

Proposals to stop commercial waste bins clogging pavements in West Lothian

West Lothian is set to take action to stop 1,000 litre commercial waste bins clogging pavements.

Proposals will come before the councillors in September after officers complete a study of practices in neighbouring councils.

However in local towns a scheme will only work if the council can persuade shops and their private waste collectors to take part.

The council does not have a commercial rubbish collection.

And the chair of the Environment and Sustainability PDSP acknowledged that enforcement will cost the council and could eventually be something the council had to staff and police alongside changes to parking rules.

Bathgate councillor Willie Boyle raised a motion at full council earlier this year calling for an end to retailers clogging pavements in Bathgate with huge dumpster bins.

The problem is particularly acute in the Steelyard, Bathgate's pedestrianised area. It is also common in other streets in the town as well as in Linlithgow and other traditional town centre locations.

A report to the PDSP said: "Several councils use existing legislation to operate schemes to control the storage and presentation of trade waste with designated control zones. Progressing a similar scheme within West Lothian will require a more detailed assessment."

In Edinburgh the council manages commercial waste collection by timed periods. Head of Operational Services Jim Jack suggested better comparisons for West Lothian would be smaller communities such as those under schemes run by Fife Council in St Andrews.

In that town commercial waste collection is only allowed between 7:30am to 10:30am.

Mr Jack said bins being left out on pavements was a particular problem in Linlithgow and Bathgate.

Outwith the collection times the dumpster bins have to be moved off pavements or the stores can face fines under the Roads Scotland Act for obstruction.

Key to councillor Boyle's initial request had been the problems experienced by wheelchair users and those with child buggies trying to negotiate a path around huge bins left out on pavements.

In his original motion Councillor Boyle said: "Where there is an obvious requirement for commercial waste disposal the demand is not being managed in a respectful way to complement the efforts to keep our streets attractive to customers and new businesses. Large waste containers, which can be over 1000 litres in size, are regularly left out on the pavements and streets as a permanent fixture. There are no restrictions in planning terms specific to the placing of these bins."

Chairing the meeting Councillor Tom Conn said that in the future the council could take a "holistic approach" to enforcement including policing the introduction of Decriminalised Parking Enforcement rules which will introduce parking fines along with legislation to stop parking on the pavement.

Councillor Conn said he hoped that retailers would be able to work better to co-ordinate collection times with waste

firms. Mr Jack confirmed that his team was in discussion with trade waste firms to find a path to improve things.

A report will come back to the panel on 24 September. Any new policy will have to be agreed by the Executive.

By Stuart Sommerville, Local Democracy Reporter