

REFUSE ARRANGEMENTS IN NEW HOUSING

Advice to developers, architects and designers on best practice when designing refuse and recycling facilities for new residential development



A well designed communal bin store on the frontage of a residential development



A simple, neat and commercially available "Three Wheelie" front garden store for an individual household

As Waste Collection Authority, Bedford Borough Council requires each householder to manage and take responsibility for their own domestic refuse and sorting of their recycling at source. It is important that future residents can do this easily, conveniently and in a way that does not adversely affect the residential environment of any new dwelling, its near neighbours or the area as a whole. The principle of ensuring that all new dwellings are provided with adequate storage for solid wastes has been incorporated into the Building Regulations. Bedford Borough Council has powers under Section 46 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to stipulate the level of storage for refuse and recyclables that should be provided to serve each new dwelling in the Borough. The planning policies of the development plan in relation to waste are material considerations in the decision to be made about any planning application for new homes within the Borough.

This Appendix supplements the Building Regulations and outlines those functional requirements of the Council as Waste Collection Authority.

Ease of Use and Ease of Collection

The Council's contractors will only collect refuse containers from a point immediately adjacent to a public highway where the collection vehicle can safely pause while loading. The Council's contractors will not enter a private road unless a prior legal agreement has been entered into which indemnifies the Council against structural or other damage from manoeuvring the large and usually heavy laden vehicle (typically 32 tonnes GVW). If the proposed road is to be adopted as a public highway then access for vehicles will be straightforward, provided that there is adequate turning space. Refuse collection vehicles should be able to turn safely even when the highway turning area is being misused for the parking of residents' or visitors' cars. This may involve a vehicle turning area of more than minimum dimensions. Any archway above the carriageway must safely accommodate refuse vehicles which are 11.8 metres long; 2.53 metres wide and 4 metres high.

Refuse storage serving dwellings on any private road should be located conveniently within the private curtilage of each dwelling - but with a separate and safe bin collection point or 'area' allocated for use on collection days next to the nearest public highway. Collection points should not be more than 10 metres from a suitable stopping place for the refuse collection vehicle. That allocated collection point should be clear of the footway or any pedestrian route to and from any dwelling.

For the safety and convenience of residents when placing refuse containers ready for collection, a hard surfaced pathway from the refuse store to the safe collection point should be at least 1.2 metres wide and as near level as possible. If larger 'Eurobins' are to be used then there should be a dropped kerb at the highway edge to allow their easy movement. Steps or other hazards to ease of movement should be avoided.

Storage and collection if using a communal bin store



Individual or communal bins should never be stored more than 30 metres from the dwelling which they serve (excluding stairs or lifts in flatted developments). Any individual or communal bin store should be not more than 25 metres from the safe collection point mentioned above. In many cases a legal agreement will be required to allow access to private roads in order to meet this standard.

Although individual residents are able to place smaller wheeled bins ready for collection, no reliance should be placed on individual householders to move the larger 'Eurobins' generally used in communal bin stores.

Amount of Bin Storage to Provide

Any self contained dwelling that does not rely on a communal bin store should provide an allocated space to store three x 240 litre "wheelie" bins as follows:

- 240 litres of refuse bin capacity – black bin
- 240 litres of compost bin capacity – green bin
- 240 litres of recyclables bin capacity – orange bin.

This will occupy a discretely located space of about 0.8 x 2.1 metres. Ideally further space should be available to meet any future requirements for storage of separated recyclables. Individual dwellings should store bins externally but away from the visible public domain such as in the rear garden, but with easy access to the highway edge.

Whenever possible, new homes that have a garden should also be provided with physical capacity for self-composting and advice should be provided to householders on how best to compost their household and garden wastes.

Where it is not practical to provide separate bins for each household, for example in blocks of flats, provision may be made communally for shared 'Eurobins' to accommodate both waste and recyclables. The volume of bin storage should be calculated at the rate of 240 litres of storage for refuse and a further 240 litres of storage of recyclables for each dwelling proposed. Larger bins having a volume of 1100 litres will occupy a space of about 1.1 x 1.4 metres - plus space for residents to access them and to allow easy removal and replacement after collection. Bins for refuse and bins for recyclables should be clearly and visibly distinguished. Larger wheeled Eurobins must be stored near to a safe highway collection point and with no reliance on householders to move such heavier containers ready for collection.

Location, Construction and Appearance

In flatted development refuse stores are best integrated into the ground floor of the building where they are easily accessible to residents, outside the external door, but without leaving the building and where they are likely to be better managed by users. Bins will only be collected from a collection point near the highway edge (but clear of any footway), and the selection of bin size and the route to and from a collection area at the highway edge should allow for safety and ease of use.

Individual dwellings with access to ground level should ideally be provided with storage located away from the public realm or street scene. Bins can then be placed at a designated collection point on collection days. A safe and designated area should always be incorporated into the design for the placing of residents' bins which is clear of any footway or carriageway. Alternatively, attractive bin storage might be integrated into the frontage of the development in those locations where it is appropriate to do so. (See the two illustrations on the first page of this Appendix and also the requirement of Regulation H6; paragraph 1.17 of the Building Regulations Approved Document.)

If the placing of bins for collection involves moving them through a garage or other outbuilding, then subsequent alterations which prevent easy bin placement on collection days might involve bins being permanently placed in the front garden. The fact that bins might become an unsightly addition to the street scene could make such alterations unacceptable. (See Section 23(3) and 23(4) of the Building Act 1984.)

The design of refuse storage facilities can have an adverse impact on the character of existing buildings, streets and spaces. This is particularly the case in conservation areas and near listed buildings. For this reason purpose-built external bin enclosures need careful design as an integral part of the residential environment as a whole. Designers should never add them merely as an afterthought. They and the activity associated with them should be at a neighbourly distance from the habitable windows of any nearby dwelling and should not form the foreground view from any dwelling, including pre-existing dwellings nearby. Communal bin stores should be of durable construction with roof, external materials, scale and location to complement the proposed development and the street or neighbourhood as a whole. Apart from their appearance within a street, bins should not be visible from the upper part of any nearby buildings, so communal bin stores should generally have a roof. They should be well ventilated and secure, preferably in shade if not provided with a roof and with a paved floor and drainage to facilitate periodic cleansing. Doors should incorporate self closures to prevent access by foraging animals and small children.

The size of enclosure should provide space for the required number of individual wheeled bins or larger Eurobins, plus space for them to be easily accessed by residents and routinely manoeuvred to and from the safe collection point.

The Council will provide 240 litre wheeled bins but developers are responsible for providing any of the larger Eurobins, clearly marked and labelled for refuse or recyclables, when those are proposed as an alternative.

Management of Bin Stores

Communal refuse stores or external enclosures have the potential to become unsightly and a nuisance if they are not adequately managed. Many residential developments have a management company for maintenance of communal areas and grounds. The *Code for Sustainable Homes* has a mandatory requirement that a private contractor must be appointed. It is important that where an individual household is not responsible for managing its own bin storage then some organisation or known individual has responsibility for routinely maintaining and cleansing communal refuse facilities and, for example, placing the appropriate bins out for collection each week. Careless misuse of a bin store may well constitute 'fly tipping' which is an offence.

If kept reasonably clean like any other part of the home, then refuse and recycling bins should not present any hazard to health or amenity. Individual households and their neighbours should be able to sort and manage their own refuse and recyclables in a safe, secure and convenient way. Communal bin stores introduce additional management issues in how that is to be achieved. Designers and developers are responsible for overcoming those issues in a way which is convincing to the local planning authority and which will persuade future householders to follow best practice in maximising the reduction, recycling and management of their own refuse.

Annotated and detailed drawings submitted for planning permission should clearly show what arrangements are to be made for bin storage, collection points and bin collection in any new residential development.

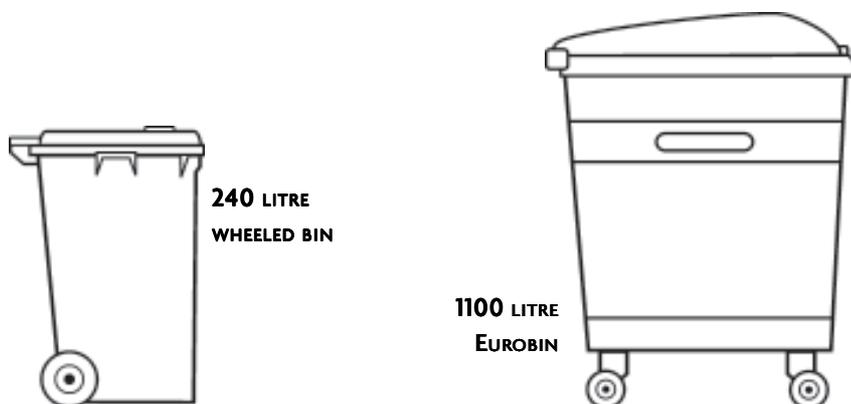
Checklist for Designers and Developers

- Have you calculated the correct amount of refuse and recyclables capacity for each household in the development?
- Will households be responsible for their own wheeled bins or will there be communal bins clearly marked for refuse and recyclables?
- On a day to day basis, will bins be located conveniently for householders to use but out of sight from the public realm and the street scene?
- Where will bins be placed on collection days and will that obstruct any entrance paths, public footways or highways?
- Who will place them out on collection days and return them after emptying?
- Who will be responsible for cleansing and maintenance of any communal bin store? How will future residents know who to complain to?
- Finally, are you going to explain to new residents about local refuse and recycling arrangements as part of any sales “Welcome Pack”? *How will they know how to make best use of refuse and recycling facilities unless somebody tells them?*

Size of Refuse Containers

240 LITRE WHEELED BIN - 590 mm wide x 740 mm deep x 1070 mm high (1800 mm high with lid open)

1100 LITRE EUROBIN - 1380 mm wide x 1090 mm deep x 1470 mm high (2700 mm high - lid open)



Contacts

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