

Edinburgh councillor blogs – Cllr Scott Arthur

✖ by Labour Councillor Scott Arthur who represents the Colinton/Fairmilehead Ward.

“Much has been made recently of the fact that complaints relating to waste management have declined substantially across the city. This reflects positively on the impact of Council policy and the efforts of staff across our capital in the face of cuts imposed in Holyrood by the SNP and Greens.

“Specifically, I think there is a clear link between the fall in complaints relating to fly-tipping and the [bulky waste item uplift service](#) improvements introduced by Labour’s Lesley Hinds (remember her?).

“Fly-tipping not only unsightly, but I know from my [professional work](#) in flood risk management that it can cause real problems when it gets stuck in culverts.

“As important as complaints are, however, I emphasised in the Transport & Environment Committee recently that we should consider them alongside more objective measures of good service delivery.

“In my own Ward many people put their waste and recycling out on “bin day” hoping, rather than expecting, it to be collected. Whilst the Council is striving to improve this situation, many of my constituents now quietly accept it rather than complain. Those who do complain often find the procedure difficult to navigate and give up. I fear that this situation may be contributing to the decline in the level of service complaints the Council received over the past year.

“Furthermore, we know that middle-class people are far more likely to complain than others in society. So if City of Edinburgh Council were to wholly rely on complaints to drive service improvements there is a risk that some areas would not get the attention they deserve.

“The good news is that the Council is committed to using its own data, alongside improving the complaints process, to drive service improvements.

“By the end of the year, our waste/recycling vehicles will be fitted with a system that automatically reports where collections have been missed. This means data will be available almost live to prioritize service improvements and keep the public updated.

“Both now and in the future, however, complaints will remain a key consideration when driving service improvements. So please let the Council know if there is anything it can do better.”