

The background of the slide features a large, faint, light blue watermark of the City of Vancouver coat of arms. The crest includes a crown at the top with four maple leaves, a shield divided into four quadrants (top-left: a ship, top-right: a stag, bottom-left: a ship, bottom-right: an eagle), and a banner at the bottom with the motto "A NE FOR A".

## **Agenda Item 8**

### **Litter Bins and Street Cleansing Performance**

**Falkirk Council**

**Title: Litter Bins and Street Cleansing Performance**

**Meeting: Scrutiny Committee**

**Date: 11 November 2021**

**Submitted By: Acting Director of Development Services**

**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update of the performance of Roads and Grounds Services in relation to the servicing of litter bins and street cleansing as discussed at Scrutiny Committee on 9 September 2021. The report brings:

- details of existing service provision and performance;
- details of financial information relative to the service provided; and
- details of the impact of Covid-19 on service delivery for the year 2020/21

**2. Recommendation**

**2.1 It is recommended that the Scrutiny Committee:**

- (1) notes the report on the performance of the Service in relation to the servicing of litter bins and street cleansing**
- (2) considers if this report requires to be forwarded to Executive for consideration, along with any additional comments that Scrutiny Committee would like to make.**

**3. Background**

- 3.1 The Code of Practice for Litter and Refuse (CoPLAR) 2018 details statutory guidance on the two duties local authorities must adhere to by virtue of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. These duties are:

- to keep their own land clear of litter and refuse
- to keep certain roads clean

- 3.2 The core works undertaken by the street cleansing service are:

- mechanical sweeping of the road network;
- manual litter picking and sweeping in all our towns and localities;
- supply, emptying and maintenance of street litter bins;

- syringe and sharps removal;
  - removing fly-tipped waste;
  - rechargeable works to clear private and domestic premises where clearance notices have been served by enforcement officers, and
  - removal of dead animals from publicly maintained land.
- 3.3 To identify where resources should be deployed, monitoring is undertaken to recognise where and when littering will most likely to occur. The speed and intensity by which litter gathers is influenced by several factors, including the levels of traffic (both pedestrian and vehicle); the time of year; weather; nature; and condition of the area. CoPLAR identifies that the '*intensity of activity in the area*' and the '*health and safety limitations*' are most likely to influence littering.
- 3.4 The issue of littering cannot be solved by the Council alone. Officers are working with partners and communities on litter prevention within the principles set out in the Scottish Government's publication, '*Towards a litter-free Scotland: a strategic approach to higher quality local environments*' to ensure communities receive an effective service. In addition, Falkirk Council launched its 5-year Litter Strategy, entitled '*A Cleaner Falkirk*' earlier this year. The Strategy and associated Plan lay out the Council's ambitions towards achieving a cleaner and greener environment in local communities. Fundamental to the Strategy is recognition that the Council, whilst having an important part to play, cannot deliver the Plan on its own, and that all sectors within our communities have a critical role.
- 3.5 To support the delivery of the Strategy the Council has enabled local groups, including schools, to take action, assisting with litter picking equipment, training, risk assessments and support, including public liability insurance.
- 3.6 The organisation, Keep Scotland Beautiful (KSB), in partnership with all local authorities in Scotland, undertakes local environmental quality surveys at random sites in each area. The approach used is called the Local Environmental Audit and Management System (LEAMS) and the audits collect information on litter types and source. Further, factors such as weeds, graffiti, fly tipping and vandalism, are also recorded to provide an overall picture of every site. Audits are also carried out by each local authority to provide independence and validation. All local authorities are grouped into 'clubs'. Falkirk is in Club Four which is defined as the most urban authorities.
- 3.7 These audits enable the Council to benchmark and monitor performance. The Covid-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the ability of all local authorities to carry out street cleansing and litter monitoring duties. This should be taken into consideration when analysing long term trends. Indeed, KSB's 2020/21 report illustrates that more than half of local authorities have seen an increase in the percentage of unacceptably littered sites since the previous year. An increase in packaging litter, particularly single-use disposable food and drinks packaging also plays a part.
- 3.8 Covid restrictions and guidance for safety of employees brought acute pressure to the Service in 2020 and 2021, especially in the early part when recycling centres were closed. This produced a 91% increase in the volume of fly-tipping across the area compared with the previous year, 2019/20. In addition to this,

household waste being deposited in and adjacent to litter bins created an added demand on resources and continues to place pressure on the Service. Table 1.1 details the volume of fly tipping reports the Service has attended over the period 2019/20 to 2021/22.

2019/20	2020/21	2021/22 (to September)
2101	4013	1386

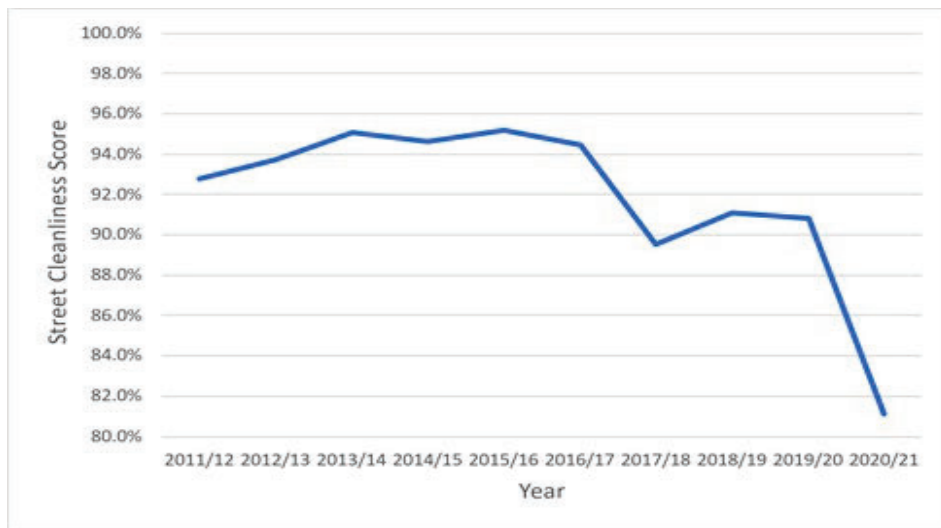
Table 1.1 – Fly Tipping Attendance

- 3.9 LEAMS utilises a standard approach to the audits by grading them in five grades as outlined in Table 1.2. Pictorial examples of these grades are included in Appendix 1

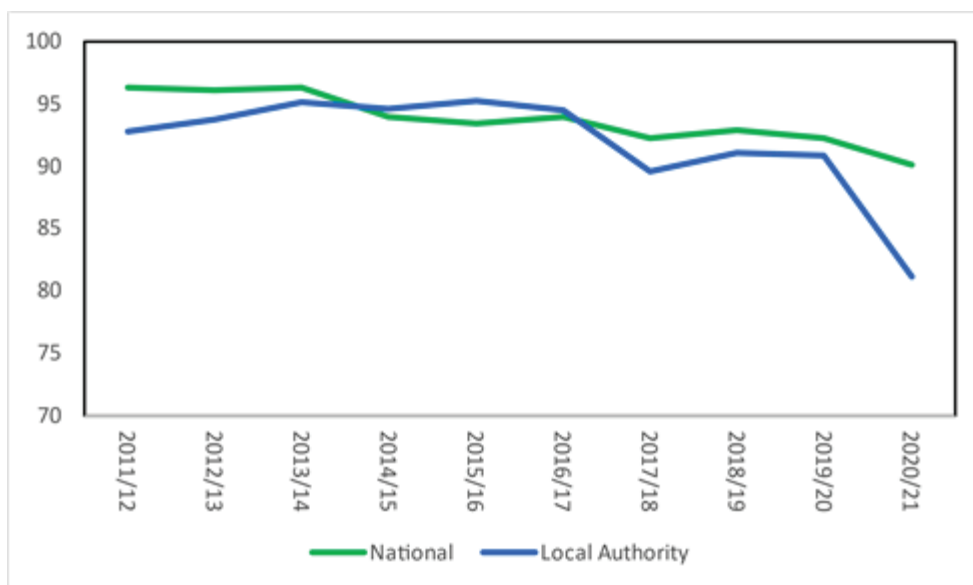
Grade A	No Litter
Grade B+	Predominantly free of litter – up to three items.
Grade B	Predominantly free of litter
Grade C	Widespread distribution of litter with minor accumulations
Grade D	Heavily littered with significant accumulations.

Table 1.2 – Litter Grades

- 3.10 The Council has 1752 litter bins across our area. The servicing of these litter bins varies from daily - in high footfall areas, to weekly - in rural areas. A review of the litter bin stock was undertaken in 2017 and, as a consequence, small pole mounted bins, some of these dog fouling waste bins, were removed and bin provision rationalised. This reduced the overall number of bins. However larger multipurpose bins were put in place, providing greater litter capacity and increased efficiency of service. The Council's litter bin locations can be viewed on the Council's website here: <https://www.falkirk.gov.uk/maps-local/bins-rubbish-recycling/rubbish-bins.aspx>
- 3.11 The latest LEAMS survey audit for year 2020/21 scores Falkirk Council as having a cleanliness score of 81.1%. This figure is classed as the percentage of sites recording an acceptable cleansing rating for litter, hard standing footpaths, road channels, and road verges. Those sites that recorded C and D litter grades were found to have significantly lower average scores than normally posted for Falkirk Council. When audited by Keep Scotland Beautiful, those sites were indeed found to have litter present on them. This is primarily due to operating a reduced service with fewer than normal staff numbers throughout the early COVID pandemic period. At that time, resources were concentrated on town centre areas and high amenity areas and this approach supported maintaining the area's attractiveness and the economic viability of town centres.
- 3.12 The figure of 81.1% represents a percentage decrease of 11.9% in satisfaction level since 2019/20. However the service is now fully operational and, on the assumption that there will be no further Covid lockdown requirements for the Service, it is not anticipated that there will be repeat of this reduced satisfaction level. The two graphs shown below illustrate the Council's performance over the previous 10 years showing generally good performance excepting 2020/21 (Graph 1.1) where the effects of Covid-19 are most evident. The performance over the same period in comparison with the national average is also given, showing that, generally, Falkirk's performance has been close to the national average (Graph 1.2).



Graph 1.1 – Falkirk Council LEAMS performance since 2011



Graph 1.2 – Falkirk Council performance against the national average.

## Considerations

- 3.13 The performance of the Service, in terms of the LEAMS audit results, shows a clear correlation between service budget reductions that have been experienced and a reduction in the percentage of sites recording an acceptable cleansing rating post 2015/16, 2016/17, and 2019/20, respectively. As noted above, it also shows a clear decline in 2020/21 that is directly linked to the impact of the Covid restrictions.
- 3.14 The Council of The Future: Transformation of Roads and Grounds project will directly address inefficiencies in service provision, to deliver financial savings. The project will continue to ensure that a best practice approach is taken that can deliver best value.
- 3.15 To enable these improvements, the Service has invested in and continues to develop a 'data-led' approach to managing routine and reactive maintenance. Litter bin routes are all available on tablet devices and, as data is gathered, bin

usage is being analysed with adjustments to routes implemented to improve effectiveness and efficiency.

- 3.16 Investment has been made in smart bin sensors. These have been used in several areas and the technology will allow data to be gathered which will help shape and target service delivery. It will also allow a more dynamic approach to operations, helping drive efficiency and mitigate littering. Furthermore, it will help with the Council's environmental aspirations, potentially preventing unnecessary journeys. This digital approach, and its intended benefits are captured in Appendix 2 which displays a dashboard of the Service's digital transformation.
- 3.17 National recognition of the impact of litter on communities and individuals as well as Councils will also lead to improvements. The collection and packaging reforms to include the Deposit Return Scheme may offer some benefits in this regard. The Deposit and Return Scheme for Scotland Regulations 2020 were passed by the Scottish Parliament in May 2020 and will be in force from July 2022. This introduces a deposit return scheme for single-use drinks containers, to help improve quality and quantity of recycling, reduce litter, and achieve our national climate change targets.

#### **4. Consultation**

Nil

#### **5. Implications**

##### **Financial**

- 5.1 The budget savings options taken from street cleansing services in previous years are outlined in Table 5.1.

Year	Savings	FTE Reduction
2014/15	Nil	0
2015/16	£300k	10
2016/17	£200k	3
2017/18	Nil	0
2018/19	Nil	0
2019/20	£300k	3

Table 1.4 – Street cleaning savings taken 2014-20

Further to these historic savings, additional savings options are being presented for consideration by the Council at its budget meeting next year.

An additional sum of £50k revenue funding was allocated this year to environmental issues and this funding aids the removal of fly tipping from private land where no landowner details are available.

##### **Resources**

- 5.2 Staff resources have been reduced through vacancy management.

## **Legal**

- 5.3 The Environmental Protection Act 1990 imposes two duties on the Council:
- to keep owned land clear of litter and refuse, and
  - to keep certain roads clean

## **Risk**

- 5.4 Environmental considerations, including the level of performance in litter removal and street cleansing are important risk factors in the economic recovery and regeneration of the area post Covid.

## **Equalities**

- 5.5 No equality or poverty impact assessment is considered necessary for this report.

## **Sustainability/Environmental Impact**

- 5.6 The provision of an effective street cleansing service is fundamental to the Council's environmental aspirations. No Environmental Impact Assessment was considered necessary in the compilation of this report.

## **6. Conclusions**

- 6.1 This report provides an update relating to the existing service provision in respect of Street Cleansing and, in particular, background on the performance of the Service over the period of 2020/21.
- 6.2 This report also demonstrates the plans of the Service to manage performance over time and gives a background on historic financial savings and Covid-19 impacts on service provision.

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**Acting Director of Development Services**

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Date - 01 November 2021

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 - Keep Scotland Beautiful: Visual Examples of Litter Grades

Appendix 2 – Street Cleansing: Digital Transformation Dashboard

## **List of Background Papers**

The following papers were relied on in the preparation of this report in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973:

Environmental Protection Act 1990

The Code of Practice for Litter and Refuse (CoPLaR) 2018

Falkirk Council Corporate Plan 2020 – 2022

The Deposit and Return Scheme for Scotland Regulations 2020

The Scottish Government: *"Towards a litter-free Scotland: a strategic approach to higher quality local environments"*

Falkirk Council: Litter Strategy: A Cleaner Falkirk 2021-2026



## Appendix 1



*Grade A: No litter or refuse is present on any type of land*



*Grade B: Small amounts of litter and refuse. As a guide there should be fewer than 5 large items or fewer than 30 small items of litter*



*Grade C: Moderate amounts of litter and refuse with small accumulations. As a guide 5 -15 large items or 30-90 small items of litter or refuse.*





*Grade D: Significant amounts of litter and refuse, with consistent distribution and accumulations. As a guide, 16 - 30 large items or 91 - 180 small items of litter*

# Street Cleansing | Digital Transformation | October 2021

Gary Neill | Acting Roads and Grounds Manager| Falkirk Council

## Digitisation and Route Development

This directly address inefficiencies to deliver financial savings. The project will continue to ensure that a best practice approach is taken that can deliver best value. The project will deliver a more modern, flexible and competitive workforce

### So what?

This enables us to have an end-to-end process for work both reactive and routine. This allows us to be smarter in how we allocate our resources. Now we know everything about our assets: capacity, location, and can track data effectively from each location, we can allocate resources better with a data-led approach to mechanical sweeping and litter bin emptying routes.

### And?

Whenever a problem with a street is reported it goes straight to a tablet in real time, is inspected and issued for cleaning to an operative who undertakes the work and records it on a the tablet and In-cab device

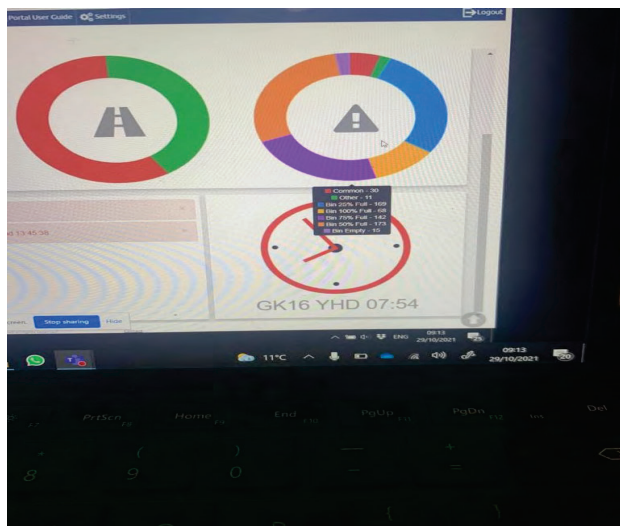


Figure 1.1 - Street Cleansing Dashboard

- No Paper
- Better Records
- Greater Resilience
- Before and After Pics
- Anyone can work any route
- More efficient
- More effective

## Our Assets | Smarter Routes

By collecting our assets, digitising them and then analysing them, it allows us to better use our resources by targeting those that need cleaned most often.

The service has been working with a software provider, WebASPX, and with our operational staff and digitised all mechanical sweeping routes which have been routed for efficiency and tested with operational staff. These routes are all built in to our mechanical sweepers meaning that any driver can drive any routes like a sat-nav.

## Our Assets | Smarter Routes

Figure 1.1 shows the 'back-end' of the system. This is what officers see and can analyse trends. This particular figure shows that on this particular day staff attended

169 bins that were 25% full;  
173 bins that were 50% full;  
142 bins that were 75% full;  
68 bins that were 100% full, and  
15 bins that were empty.



Further, it notes that there are issues with 41 bins, or issues where they are plotted on the system. This data is useful in isolation, however, when tracked over time, this data becomes useful information which the Service can turn into action which better uses our resources.

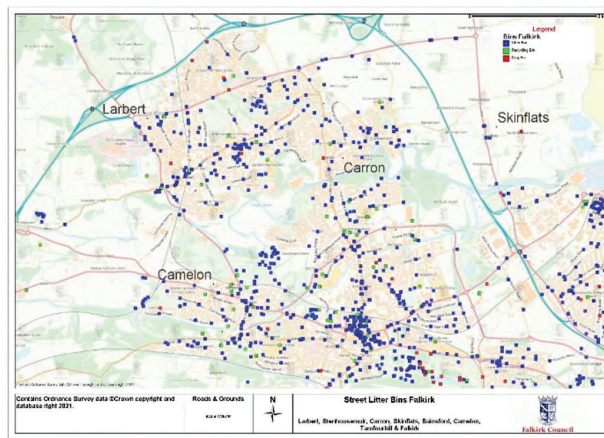


Figure 1.2 – Map-based Litter Bin Locations.

## Our Assets | Smart Sensors

The Council is piloting the introduction of smart sensors in locations. When a sensor is installed, we can monitor the current fill level, temperature, location and tell if the bin is upright. It then uses this data to generate an optimised pickup route.

These pilot areas are:-

- Denny High School
- Falkirk High School
- Tamfourhill
- Rural Bin locations Council-wide.

Aligning our services to actual litter behaviour has the potential to reap several benefits, primarily to be more efficient and effective. This will allow us reallocate those resources towards litter picking, graffiti cleaning, and other service-related tasks.

It is envisioned that carbon emissions will also decrease as a result of better planned journeys. Case study evidence shows that the application of smart sensors saw a 19% reduction in emissions as a result.

## Our Communities | Partnership

The Service has worked with colleagues in Waste Service's Litter Strategy Team, High Schools, Community Policing and Communities to determine the first phase of these pilots. It is recognised that both Denny and Falkirk High have acute issues with litter. Waste Services and Street Cleansing have been working with the Schools and Community Policing on a joint project to tackle the behaviour and the effect of it. The Service will report back on its effectiveness. Similarly, the Service has been working with the community group at Tamfourhill to tackle a recognised issue in this area. Finally, the service will install the sensors in our most remote bins to analyse littering behaviours and potentially save trips based on the fill level of the bins there.

## Our People | Skills

The CoTF project: *Transformation of Roads and Grounds* aims to have a multi-skilled workforce empowered by upskilling and enabled by the use of technology. The service continues to work with staff, HR, and Trade Unions via regular focus groups to discuss the implementation of technology across the service. Front line staff are vital to the success of these projects and play a vital part in shaping practices.