

Traders in Edinburgh must be more responsible about waste



New rules will govern the way that businesses get rid of their trade waste and these will be introduced by the council next week to ensure that our city's streets are kept as clean as possible.

Traders will now have to put out their bins within a shorter time window to ensure that their rubbish is not then attacked by seagulls or urban foxes overnight and scattered across pavements.

In a new move the council will now insist that apart from a short collection window all businesses must take their containers back into their premises rather than leaving them on the pavements all the time.

Councillor Hinds said:-“Traders must be made to deal with their waste more responsibly. There will be three pilot areas in the High Street, Rose Street and Leith Walk and adjoining lanes. There will be certain times when the traders can put out their waste and an enforcement team will monitor the situation and hand out fines if necessary,

“We have learned from other cities such as Manchester and the City of Westminster who have run schemes like this. We think this is a real way of getting rubbish off our streets. Streets look scruffy with the rubbish which is often left out all day. We can fine them but it is a small fine and traders often suffer the fine rather than going to the bother of taking their rubbish in until the collection time.

“We want to work with the traders but we are going to take a

harder line with them.

“We can’t carry on the way we are. It makes a big difference to our streets when waste containers are removed from outside trade premises, and so traders must be more responsible for their own waste. There has been an increasing number of waste containers being kept on the city’s streets which is having an adverse impact on the city’s appearance. We will be supporting businesses in the pilot areas to comply with the timed collections and the pilots will allow everyone to assess how effective this approach is.”

✘ The council say that Edinburgh World Heritage and Historic Scotland were consulted and were both supportive of the move.

Essential Edinburgh who run the Business Improvement District in the city centre put the trade waste contract for some of the city centre streets out to tender. This means that businesses now employ one trade waste company to remove waste from one street street, and leads to less vehicles requiring access at any time. This might allow waste companies to pick up waste at an appointed time each day more easily.

Councillor Hinds confirmed that there will be no need to employ new enforcement officers as there are enough on the team already to deal with this new initiative.

If waste is presented incorrectly, i.e. spilled all over the road, burst bags, overflowing bins, traders putting waste in domestic bins, or is not clearly identified for collection by trade waste company (i.e. not using branded bags or affixing trade waste company labels) the council can issue a fixed penalty notice against the business.

This has a fine of £50 attached, which if they pay means they discharge any responsibility and cannot be prosecuted for the same incident under the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

In the last year, 22/10/12 – 22/10/13, the Council issued 897 of these fines to businesses across the entire city.

There were two other options considered by the council:- a zero tolerance of any trade waste on the street and a permit system. These have both been discounted by the council.

The council's Transport and Environment Committee will meet next Tuesday.