

Scrutiny Board :	Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board
Report Title	Litter Bin Strategy
Date of Meeting	26 February 2026
Report Author	Waste Operations and Contract Officer Nigel Harris
Lead Officer	Executive Director Place Alan Lunt
Wards Affected	All Wards
Appendices (if any)	1. Draft Litter Bin Strategy 2. Draft New Bin Scoring Matrix

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Council wishes to reduce littering, increase recycling and improve service efficiency as part of our environmental responsibility, and in accordance with best practice and circular economy principles. To achieve these aims a Litter Bin Strategy has been developed to establish current litter practice in Sandwell and a New Bin Scoring Matrix developed to provide guidance for installing the most appropriate litter bins and recycling bins in the most effective places. The Strategy also promotes the use of both enforcement for those who continue to drop litter and education /engagement with residents and businesses to change littering behaviour.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Board considers and comments upon the information presented and determines whether it wishes to make any recommendations to the Executive.

3. Background and Context

- 3.1 Littering is an anti-social behaviour that negatively impacts our environment. It is both a local and national problem, with 81% of respondents to a nationwide survey stating that they were angry and frustrated with the amount of litter in England.
- 3.2 Previously – in the absence of a strategy – there has been minimal coordination of litter bin installations. Sandwell currently has a very large number of litter bins installed 1,659, the majority of which are in a good or average condition. However, based on the consultation results, the number of requests for bin

emptying and for new bin installations, there would appear to be opportunities to improve litter bin distribution.

- 3.3 A Draft New Bin Scoring Matrix has been developed to help improve litter bin distribution which takes into consideration a range of criteria including the intensity of use of a location, proximity to existing bins and facilities and the number of requests received for a bin at that location in the last six months.
- 3.4 The overall aim of the Strategy is to ensure that bins are in the locations where they are most needed rather than seeing an overall increase in number. Although one of the proposed Waste and Cleansing Interventions does seek to provide 100 new street bins with segregated recycling (residual / glass, cans, plastics / paper & card) to reflect household dual-stream recycling. The matrix will assist in selecting those locations.
- 3.5 Ensuring that those who litter are frequently prosecuted is important in order to create a non-tolerance approach to littering within Sandwell. If it is perceived by the public that enforcement activity is not often pursued, individuals are more likely to litter as it will be assumed that their actions will have no consequences. The proposed Waste and Cleansing Interventions do include the appointment of additional Environmental Enforcement Officers and the greater use of CCTV. These additional resources should significantly improve enforcement activity within the district especially using Fixed Penalty Notices.
- 3.6 It is thought that a movement away from littering behaviours can be achieved through having clear expectations of the public and motivating them to do the right thing. In addition to this, if individuals are aware of the harm that littering can cause, they are more likely to stop undertaking these behaviours. Therefore, engaging and educating residents is key to improving litter issues in Sandwell. The Strategy also recognises the valuable contribution that Litter Watch makes on education, raising environmental awareness and managing the litter pick volunteers.
- 3.7 The draft Litter Strategy and New Bin Scoring Matrix were developed in 2024, but it was decided to delay their implementation until after alternate weekly collections had been introduced to allow the Strategy to address any littering issues that may arise from the new service. The new service was successfully introduced in September 2025, and no changes have been made to the original drafts.

4. Consultation

- 4.1 The 6-week consultation exercise that took place with residents in late 2023 provided a valuable insight into residents' views about litter in the area, how litter should be managed and where litter bins should be located. Several key themes emerged from responses to the public consultation survey, which have been considered throughout the development of this Strategy. Those included community perception, education, enforcement and litter bin type.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 Provision of bins is within the current Waste & Street Cleansing contract with Serco, however the number of bins needs to be managed to stay within contract parameters.

6. Legal and Governance Implications

- 6.1 There are no legal and governance implications.

7. Risks

- 7.1 There are no significant risks associated with the implantation of the Litter Strategy or the New Bin Scoring Matrix.

8. Equality and Diversity Implications (including the public sector equality duty)

- 8.1 There is no requirement to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment.

9. Other Relevant Implications

- 9.1 Improved management of litter will reduce the pollution of the natural environment. Better Management of waste will also encourage greater levels of recycling.

10. Background Documents

- 10.1 None

11. How does this deliver the Outcomes in the Council Plan?

- Living in Sandwell – a well presented public realm is critical to residents' quality of life and affects the perception of the borough.