

### Consultation on revised refuse collection arrangements 2014

I make the assumption that the following will be taken as a valid contribution to the current consultation on the revised Refuse Collection arrangements. If this is not the case I expect that you will contact me with details of an ACCESSIBLE means for me to make my contribution. I have looked in vain, and have made formal request for a copy of the Impact Assessment and the mitigation arrangements for the current weekly collection scheme. They appear either not to exist or have been hidden away so that the Impacts which I and others told you about for the current weekly system have not been taken into account.

You will remember that I contacted you about the actual dangers caused by the non-adherence to the current collection arrangements and you replied by e-mail having passed on my e-mail to messrs Graham & Winstanley. I have heard from neither. The situation has not improved. I have collided with several bins left on footways. At least one had been left by the refuse collectors because when I collided with it, the bin fell over and was obviously empty.

As far as I have been able to piece together the proposed options none will address the dangers posed to myself, other visually impaired people or others with mobility problems. For clarity, I will list the dangers again.

- Householders do NOT place wheeled bins on their property even though their houses have a driveway/path etc. They leave them on the footway.
- Having emptied the bins, the collectors leave them where they picked them up. If this is the footway, the collectors leave them back on the footway.
- Recycling boxes are left wherever the householder feels like it. The original instructions were to leave them by the kerb. Instead there are some stretches of footway where the effect is to form a chicane with boxes by walls, by kerbs and mid-pavement.
- When replacing empty recycling boxes collectors 'throw them down anywhere' (quote from a supervisor) on the footway removing any vestige of predictability of the location of hazards.
- Items blown out of boxes generally tend to be left uncollected on the footway.

There is of course the issue of colour coding boxes for people such as myself with severely impaired colour vision but this is trivial by comparison. Mitigation is as simple as a tactile label on each box.

Mitigation for the bulleted points above is however very serious indeed with potentially impact of physical safety for a large section of Darlington Council tax payers and disabled people in general.

The council has demonstrated that it is incapable/unwilling to do anything about householders/collectors who 'break the rules'. Unless sanctions are built into the 2014 scheme, the physical increase in numbers of hazards in all 3 options on footways is dangerous. (size is not a relevant factor – something the size of a brick or something the size of a bus-shelter both end up with a collision liable to cause me physical harm).

I could not personally care less which option is taken provided that the council actively manage the safety aspects for disabled people.