-degradable bin liners be used in all litter bins.
- 6.10 That consideration be given to the provision of 'gummy' bins to encourage appropriate disposal of chewing gum.
- 6.11 That an achievable and sustainable Litter Bins Policy is developed which reflect the above recommendations, together with the inclusion of criteria for the provision of litter bins.
- 6.12 That the Task Group acknowledges the hard work of the 'litter pickers' in the Borough and recommend that the Council invite those staff to a future meeting to receive an award of recognition.

The Litter Bins Task and Finish Group Members

Councillor Neal (Chair)
Councillor Dickinson
Councillor C Gill
Councillor P Gill
Councillor Morris
Councillor Thorne
Councillor Sandiford

Members would also like to thank all Elected Members who contributed to the project as well as the following Officers

Dave Whiteman, NEAT Manager
Joe Kennedy, Operations Manager, Street Scene & Liveability
Pat Couch, Scrutiny Support Officer
Heather Moore, Committee Services Manager