

27th August 2017

Councillor Tim Warren
Bath and North East Somerset Council
The Guildhall
Bath
BA1 5AW

Dear Councillor Warren,

New Refuse Policy

I am writing about some aspects of your impending refuse scheme for B&NES, as several of FoBRA's member Associations have grave concerns.

We are broadly supportive of the scheme and its objectives: it will work very well for many types of properties across Bath; it should make the budget savings you require; and it should improve food waste recycling targets for many households. We also support the plans for certain key streets to retain weekly collections, your Officers being responsive to residents' demands for this and having listened to their concerns. We fear though, that there is a major oversight: the scheme has overlooked the unique and problematic nature of the heritage core of Bath and the reality that many sub-divided, street-fronted properties inhabited by transient tenants have no managed refuse stores.

Bath is a special and very beautiful city (and World Heritage Site - WHS). As such, it deserves and requires sensitive consideration to address the aesthetic impact of refuse collection. The overall objective of any refuse system should have at its heart the need to keep our streets and street frontages clear of waste, and of refuse containers. Without this as a key performance indicator, your Officers have designed a scheme which may meet many targets (budgetary and environmental), but somehow has forgotten the need for our city to be clear of refuse, refuse bags, bins and wheelie bins!

Two aspects of the scheme are particularly worrying:

- First, the limited quota for refuse imposed on each household will create a substantial amount of 'side waste' in problem streets. Whilst placing a sticker on it may shame a regular household into taking their waste back inside their property, we fear that



some residents in the problem streets around Bath, which already look appalling (see picture of Park Street here, three days after collection), will feel no embarrassment, will simply ignore stickered bags of waste and these will be left to rot on the street. We are aware that your enforcement team is limited and we just wonder how long residents who live in these streets and do care about their public realm will have to put up with pavements of festering waste left by their inconsiderate neighbours, not to mention tourists and our visitors? Under the current scheme these streets do at least get cleared of refuse and cleaned once per week (largely), yet it will apparently not happen after November. This is shameful.

- Secondly, the blanket introduction of wheelie bins has not considered the aesthetic impact on terraced properties surrounding the historic core of Bath even though they are still within the WHS. Residents will not be likely to want to wheel these through their homes and thus we are left with a number of terraces which will be scarred with unsightly wheelie bins on their street frontages for ever. The streets of Bathwick Estate, Bear Flat, Newbridge, Weston, Oldfield Park, Combe Down, all key parts of the public realm for Bath, will now be littered with wheelie bins, some of which will be blown down the street in bad weather or lost. This cannot be acceptable to anybody who has civic pride in World Heritage Bath. We very much doubt that you will want Bath's WHS inscription thus jeopardised in its celebratory 30th year.

Both of the points raised above could be addressed before the start date in November with a little consideration from your Officers. Problem streets which retain weekly collections should be cleared of all refuse weekly and this issue of "side waste" eradicated. If not then we suggest your scheme will not be fit for purpose. In addition, terraced properties in the streets mentioned above should not be forced to keep wheelie bins in their front yards. They should be provided with the sacks which they then take back inside after collection.

FoBRA very much hopes that you will address these concerns now so that the new scheme is given the best chance of success for all of us. I have copied this letter to the Cabinet Member for Development, Councillor Goodman, as you would expect, and shall be posting this letter on our FoBRA website, in due course.

Yours sincerely,

Robin Kerr, Chairman

CC: Cllr Bob Goodman