



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL



Litter Bin Placement and Renewal Programme Case Study

In December 2020 West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) adopted a new set of public waste bin principles which outlined where bins would be located in the future. The council took the decision to install new 90ltr dual litter and dog waste bins to replace the 'end of life' separate dog waste and litter bins.

Overview

In July 2021, in partnership with West Oxfordshire District Council and Publica, teams at Ubico (the council's waste company), started to remove and replace 1,200 litter and dog waste bins, completing the implementation phase in May 2022, and achieving the following results:

- A total of 631 new dual bins were installed in 81 parishes across West Oxfordshire.
- A reduction of 58.8% in reports of litter bins overflowing
- The programme implemented a structured and consistent framework to ensure bins were located strategically to meet local needs, ie higher numbers of bins in high footfall areas like town centres
- A new emptying schedule was published and made available to town and parish councils
- A digital map was created to show locations and condition of bins
- The council identified £70,000 of additional income to empty bins in locations that were not adopted highway e.g. play parks and recreation fields

Background

Under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, WODC is a "Litter Authority" and therefore responsible for cleansing of the adopted highway within its district boundary. This act includes providing and maintaining any street or public place receptacles for refuse or litter (referred to as litter bins) - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/litter-and-refuse-council-responsibilities-to-keep-land-clear>

It is the duty of a "Litter Authority", to make arrangements for regular emptying and cleansing of any litter bins provided/maintained by them. The regular emptying must be sufficiently frequent to ensure that no such litter bin or its contents shall become a nuisance or give reasonable grounds for complaint.

WODC had approximately 700 90ltr litter and 500 30ltr dog waste bins (total 1,200) in place across the district. The bins were in varying conditions and had differing levels of usage. Many of the receptacles were at end of life and this reflected poorly on the Council and the District, which

attracts millions of visitors annually. In many cases, there were multiple bins (dog and litter) in the same location and these were not accessible to people with physical disabilities.

Some Parish and Town Councils had requested litter and/or dog waste bins in their parks and playgrounds, which they are responsible for. In some cases, the emptying of these bins was being paid for by Parish and Town Councils and in some areas, the costs were being met by WODC.

The locations of litter and dog bins were inconsistent across the district and there was no proper maintenance or replacement programme. The dog bins were in many cases not accessible to all users as they were mounted on poles and to dispose of waste people were required to lift the lid on the top, presenting a potential public health risk.

Some Town and Parish Councils were not aware of when bins in their area were scheduled to be emptied and there was no proper system in place to request additional bins.

What we did

The council adopted a project management approach to deliver the programme, by appointing a sponsor and project lead, and project leads from the council's waste company, Ubico. The installation of new dual bins was done one parish at a time starting with A (Ascott -Under- Wychwood) and working through to W (Witney).

The programme implementation phase started in July 2021 and emails were sent to all town and parish councils informing them. Only 20% of town and parish councils responded to a request for information, despite being sent multiple requests. This subsequently caused communication breakdown in some parishes when the programme was implemented and changes on the ground started to occur. To overcome this, all Town and Parish Councils were emailed a few weeks ahead of the work starting in their area and in a number of cases, site meetings were arranged.

The project team held weekly stand-up review meetings initially and these increased to daily meetings during the final phase of the implementation due to the pace of implementation increasing.

The programme lead reported progress on several occasions to the Councils' Environmental Overview and Scrutiny Committee, ensuring elected Councillors

were kept informed. The Cabinet Member for Environment was briefed on progress every month and the team had a programme tracker.

Teams at Ubico and Publica completed the implementation phase in May 2022, 10 months after it started, installing 631 new dual bins, across 81 parishes in the district.

A reduction of 47.4% in the number of bins across West Oxfordshire was the result of:

- combining litter and dog waste into a dual bin
- rationalising bins that were located at isolated bus stops and laybys; and removing bins that were located in residential areas

Residents of the district are encouraged to take litter and dog waste home and dispose of it in their grey refuse bin. As a result of the reduction in the number of public space waste bins there has not been a visual increase in the amount of littering.

Results

- A total of 1,200 litter and dog waste bins have been reviewed
- A total of 631 new dual bins were installed

Benefits

- The new dual bins improve the appearance of council assets and branding
- There has been a 58.8% reduction in complaints of overflowing bins (Q4 2021 compared to Q4 2022)
- A new emptying schedule has been published and made available to Town and Parish Councils
- £70,000 of additional income was identified

The implementation benefits outlined at the start of the programme have been over achieved. The secondary benefits will be identified as part of a review of the street cleansing service in 2022/3 as part of the Environmental Services Innovation Programme (ESIP).

Next steps

The management of public bins was transferred to the contracts team to manage at the completion of the programme.

