

# Nobody wants to pick up litter on our main roads

Councillor Callum Laidlaw posed what looks like an innocent enough question today at the meeting of the full council.

He asked the Transport and Environment Convener :

**Can the Convener provide an update on plans for routine grounds maintenance of arterial routes in the city which was confirmed in September 2018 as not in place but currently being investigated?**

The amazing answer is that nobody wanted to pick up the litter on the A1, A199, A8, A70, A71 or A90 which are all the responsibility of the council. When the council put the contract out nobody at all tendered for the work.

The Transport Convener, Cllr Lesley Macinnes replied in writing : "Procurement for routine grounds maintenance was advertised earlier this year however there were no tenders submitted. Officers are arranging to meet with Transport Scotland to discuss the potential for collaborative working for these activities."

Cllr Laidlaw explained "One of the first issues I wanted to address following my election last year was the terrible state of the verges and roundabouts on the A1, Sir Harry Lauder road, which are overgrown, surfaces and barriers are in a poor state of repair and litter abundant. It's a particularly sorry sight for both residents of my ward but also those entering our capital city from the South East.

"After meetings and site visits with officers, it was agreed, in March, that a full clean-up and cut back would take place, ideally before the summer growth of foliage and private contractors would be used as this was more efficient. When this still hadn't taken place by August, I was surprised to be

informed that this was due to no contractors tendering, not even Amey that maintain the A1 in East Lothian.

"I therefore took this question to Council in September and was surprised that no routine ground maintenance was in place for our arterial routes but was being considered.

"When I asked for clarity on this today at October Council I was even more shocked that while tenders were advertised earlier this year, there have been no tenders submitted which must beg the question why?

"Furthermore when asked why the Convener had not answered my question commercial sponsorship of roundabouts for landscaping and public art, as used by Fife and West Lothian Councils amongst others, she said it was being considered, despite officers confirming it was an option being considered over a year ago and Asda at the Jewel has expressed an interest.

"It appears that once more, the Council is tackling the deterioration of our arterial roads that welcome thousands of visitors to the city each year in a piecemeal and reactive manner and have significant issues in procurement if they are receiving no response to tenders.

"Finally, in these times of tight budgets and the need to squeeze them tight, the failure to explore commercial funding of these improvements seems a significant oversight especially given its success in other local authorities."

What do you think? Do you think businesses should be offered sponsorship opportunities of this kind which may save the council money?