

BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL
Environment
21 May 2026
Decision Report – Skips

Recommendation that the Council:

- **Consider establishing a skip policy which would set out the timing, frequency and number of skips across Council-run sites.**

Ward(s)

All (no allotment sites within Plessey)

Risk Management

The allotment budget for 2026/27 is £18,000. There is an earmarked budget for one skip per site, on a demand basis. The most recent invoice for a skip was approximately £325.

Objective

Promoting the environmental, social, and economic wellbeing of the town and its community.

Crime & Disorder Prevention

None.

Public Sector Equality Duty

No considerations.

Report

To summarise:

- Tenants are expected to undertake waste disposal in most circumstances.
- The council has in the past supported sites with provision of a skip, but is not required to.
- Skips may be provided on a request basis, but tenants appear not to be aware of the process.
- Skips are currently funded through the allotment budget.
- Skips have not been requested by all sites in every year, while general standards have been maintained. It may not be necessary to stipulate provision.

Following public questions about the provision of skips to allotment sites run directly by Blyth Town Council for the use of tenants, clarification on the current provision is offered, and the opportunity for the Council to consider changes to the administration/arrangements of the skip provision is presented.

Please note this discussion relates solely to skips requested by tenants for use of tenants for waste coming directly from their plots. The council may also commission skips to manage waste that is Council responsibility e.g. relating to lanes, hedges and perimeter fencing (these may be made openly available to tenants at the discretion of the council).

The council appreciate that occasionally tenants might undertake significant work on their plots which generates a larger than usual amount of waste or spoil, and understand this work is done to better adhere to the tenancy agreement principles of cultivation and maintenance and for the overall benefit of the site as a whole.

On this basis, the council has in the past taken the step of supporting tenants through the provision of a skip.

However, provision through the council is not specified in the tenancy agreement or required under law. Tenants are not entitled to any level of provision through the council. It is the tenant's choice to undertake major works (taking down a structure or a major re-organisation of their plot, for example, the costs of which might reasonably be expected to fall to the tenant. The tenancy agreement makes clear that the management of waste on a plot is the tenant's responsibility (Tenancy Agreement, Section 4.1 [...] *keep it free of hazards, eg broken glass or scrap metal etc, and reasonably free from weeds and noxious plants and in a good state of cultivation and fertility and in good condition.*) and there are existing mechanisms in place to avoid the buildup of waste e.g. regular inspections, and the requirement for a tenant to vacate a plot in a tidy condition (Tenancy Agreement, Section 9.1) with the provision to withhold the bond and charge any additional costs to that tenant.

Even where a new tenant takes on an overgrown plot that requires significant clearance, the lease is taken on with the tenant's agreement to manage the maintenance of the plot and with full understanding of the work required (as prospective tenants visit the site prior to agreeing a tenancy, for this reason, amongst others). The General Services Team will make tenants aware that they cannot rely on access to a skip and that they are responsible for alternative means of waste disposal. Concessions on rent are occasionally offered.

Skips are provided on a request basis to tenants, rather than at set times of the year. The number of skips is also not set and in fact no skips may be provided in a year should the need not arise. This is to avoid waste should the skips not be needed and allow flexibility for tenants around when they choose to do significant work on their plots. The number of requests is monitored by the General Services Officer; a single request won't trigger the provision of a skip, for example. To date, the General Services Officer has only received one request from a tenant on 10th

Avenue. More recently a question has been received from a tenant of New Beatrice, in relation to fly tipping on communal areas within the site.

Another step in the management of waste on a plot and skip requests, is for a plot visit/discussion to take place about the tenant's waste and disposal options on the receipt of a skip request. A skip may not be agreed to if some of the issues outlined above (excessive rubbish, poor management) are identified.

It is noted that tenants may not be properly aware of the request system, as some have instead spoken to their neighbouring Associations. Officers would therefore aim to improve information communication around skip provision, whether or not a policy is developed. The council may feel that better promotion of this informal system and monitoring of the accumulation of waste on plots might address the issue.

Historically the Council allotted budget provision for 2 skips per site, although the budget was not always spent. The budget reduced to 1 skip per site in 2021-22 as resolved at the Environment Committee meeting held 26 May 2020.

Despite budget allocation being provided yearly for the provision of 1 skip per site, no allocation was spent in 2024-25 and the budget was only used by the 10th Avenue site during 2022-23 and 2023-24. For 2025-26 and 2026-27 skips are not separately projected in the budget.

It is worth noting that Laverock Place comprises just 3 plots and Delaval Garden just 3 plots. We would not recommend earmarking a budget or stipulating a skip for these locations, but one can be supplied on demand and would be taken from the allotment budget.

A change in policy to provide one skip per year for 4 sites (10th Avenue, Beatrice (New), Bebside and Wensleydale) would lead to definite spend of approximately £1300 per annum (based on most recent invoice for skip hire) vs a variable but typically much lower spend. This spend would come from the allotment budget of £18,000. Site water rates over the last two year are in the region of £12,500 which come from this budget.

If the council resolve to provide a skip/skip per site, consideration should be given to whether this is provided at a set time chosen by the General Services Team taking into account likely seasonable demand (e.g. spring clearouts and the end of burning season) or retain the request basis.

There have been concerns raised by the General Services Team around contamination of skip waste, including by people bringing household waste from off-site. Should skips be provided, Officers would give consideration to supervision of the skips (could be combined with site inspections).

**Hannah Jenner
Principal Officer
13 May 2026**