

Briefing note



Trial – Project for the provision of free of charge ‘seagull proof sacks’

Introduction

Background: The Council currently sells ‘seagull proof’ sacks householders who have problems keeping their waste secure from seagulls and other animals and who don’t have space for a bin. The sacks, which cost £3.50 each, are a woven plastic material that enables black sacks to be kept relatively secure on the kerbside.

Improper containment of black sacks before collection, leads to them becoming ripped open by birds and animals, with the contents of the bag being strewn across streets or roads, causing littering and other waste management issues.

Aim: The Council is keen to look at ways of reducing incidents of this type of littering as in most cases it can easily be prevented through using proper waste containment. To this end the Council has conducted a trial for the provision of free ‘seagull proof’ sacks to a number of properties in Cornwall where there is a localised problem with waste containment and seagulls.

This paper sets out what the trial entailed and how it was monitored and its performance assessed. Feedback from the trial will also be used to help steer the waste strategy and any outcomes it has around containment for residents.

Overview

Cornwall Council operates a ‘black sack’ refuse collection service which means that householders must present their waste contained in a disposable plastic sack that they provide. Residents are also responsible for their rubbish up until the point it is collected by Cornwall Council’s contractor, Biffa, and are advised not to place waste out too early and to protect it either by placing it into a bin or to cover it prior to collection.

Cornwall Council current policy is not to provide containers for residents to store and present their rubbish for collection but is to provide containers for the dry recycling service.

Many households in Cornwall do not have storage capacity or property frontage for a standard dustbin or wheeled bin to contain their waste. Therefore, in many circumstances, these properties place their waste out in black sacks which are frequently attacked by animals and birds. In rural and inland urban areas this is often

foxes, cats and jackdaws but in seaside areas seagulls are the usual culprits, ripping open the sacks and spreading the rubbish around the area.

2017 Trial

As set out in the introduction, the Council has carried out a trial providing 'seagull proof' sacks free of charge in specific areas of Cornwall to establish any effects on the levels of litter. The targeted areas, identified as problematic by the Council's Waste Management Team and contractor in liaison with the Cabinet Member for Environment & Public Protection, were where the issue of littering from unprotected waste is of a particular problem.

Areas and streets included

West 2:

- Camborne:

William Street, Moor Street, Kerrier Way, Nicholas Holman Road, Foundry Road
, North Roskear Road, Rosemellin

Central 1:

- Truro:

Trelander North, Trelander East, Castle Street, Ferris Town

East 1:

- Bodmin:

Treingle View, Bawden Road, Monument Way, Harmer Close, Wallace Road

- Bude:

Berries Avenue, Bede Haven Close

East 2:

- Liskeard:

Catchfrench Crescent, Austin Close, Old Road

Number of properties

The trial focused upon approximately 1,550 properties across Cornwall.

Monitoring of outcomes

Council staff directly monitored each of the streets prior to the trial starting and again once the trial was underway to determine what effect, if any, the trial has on levels of litter. The Council's waste team worked closely with its waste contractor Biffa to gather evidence; documenting visits and 'clear ups' required including photos – before seagull proof sacks were introduced and after they were used to assess the differences. They also worked with the Council's Environmental Crime team to assess areas of concern that they have received in the past.

Communication

Members were kept informed of progress and a leaflet was designed and sent out to residents of the trial advising them of what was happening and allowing them to opt out if they so desired.

Key Dates

- The streets were monitored for litter levels in late September to late October
- The pre-flyer advising resident about the trial and the offer of a free seagull proof sack was sent out week beginning 30th October.
- Residents had until 10th November to let the Council know (via the Contact Centre or email) if they wished to opt out of the trial.
- A seagull proof sack leaflet, explaining how to use the sack, was designed and is sent out to the 6 Biffa depots week beginning 30th October.
- Biffa delivered sacks and leaflets to residents involved in the trial from Biffa Depots week beginning 13th November.
- Treningle View (Bodmin) residents' letter about kerbside collection change and seagull proof sack trial was sent out from week beginning 30th October.
- Treningle View kerbside collections to start Monday 27th November.
- Seagull proof sack trial started (including post rollout monitoring) 27th November.
- Monitoring completed (3 week period) week beginning 18th December.

Trial Results

Summary Method

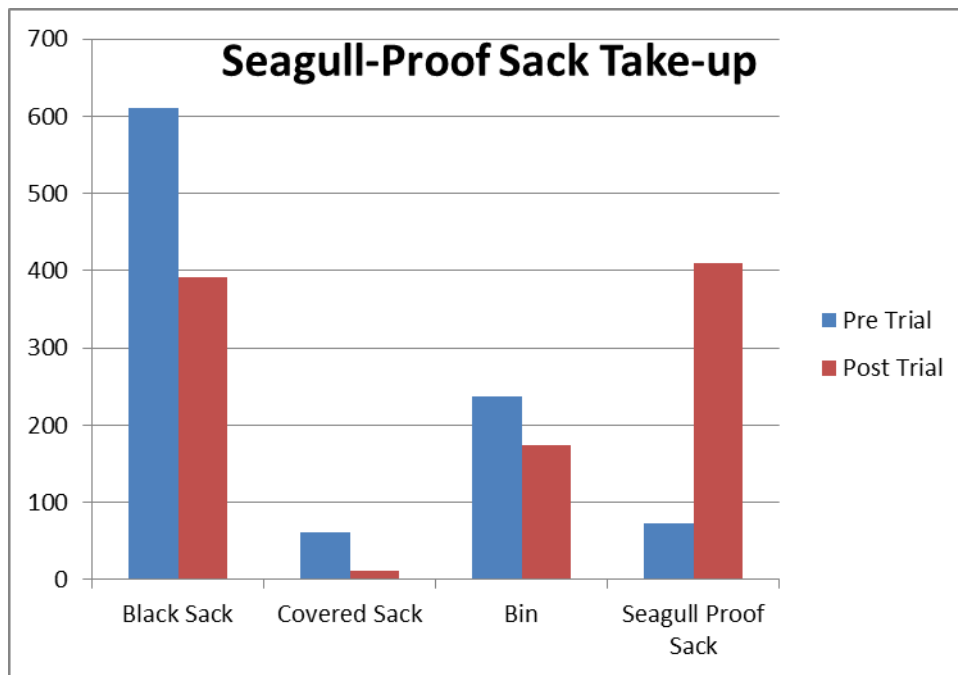
21 streets were selected containing 1,550 properties. These were monitored twice, before and after the delivery of Seagull-Proof Sacks, both times on weeks when there were no recycling collections to those properties.

A 50m transect for each street was selected before the pre-trial monitoring visit which would then host a litter count as well as NI195 litter and detritus surveys. NI195 survey is the percentage of relevant land and highways that is assessed as having deposits of litter, detritus, graffiti and fly-posting that falls below an acceptable level.

The same transects were used for the post-trial visit. Containerisation types were counted for the entire street in each case. Pre-trial visits were conducted between late September and late October and Post trial visits throughout December 2017.

Summary Findings

1,550 sacks were given out to residents at the start of the trial. The number of residents who chose to use the sack showed an increase than previously with an additional 337 households presenting waste within a seagull proof sack after receiving one during the trial. "Set-out" (how many properties placed waste out) remained roughly the same with just under 1000 properties putting out their residual waste for collection on both occasions. The biggest reduction in containerisation types were black sacks, which saw about a 35% drop in usage, and covered sacks which saw an 80% drop in usage. Unexpectedly, 25% fewer bins were also put out for collection in the post-trial monitoring. This could be due to less residences with bins putting their refuse out for collection during the post-trial monitoring, along with residences using the option of presenting refuse in the seagull proof sacks. Graph 1 below illustrates these changes in usage.



Graph 1: Seagull Proof Sack Uptake

NI195 litter ratings did not change significantly with some sites showing minor improvements and others minor deterioration. Litter counts along the 50m transects did show a reduction in litter overall with 177 fewer items recorded across all sites during the trial. This represents a 20% drop in overall litter amounts along those transects. However, it is not clear whether this is related to use of seagull-proof sacks or whether litter had been collected. Curiously, almost all of the Bodmin transects showed a rise in overall litter despite having some of the highest levels of uptake for seagull-proof sacks.

NI195 detritus ratings showed a minor deterioration over the timespan of the trial though this may have been to do with the time of year with increased leaf litter and other wind-blown detritus as autumn progressed.

For full detail of the trial results please see Appendix 1, 2 & 3.

Conclusions

The trial shows evidence of fewer litter items noted on the streets (177) which represented a drop in overall litter amounts.

In terms of usage, 337 properties were using the seagull proof sacks. Before the trial started there were approximately 981 properties setting out with some form of containment, of that 73 used seagull proof sacks.. Although there is a decrease amount of litter items it is not clear whether it is attributable to uptake in seagull proof sacks usage.

There are a number of conditions to also take into consideration about the trial:

1. Gull activity during the trial was reduced at that time of year and so the results may not be truly reflective of the impact gulls would have on these bags, although activity by other types of animals should be unaffected.

2. The output based contract requirement means the Biffa are likely to have carried out cleansing operations within the trial period possibly affecting the baseline survey results.
3. Further follow up assessments in 6 months maybe required to ascertain long-term litter levels and usage of the sacks by residents.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Pre trial

Appendix 2: During trial

Appendix 3: Analysis for each street in the trial

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Appendix 1: Pre-trial Results

Town	Street	Litter			Waste Presented					Setout
		Litter Total	NI195 Litter	NI195 Detritus	Black Sack	Covered Sacks	Bin	Seagull Proof Sack	Ripped bags	
Truro	Castle Street	53	B	B+	2	1	7	2	0	12
Truro	Ferris Town	16	B+	A	4	5	8	3	0	20
Truro	Trelander North	78	B-	B-	4	11	15	5	0	35
Truro	Trelander East	81	B-	B-	1	7	17	11	0	36
Bude	Berries Avenue	18	B+	B	54	0	4	7	0	65
Bude	Bede haven Close	11	B+	A	17	0	35	10	0	62
Liskeard	Catchfrench Crescent	22	B-	B	12	10	20	5	2	47
Liskeard	Austin Close	8	B+	B+	4	1	7	3	0	15
Liskeard	Old Road	29	B	B	21	1	12	2	0	36
Camborne	William Street	108	B-	B	10	2	1	2	1	15
Camborne	Moor Street	119	C	B-	26	3	1	0	1	30
Camborne	Kerrier Way	51	B	B+	49	0	7	2	0	58
Camborne	Nicholas Holman Road	86	B-/C	B	19	1	17	2	0	39
Camborne	Foundry Road	42	B-	B	45	1	2	2	1	50
Camborne	North Roskear Road	72	B-	B-/C	72	2	13	2	0	89
Camborne	Rosemellin	24	B+	B+	92	3	29	4	0	128
Bodmin	Trengle View	10	B+	B+	81	0	11	1	1	93
Bodmin	Bawden Road	22	B+	B	23	6	14	3	0	46
Bodmin	Monument Way	7	B+	B	6	5	3	1	1	15
Bodmin	Harmer Close	5	B+	B-	21	2	8	4	0	35
Bodmin	Wallace Road	35	B-/C	C	47	0	6	2	1	55
Total		897			610	61	237	73	8	981

Appendix 2: During Trial Results

Town	Street	Litter			Waste Presented					
		Litter Total	NI195 Litter	NI195 Detritus	Black Sack	Covered Sacks	Bin	Seagull Proof Sack	Ripped bags	Setout
Truro	Castle Street	10	B+	B+	3	0	6	5	0	14
Truro	Ferris Town	14	B+	B+	3	2	3	5	0	13
Truro	Trelander North	63	C	B-	0	0	5	22	0	27
Truro	Trelander East	44	B-	B-	1	1	8	29	0	39
Bude	Berries Avenue	15	B+	B+	29	0	6	36	0	71
Bude	Bede Haven Close	10	B+	B+	12	1	26	25	0	64
Liskeard	Catchfrench Crescent	21	B-	B	16	1	20	22	2	59
Liskeard	Austin Close	11	B+	B+	5	0	6	3	0	14
Liskeard	Old Road	18	B	B	22	1	13	7	0	43
Camborne	William Street	65	B-/C	B-	7	1	1	11	2	20
Camborne	Moor Street	83	B-	B-	24	0	1	16	0	41
Camborne	Kerrier Way	27	B-	B	39	0	4	11	5	54
Camborne	Nicholas Holman Road	76	B-	B-	12	0	14	11	1	37
Camborne	Foundry Road	40	B	B	12	0	3	18	0	33
Camborne	North Roskear Road	81	B-	B-/C	53	0	8	22	0	83
Camborne	Rosemellin	14	B	B	58	3	14	27	3	105
Bodmin	Trengle View	19	B+	B+	32	0	9	54	0	95
Bodmin	Bawden Road	19	B	B-	8	0	6	29	0	43
Bodmin	Monument Way	21	B	B	4	1	4	9	1	18
Bodmin	Harmer Close	12	B	B-	22	1	10	19	0	52
Bodmin	Wallace Road	57	B-	B-/C	29	0	8	29	1	66
Total		720			391	12	175	410	15	991

Appendix 3: Analysis of Each Street

Town	Street	Litter			Waste Presented					
		Litter Total	NI195 Litter	NI195 Detritus	Black Sack	Covered Sacks	Bin	Seagull Proof Sack	Ripped bags	Setout
Truro	Castle Street	-43	1	0	1	-1	-1	3	0	2
Truro	Ferris Town	-2	0	-1	-1	-3	-5	2	0	-7
Truro	Trelander North	-15	-1	0	-4	-11	-10	17	0	-8
Truro	Trelander East	-37	0	0	0	-6	-9	18	0	3
Bude	Berries Avenue	-3	0	1	-25	0	2	29	0	6
Bude	Bede Haven Close	-1	0	-1	-5	1	-9	15	0	2
Liskeard	Catchfrench Crescent	-1	0	0	4	-9	0	17	0	12
Liskeard	Austin Close	3	0	0	1	-1	-1	0	0	-1
Liskeard	Old Road	-11	0	0	1	0	1	5	0	7
Camborne	William Street	-43	-1	-1	-3	-1	0	9	1	5
Camborne	Moor Street	-36	1	0	-2	-3	0	16	-1	11
Camborne	Kerrier Way	-24	-1	-1	-10	0	-3	9	5	-4
Camborne	Nicholas Holman Road	-10	1	-1	-7	-1	-3	9	1	-2
Camborne	Foundry Road	-2	1	0	-33	-1	1	16	-1	-17
Camborne	North Roskear Road	9	0	0	-19	-2	-5	20	0	-6
Camborne	Rosemellin	-10	-1	-1	-34	0	-15	23	3	-23
Bodmin	Treingle View	9	0	0	-49	0	-2	53	-1	2
Bodmin	Bawden Road	-3	-1	-1	-15	-6	-8	26	0	-3
Bodmin	Monument Way	14	-1	0	-2	-4	1	8	0	3
Bodmin	Harmer Close	7	-1	0	1	-1	2	15	0	17
Bodmin	Wallace Road	22	1	1	-18	0	2	27	0	11

Total	-177	-2	-5	-219	-49	-62	337	7	10
	0.802676			0.640984	0.196721	0.738397			

Observations:

No significant change in NI ratings for litter and poorer performance for detritus, but not huge change. Could be down to local factors or sampling bias

Strong reduction in overall recorded litter levels on the transects selected. Rise in Bodmin.

Good take up of Seagull Proof Sacks - 337 additional users

No link between level of uptake of SPS and litter levels on individual streets (see graph)

Rise in detritus (small) but this may be seasonal as this was conducted going into autumn and winter