

Bin hub roll-out shelved over fears it would fuel tensions over parking spaces

Edinburgh residents who fear the arrival of bin hubs outside their homes could fuel tensions and turn their neighbourhood into a “vermin-infested litter dump” have successfully campaigned to have the project halted.

Officials said the switch from individual to communal on-street waste and recycling bins had been cancelled in the Forrester Park estate in response to the concerns and apologised for any “undue worry” the proposals caused.

The council has introduced bin hubs outside flats in a bid to speed-up collections and boost recycling rates. However the changes have been controversial in some areas as they can involve loss of car parking spaces, and bring noise and bad smells.

Locals living on the estate in the west of the city, which unusually has no pavements but instead a series of footpaths, warned arguments over parking spaces could arise if residents were forced to park outside someone else’s property or cross over private gardens to access the new bins.

Lesley Lalmas, who was due to get a bin hub outside her block, said the current system “works” and added: “The layout of

Forrester Park is not really adequate for the installation of communal bins.

“This is going to lead to the loss of parking spaces, is going to lead to one particular block bearing the brunt of these communal bins.

“We feel that it would lead to a lot of disagreements between neighbours, a lot of inconvenience to traffic, which is bad enough already getting in and out – it’s a dead-end estate.

“With people walking over the grass constantly, with people parking their cars not outside their own block – that leads to disputes.

“I don’t want it to come to my area.”

Another resident, Robert Stokes, said: “The lack of space will mean cars will park on verges.”

The pair’s deputation was heard at the council’s transport committee on Thursday, October 10, where a petition from the Forrester Park Residents Association objecting to the installation of communal bins was considered.

The petition, which gathered 94 signatures, stated: “Unless bins open street side, the council is condoning trespass on private property – our gardens.

“There are many elderly people, people with health issues, who will struggle to reaching, accessing these, and to open lids. Not everyone recycles, and everything will go into landfill.”

It said the scheme would be a “godsend to commercial fly tippers” and risked “turning our pleasant, child-friendly with plenty green spaces to enjoy into a vermin-infested litter dump”.

Responding, council officer Liam Glass said the purpose of the project was “solely for efficiencies to the local rounds in

the area due to high levels of new builds and to help increase recycling output”.

He said: “We got quite strong resistance from the residents at Forresters.

“We have had the chance to look at that and look at others areas in the west of Edinburgh where further efficiencies could be made and there are no plans to change the current waste management system in the Forresters from individuals to communals in either the short or medium term going forward.

“I would like to apologise for any misunderstanding or undue worry that we have caused residents.”

Mr Glass admitted the consultation with Forrester Park residents had been “inadequate” and this had partly influenced the decision to cancel the roll-out in the “short or medium term going forward”.

He added if the council sought to re-consider it in future there would be a “full and robust consultation”.

Deputy council leader Mandy Watt said it was a “shame” the area was not suited to bin hubs.

“They are very efficient and residents very much like them once they’re in and if they are in the right place,” she said. “They can put their different types of waste out whenever suits them and some people find that hugely beneficial.”

By Donald Turvill Local Democracy Reporter