



Broxtowe
Borough
COUNCIL



Report of the Overview and Scrutiny
Committee

Review of Missed Bins

January 2023



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Summary

1. Broxtowe Borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee established a review of Missed Bins, to be carried out by the Overview and Scrutiny Working Group at its meeting on 16 December 2022. The review was requested by Councillor P J Owen, to answer the following questions:
 - How should the process work?
 - How many bins are being missed?
 - How quickly are they collected?
 - What happens with repeated missed bins?
 - How do we communicate regarding feedback on missed bins, including communicating with the complainant?
 - Do the starting times of collections result in missed bins?
 - Are there times when bins are missed due to lack of foresight, missing bins where there are obstacles like lorries?
 - How many bins are missed because they are contaminated?
 - Is there a reason bins are being missed, what is the cause?
 - Do we have data on why bins are missed and which type of bins are missed?
 - New builds, how do we get information on where new collections need to start?
 - How is data used for training?
 - Should there be a charge for collecting missed bins?
2. The review is in accordance with the Council's values of innovation and readiness for change, valuing employees and enabling the active involvement of everyone, continuous improvement and delivering value for money and integrity and professional competency.
3. The Working Group met on 16 December 2022 after receiving information from the Head of Environment, Paul Wolverson, to assist the Working Group in relation to the specific points on the scoping form, see page 7.
4. The purpose of the review was to achieve the outcomes outlined in the scoping report¹. The review sought the following outcomes:
 - To understand why bins are missed and if the number of missed bins could be reduced.
5. This report sets out the review process that was adopted and the recommendations to be made.

¹ The scoping report is attached at appendix 1.

Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Working Group

1. The Working Group was chaired by Councillor P J Owen, with Councillor S Easom as the vice chair.
2. Three other councillors were part of the Working Group:
 - Councillor J C Goold
 - Councillor D K Watts
 - Councillor I L Tyler.
3. The Working Group was assisted by Kevin Powell, Executive Director, Paul Wolverson, Head of Environment, Emma Georgiou, Waste and Climate Change Manager, Arron Beckworth, Complaints and Compliments Officer and Kat Newton, Democratic Services Assistant.

Recommendations

It is proposed to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to recommend to Cabinet that:

1. To ensure that residual, recycling and garden waste bin collections do not commence before 6.30am and glass recycling collections do not commence before 7am with management checking vehicle tachographs at least once a month.
2. To ensure that employees do not “dunk” residents glass recycling bins.
3. To investigate vehicle specification (particularly narrow track vehicles) to facilitate access to difficult access areas.
4. To improve the communication between the crews supporting each other on the brown lidded (garden waste) service.
5. Create a process, as part of a review of the Waste Strategy, that addresses bins that have not been presented for collection in the correct manner including for example, charging for collection and/or not returning to collect.
6. Implement an enhanced investigation and engagement process, that includes the householder, in relation to repeat missed bins.
7. Where a bin is missed due to service failure it will be collected as soon as practically possible and within 5 working days.
8. To ensure the vehicle specification is included by Environment Services in every new development consultation response to Planning Services.
9. Bins should be returned to the point of collection after being emptied where it is safe to do so.

Background

1. The topic was suggested by Councillor P J Owen to consider Missed Bins.
2. The review was scoped at the meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 10 November 2022 where the Scrutiny Working Group was allocated the review, which sought to provide explanatory data on Missed Bins.

Considerations at the Working Group Meetings

1. At the meeting of the Working Group on 16 December 2022 Members were updated with the Missed Bins presentation in addition to information that was provided at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 19 October 2022 by the Executive Director.
2. There were a number of lines of enquiry which included:
 - Are people's bins being missed because crews start early?
 - What are the issues that cause bins to be regularly missed?
 - Were bins left due to contamination?
 - Was there under-reporting of missed bins?
3. The Executive Director confirmed that the data provided indicated the number of missed bins was low, at 0.30% of all collections.
4. In consideration of the issues that cause bins to be missed it was noted that access was an issue, where crews were not able to get to bins, either because they had not been put out or because there was congestion or building works.
5. Discussions around regularly missed bins included the impact that this had on resident. It was noted that a new procedure for regularly missed bins had driven down reports by 85%. There was continued focus on improving services to those properties which report a repeated missed collection. The importance of having experienced crews was discussed in reducing regularly missed bins. Discussion progressed on to the size of the brown bin rounds and the missed bins resulting from operatives who had been called in to support colleagues on the big garden waste rounds.
6. Contaminated bins were discussed, with relation to enforcement action and charges for collection, as were bulky waste charges for regularly contaminated bins and methods of enforcement for non-compliance including written warnings, visits, removal of recycling bins and section 46 orders.
7. There was concern that the level of anecdotal evidence for missed bins or the early collection of bins was not supported by the data and that some Members felt that there was under reporting of missed bins by residents. Officers requested that where Members were aware of difficulties or reports from

residents that they pass these on to the Waste and Recycling Section to ensure that they are correctly recorded and appropriate action taken.

8. At the meeting of the Missed Bin Working Group on 9 January 2023, recommendations were discussed, with nine being made as part of this report.

Scoping Form Information

The Head of Environment provided the following information to assist the Working Group in relation to the specific points on the scoping form.

1. How should the process work?

The process for the missed bin service operates in the following way: residents can request for their bin to be emptied when it has not been emptied on their scheduled collection day. The Council will then return to empty the bin.

A residents' bin may not be emptied for reasons such as:

- The resident did not put their bin out for collection on the scheduled collection day.
- The resident put the wrong bin out for collection.
- The bin was presented for collection with the lid up (overfull) so represents a health and safety issue.
- The bin was put out for collection but the crew did not empty it without a valid reason.
- The bin was put out for collection containing items which shouldn't have been in the bin (contaminated).
- The collection team could not access the property due to vehicular access problems (e.g. resident parking, access to a building site etc).

Every bin reported by a resident is scheduled onto a missed bin collection round. A separate team is deployed on the missed bin collection service.

A request for a bin to be emptied will be processed through the following communication methods:

- Telephone
- On-line
- Email
- Face-to-face

Where correspondence (usually by email) is received by a member of the refuse management team, either direct from a resident or by way of Customer Services, they will reply to the customer with an update with regards their requested collection, as well as organise for the bin to be emptied.

2. How many bins are being missed?

Figure 1 shows the number of reported missed bins since April 2020. The spike between May and October 2021 is attributable to the issue of driver shortages which was experienced during those months and resulted in the cancellation of glass and/or garden waste collections. Residents still continued to log collections as missed during this period for the services which were affected.

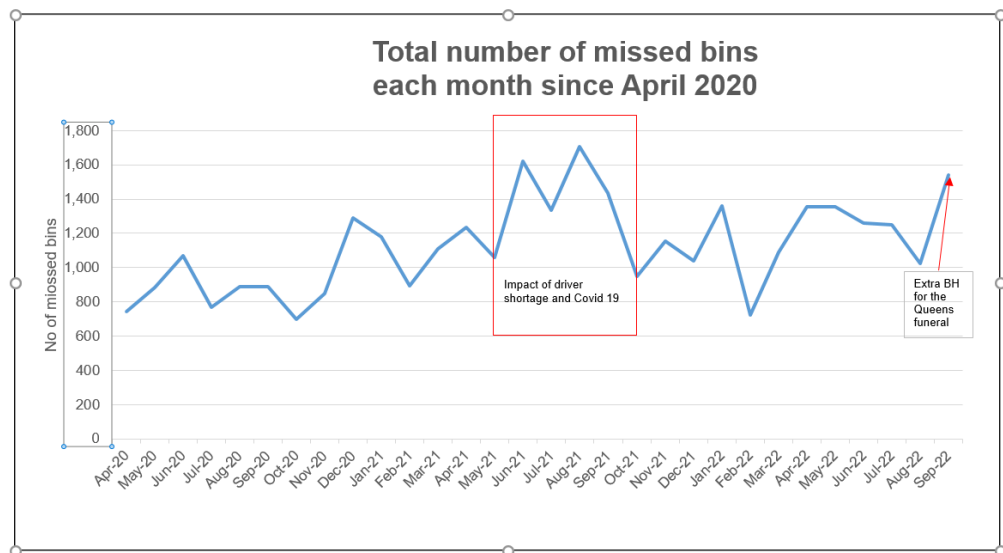


Figure 1- Number of missed bins since April 2020

As the information previously supplied to Members shows the percentage of missed bins compared to the total number of bins collected across all waste streams is low, accounting for less than 0.3%.

The trend line, which can be extrapolated from the above information, indicates a rise in missed bin reports over time. However, this trend line needs further analysis over a longer period of time in order to determine the true trend, as the figures are negatively affected as a consequence of the driver shortage and COVID.

3. How quickly are they collected?

Following a request to collect a 'missed bin', the Council will return to the property within 5 working days. Following reports that residents were being informed by Customer Services of a return timescale of 48 hours, the Environment Team has been working positively with this section, and other employees involved in dealing with processing 'missed bin' requests. Additional advice and training has been provided to ensure the correct information is passed to residents.

4. What happens with repeated missed bins?

It is recognised that a bin not being emptied causes the resident inconvenience. Where a resident escalates to management that their bin is being repeatedly missed, additional improvement measures are implemented. Analysis of the back office data

has shown that the number of repeated missed bins has reduced over the last six months.

Where a bin is escalated as a repeat missed proactive measures to address the issue include:

- The crew is educated on the location of the bin to avoid future issues.
- The crew is sent back to empty the bin on the following day. The benefit of implementing this measure is that the crew will then be familiar with the location of the bin for the next collection day.

Since the introduction in March 2022 of the 'return and educate' system there has been an 90% reduction in repeat missed bin reports.

5. How do we communicate regarding feedback on missed bins, including communicating with the complainant?

Once a missed bin has been emptied, the crew emptying the bin will close the task down on the in-cab system to confirm the bin has been emptied. This closes the active case on the back office system. No direct feedback is given to the resident.

Where there has been delay in delivering the missed bin service per se, due to resource pressures, i.e. during COVID or the driver shortage, this delay is communicated to residents through the Councils social media channels and relevant website pages.

6. Do the starting times of collections result in missed bins?

The commencement time for refuse collections is 6.30am and 7.00am for the glass collection. There has not been any feedback to suggest that the starting times affect the number of missed bins.

Due to the extreme hot temperatures experienced during the summer months it was necessary on occasions to commence collections an hour early due to health and safety reasons. Information regarding the earlier starts was communicated through the Council's usual communications channels, e.g. Social Media and Email Me. The early starting times did not impact on the number of missed bins.

7. Are there times when bins are missed due to lack of foresight, missing bins where there are obstacles like lorries?

The crews take pride in their work and it is the intention of every crew to ensure that all residents bins are emptied. It is acknowledged that there has been occasions where a resident's bin may not have been emptied due to restricted observations such as a parked vehicle.

When the refuse management team are made aware of such issues, additional education is given to the teams to inform them that there is a bin behind a vehicle and this needs to be emptied.

It should be noted that drivers are finding it increasingly difficult to access some roads, particularly the narrower streets in the borough, due to parked cars. This is likely to be as a direct impact of increased home/hybrid working

8. Data regarding missed bins.

Table 1 shows the number of missed bins by type since April 2020.

2020/2021						2021/2022						2022/2023					
Month	Missed Bins	Black	Brown	Green	Glass	Month	Missed Bins	Black	Brown	Green	Glass	Month	Missed Bins	Black	Brown	Green	Glass
April	745	37.32 %	7.92%	36.78 %	17.99 %	April	1,237	33.31 %	18.35 %	33.31 %	15.04 %	April	1,356	30.31 %	39.45 %	22.05 %	8.19 %
May	886	38.26 %	6.09%	30.25 %	25.40 %	May	1,059	35.98 %	20.96 %	26.16 %	16.90 %	May	1,357	25.64 %	50.18 %	17.24 %	6.93 %
June	1,070	37.76 %	5.33%	29.53 %	27.38 %	June	1,623	25.75 %	39.25 %	19.10 %	15.90 %	June	1,260	31.03 %	43.33 %	18.41 %	7.22 %
July	771	30.87 %	6.74%	36.45 %	25.94 %	July	1,333	31.13 %	31.21 %	22.06 %	15.60 %	July	1,252	41.69 %	32.03 %	20.77 %	5.51 %
August	887	39.23 %	7.89%	31.79 %	21.08 %	August	1,709	28.32 %	31.36 %	21.88 %	18.43 %	August	1,023	42.23 %	26.69 %	24.83 %	6.26 %
September	887	38.90 %	6.88%	34.16 %	20.07 %	September	1,437	29.44 %	24.36 %	24.77 %	21.43 %	September	1,541	42.12 %	26.15 %	26.80 %	4.93 %
October	696	37.36 %	7.61%	33.62 %	21.41 %	October	948	34.60 %	29.11 %	23.52 %	12.76 %	October					
November	848	39.62 %	4.36%	32.78 %	23.23 %	November	1,157	27.40 %	38.98 %	20.48 %	13.14 %	November					
December	1,291	39.89 %	5.96%	34.93 %	19.21 %	December	1,040	44.23 %	13.85 %	29.42 %	12.50 %	December					
January	1,179	46.14 %	9.50%	30.79 %	13.57 %	January	1,362	50.51 %	17.99 %	22.10 %	9.40%	January					
February	894	38.14 %	11.74%	31.32 %	18.79 %	February	724	36.74 %	14.78 %	34.94 %	13.54 %	February					
March	1,112	35.34 %	15.74%	28.96 %	19.96 %	March	1,092	38.37 %	25.73 %	25.09 %	10.81 %	March					

Table 1: Missed bins by type

Analysis of the data in table 1 shows that:

- Black bins are reported most as missed
- The number of missed glass collections has significantly improved since 2021/22. This is due to having a consistent Team leader and team on the round
- Reported missed recycling bins are consistently around the same level
- The number of reported missed garden bins increased at the beginning of this current season due to residents not paying their subscription fees. Teams are instructed that they should only empty garden waste bins with current subscription stickers on them.

Table 2 shows the data relating to the number of bins that have not been emptied by the crew and reported on the in-cab system.

Reported Event	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023 (April – September)
Lid Up	10	4	4
Not Broxtowe Container	99	36	38
Frozen	188	47	1
Bin Empty	125	48	11
Heavy	84	97	44
Contents Stuck	202	146	20
Gate Locked	294	311	252
No Access	662	341	175
Wrong Bin Out	713	463	249
Contaminated	4,394	2,825	2,161
Not Out	11,195	10,455	7,258
Total	17,966	14,773	10,213

Table 2: Crew issues with bins

Analysis of the 2022/23 data has been undertaken to ascertain how many bins were requested to be collected following rejection by the crew. This analysis showed that since April 2022, the missed bin team returned to 393 properties that had been previously rejected by the crew.

9. New builds, how do we get information on where new collections need to start?

Each street is allocated to a collection round. When a bin is delivered to a new development, the address automatically uploads on the respective delivery round. The crew are informed of the new street added to the round.

On new developments which are larger in scale, and result in properties being completed in different stages, access can on occasions be restricted due to construction vehicles still being on site. In future a change of process will be implemented so that these developments are informed of the increased potential for missed collections due to access issues at the point when the bins are delivered.

Where access to an entire street, or part of it, has been restricted, the Driver/Team Leader will make a second attempt to access the road within the working day. If access is then still not possible, the Driver/Team Leader will report it using the in-cab system to ensure the street is then included on the missed bin round.

10. How is data used for training?

Data regarding the number of 'missed bin reports' per team is displayed on a performance board within the depot. This data is updated each month and gives each team an insight into their own performance. Improvements in performance can lead to the award of 'team of the week', which is an award aimed at increasing motivation and performance. The information is also used to inform toolbox talks to improve service performance, as well as to allow employees to engage and share their views.

11. Should there be a charge for collecting missed bins?

The collection of waste is a mandatory function. However, there is scope to withdraw the service and potentially charge a resident who persistently fails to engage in the proper behaviour with regards the presentation of their bins.

Further work can be undertaken on this and presented to Members at a later date. Appropriate remedial measures to address persistent non-conformance include:

- Serving advisory letters in the first instance
- Serving section 46 Notices to mandate compliance
- Enforcement of the section 46 Notice and potential fining or withdrawal of the collection service
- Providing a provision to empty the bin as part of the bulky waste service for non-compliance. This would be chargeable.

Scoping Report

Title of review	Missed Bins
Expected outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To understand why bins are missed and if the number of missed bins could be reduced
Terms of reference/Key lines of enquiry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How should the process work? How many bins are being missed? How quickly are they collected? What happens with repeated missed bins? How do we communicate regarding feedback on missed bins, including communicating with the complainant? Do the starting times of collections result in missed bins? Are there times when bins are missed due to lack of foresight, missing bins where there are obstacles like lorries? How many bins are missed because they are contaminated? Is there a reason bins are being missed, what is the cause? Do we have data on why bins are missed and which type of bins are missed? New builds, how do we get information on where new collections need to start? How is data used for training? Should there be a charge for collecting missed bins?
Possible sources of information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environment Services
How review could be publicised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council website Social media The Council's Communications team
Specify site visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None required

Possible witnesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Director • Head of Environment • Waste and Climate Change Manager 		
Resource requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officer/Councillor time 		
Projected start date	Week commencing 12 December 2022	Draft report deadline	12 January 2023
Projected completion date	12 January 2023		