

Refuse Bin Issues

I met with Chloe Hipwood and a team leader today to see if there was some resolution we could find to the issue of bin collection from Tuscan Court, following the granting of the application by North Area Committee, and in the hope that resolving this issue would mitigate the concerns of residents at least in this regard.

I am copying in Chloe who will be able to correct any matters I may get wrong.

Currently Tuscan Court bins are collected from the car park at Tuscan Court - the land between 34 - 35 Pakenham Close which is the subject of the application. The land is bollarded to prevent vehicles accessing it but the bins (some 20 today) are within the curtilage and fronting Pakenham Close and are collected essentially through the bollards.

There is access to Tuscan Court between 36-37 but this is a very poor unadopted road and cannot be used by the bin lorries. We looked at if a bin storage area could be created in the car park of Tuscan Court close to that entrance (probably) but the pull distance would be too great for the bin men. The bins could not be pulled through to Pakenham Close by Tuscan Court residents as a) it would result in a blocked access between 36 - 37 including for emergency vehicles, and b) there was nowhere to leave that number of bins on Pakenham Close itself.

We looked at if a better arrangement of using larger Chamberlain bins (clearly better for flats anyway) would be possible but that would require access which is not possible for the lorry through 36 - 37.

It is a simple and unfortunate fact that the planning report made an error in regards to access from between 34 and 32 Pakenham Close. This is in fact a boundary with a fence, mature trees and a street light, and vehicle access would be simply impossible. We looked though if it would be possible to create a bin store close to this area and pull the bins though if a path was created between existing trees but a) the ownership of land might be an issue including access over the land adjacent to the boundary and b) Chloe was of the view that the pull distance would be too great again.

We then looked at access through the Union Lane entrance and took a refuse lorry down to the car park. (reversed down). Although this was achieved it was very tight and only done with someone directing behind and very slowly (and still slightly knocked a fence) and there are concerns about the ability of the unadopted road to stand up to the weight of the lorries and of the potential damage to the refuse lorry/wingmirrors if used regularly. We concluded therefore it was very unlikely that the road could be used either for normal bin collection or

for chamberlain bin collection (which again would be a better option for the residents than individual bins).

Currently some 7 bins are collected here by being brought forward to Union Lane. We discussed the possibility of all bins from the existing development being brought forward through this access. However that would mean up to 30 bins being brought forward onto a main highway, would increase the dwell time of the refuse vehicle and present (in my view and with the concerns shared by the team leader and Chloe) significant highway safety issues along an already pressured and heavily used road, not to mention the objections from residents of Union Lane about the proliferation of bins at that point.

There was some possible space at the Union Lane entrance to create some larger bin storage (for chamberlains perhaps) but it is unclear who owns the land, it might involve changing a garden type area into a bin storage area including the removal of trees or green shrubs, was potentially not large enough and a long way for Tuscan Court residents and might encourage fly tipping due to its location.

The conclusion was that at present the only possible arrangement was the current one of collecting bins stored on the existing car park area, and that not having this would present real difficulties to collect the bins at all.

Given that the planning permission has been granted, I must express real concern that if building work commences, bin collection for Tuscan Court will in fact not be possible at all and that this will leave us with a very significant issue.

I must point out that at the Chair's briefing I raised precisely this issue of access for bin collection, even asking for details about the ability to use the access road between 36 - 37 Pakenham Close, and that I also asked at committee for this application to be deferred for further information when it was clear that the amendment sheet was at best muddled and unclear.

I happened to meet the applicant last Thursday in Pakenham Close and whilst he was clearly anxious to help by relocating bin storage, I am also concerned that he expressed a wish to start construction immediately and that today there were some signs of work having commenced. I did tell him he could not start ahead of the decision notice being issued and that residents had made a formal complaint about the report, but I do wonder if officers need to reinforce this.

I must also express my own concerns that the report and amendment sheet failed entirely to deal with highlighted concerns by residents and requests for clarity from myself about refuse collection from Tuscan Court, and that this was after an initial report which itself failed to take into account the site history, even though that was in the petition/objection from residents, submitted on 14 January 2010..