

Low income households to be offered free bulky uplifts

Free bulky uplifts will be offered to low income households in Edinburgh from later this year as part of a £3 million city clean-up programme agreed by the council.

It currently costs residents £5 per large domestic item to be collected and disposed of but the charge will be waived for some from October through the introduction of a means tested special uplift service.

It is hoped the move will reduce fly tipping rates, after more than 10,000 cases of illegal dumping were recorded across the capital last year.

Scott Arthur, Transport and Environment Convener, hailed the new scheme as “a better way of running the service and hopefully a way of cleaning up Edinburgh”.

It forms part of a £3m cash injection for the council’s waste and cleansing services included in the agreed Liberal Democrat budget in February and rubber-stamped by the Transport and Environment Committee on Thursday (April 20).

The measures also include:

£530k for tackling graffiti on public buildings, with six new posts created and a “longer-term ability to sell services to private building owners”

£338k for gully and channel cleaning

An extra £290k for fly tipping collections to deploy an

additional four vehicles to focus on “high density areas served by communal bins where fly tipping is demonstrated to be more problematic than traditional kerbside areas”

A ‘dedicated team’ to improve the appearance of approach roads into the city and rural roads. The council says the £300k will fund five new roles to undertake “litter picking, mechanical sweeping, gully emptying, and verge and hedge maintenance”

£840k for additional recruitment to cover absent of sick staff on priority jobs and rapid response teams, creating up to 30 jobs

Free bulky uplifts, which will be offered to those in receipt of council tax reductions, has been allocated £500k. A report said: “A proportion of the funding will be used to ‘buy out’ part of the existing income target for this service with the balance of funding to increase resources required from an anticipated increase in job requests for those people that no longer need to pay.

“Internal discussions are on-going on how the ‘free’ uplift could be applied at the point of booking, with a view to means testing bookings taking effect from October 2023 onwards.”

Cllr Arthur said: “I think for a lot of people if you don’t have a car, if you don’t have much income this is quite a big deal and it’s quite important. At least starting to look at this is as a better way of running the service and hopefully a way of cleaning up Edinburgh a bit as well.”

Liberal Democrat group leader Cllr Kevin Lang said: “The extra £3 million that is going in through the budget, I think it’s really exciting to see the ideas that officers have come forward with in terms of what they’re going to use that money for.



Cllr Kevin Lang Liberal Democrat

“A dedicated team to tackle graffiti, free bulky waste uplifts for those on low incomes – stuff we’ve talked about for quite a number of years, it has to be said.

“Improved fly tipping collections, a new cleanliness team for areas – hurrah – outside of the city centre...and a 50 per cent uplift in gully cleaning.

“Again, I don’t pretend this is going to solve all of the problems but I think it is incumbent on us as councillors to help officers do the best job that we can by giving them the resource that is needed to do the job properly.”

by Donald Turvill Local Democracy Reporter

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