



**First-tier Tribunal
General Regulatory Chamber
Environment**

Appeal Reference: NV/2020/004/P

Between

AMRY MUNEER

Appellant

and

LEICESTER CITY COUNCIL

Respondent

Before

TRIBUNAL JUDGE MOIRA MACMILLAN

Determined on the papers, the Tribunal sitting in Chambers on 13 May 2020

DECISION

1. The appeal is allowed.
2. The Fixed Penalty Notice BH12348 dated 29 November 2019 is withdrawn.

MODE OF HEARING

3. The parties and the Tribunal agreed that this matter was suitable for a determination on the papers in accordance with rule 32 of the Chamber Procedure Rules.
4. The Tribunal considered an agreed open bundle of evidence comprising pages 1 to 55.

REASONS

Background

1. This appeal is against a Fixed Penalty imposed by the Respondent in relation to a household waste wheelie bin.
2. The bin in question belongs to 63 Tewkesbury Street, Leicester. The Appellant is one of two occupiers of this address.
3. The Respondent is a waste collection authority under the Environmental Protection Act 1990. As such it is able to regulate the times at which household waste bins are left out for collection. On 22 October 2019 it served a Notice of Contravention, because a wheelie bin was left on the street outside the permitted time. The Respondent subsequently served a Notice of Intent on 29 October 2019 and a Fixed Penalty Notice on 29 November 2019.

Law

4. S. 46 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 allows a waste collection authority to impose requirements relating to the placement of bins ('receptacles') that are used to collect household waste.

46 Receptacles for household waste.

(1) Where a waste collection authority has a duty by virtue of section 45(1)(a) above to arrange for the collection of household waste from any premises, the authority may, by notice served on him, require the occupier to place the waste for collection in receptacles of a kind and number specified.

(1A) Where –

- (a) subsection (1) applies to a waste collection authority, and*
- (b) a waste reduction scheme under Schedule 2AA to this Act is in operation in the authority's area,*

the authority may require the occupier to place the waste for collection in receptacles identified by such means as may be specified.

- (1B) *A requirement under subsection (1A) –*
 - (a) *must be imposed by notice served on the occupier;*
 - (b) *may be imposed instead of, or in addition to, any requirement imposed on the occupier under subsection (1).*

- (2) ...

- (3) ...

- (4) *In making requirements as respects receptacles under subsection (1) above, the authority may, by the notice under that subsection, make provision with respect to –*
 - (a) ...
 - (b) *the placing of the receptacles for the purpose of facilitating the emptying of them, and access to the receptacles for that purpose;*
 - (c) *the placing of the receptacles for that purpose on highways or, in Scotland, roads;*
 - (d) ...
 - (e) *the steps to be taken by occupiers of premises to facilitate the collection of waste from the receptacles.*
 - (f) *The removal of the receptacles placed for the purpose of facilitating the emptying of them; and*
 - (g) *the time when the receptacles must be placed for that purpose and removed.*

- (5) *No requirement shall be made under subsection (1) above for receptacles to be placed on a highway or, as the case may be, road, unless –*
 - (a) *the relevant highway authority or roads authority have given their consent to their being so placed; and*
 - (b) *arrangements have been made as to the liability for any damage arising out of their being so placed.*

5. Where a person fails without reasonable excuse to comply with a requirement imposed under s. 46, and where the authority assesses that this failure either causes a nuisance, or is detrimental to local amenities, the authority may issue a written warning pursuant to s. 46A. This must be served upon the person; must identify the requirement the person has failed to comply with; and must explain the consequences should they continue not to comply (s. 46A(1),(3) & (4))

s. 46A Written warnings and penalties for failure to comply with requirements relating to household waste receptacles: England

- (1) *This section applies where an authorised officer of a waste collection authority in England is satisfied that –*

(a) a person has failed without reasonable excuse to comply with a requirement imposed by the authority under section 46(1), (3)(c) or (d) or (4) (a "section 46 requirement"), and

(b) the person's failure to comply –

(i) has caused, or is or was likely to cause, a nuisance, or

(ii) has been, or is or was likely to be, detrimental to any amenities of the locality.

(2) Where this section applies, the authorised officer may give a written warning to the person.

(3) A written warning must –

(a) identify the section 46 requirement with which the person has failed to comply,

(b) explain the nature of the failure to comply,

(c) explain how the failure to comply has had, or is or was likely to have, the effect described in subsection (1)(b),

(d) if the failure to comply is continuing, specify the period within which the requirement must be complied with and explain the consequences of the requirement not being complied with within that period, and

(e) whether or not the failure to comply is continuing, explain the consequences of the person subsequently failing to comply with the same or a similar section 46 requirement.

6. Should the person not comply with the requirement following a written warning, the authority may impose a Fixed Penalty pursuant to s. 46A(4). The authority must first serve a Notice of Intent, which must explain why the Fixed Penalty is being imposed. The Notice of Intent must allow the person 28 days in which to make representations about why payment of the Fixed Penalty should not be required. The authority must consider any representations made before serving the Penalty Notice, which this respondent follows by a Final Notice informing the person of their right to appeal.

46C Penalties under section 46A: Procedure regarding notices of intent and final notices

(1) Before requiring a person to pay a fixed penalty under section 46A, an authorised officer must serve on the person notice of intention to do so (a "notice of intent") in accordance with subsections (2) to (4).

(2) A notice of intent must contain information about –

(a) the grounds for proposing to require payment of a fixed penalty,

(b) the amount of the penalty that the person would be required to pay, and

(c) the right to make representations under subsection (3).

- (3) *A person on whom a notice of intent is served may make representations to the authorised officer as to why payment of a fixed penalty should not be required.*
- (4) *Representations under subsection (3) must be made within the period of 28 days beginning with the day service of the notice of intent is effected.*
- (5) *In order to require a person to pay a fixed penalty under section 46A, an authorised officer must serve on the person a further notice (the “final notice”) in accordance with subsections (6) to (8).*
- (6) *A final notice may not be served on a person by an authorised officer before the expiry of the period of 28 days beginning with the day service of the notice of intent on the person was effected.*
- (7) *Before serving a final notice on a person, an authorised officer must consider any representations made by the person under subsection (3).*
- (8) *The final notice must contain information about –*
 - (a) the grounds for requiring payment of a fixed penalty,*
 - (b) the amount of the penalty,*
 - (c) how payment may be made,*
 - (d) the period within which payment is required to be made (which must not be less than the period of 28 days beginning with the day service of the final notice is effected),*
 - (e) any provision giving a discount for early payment made by virtue of section 46B(2),*
 - (f) the right to appeal under section 46D, and*
 - (g) the consequences of not paying the penalty.*

7. The right of appeal is created by s. 46D:

46D Appeals against penalties under section 46A

- (1) *A person on whom a final notice is served under section 46C may appeal to the First-tier Tribunal against the decision to require payment of a fixed penalty.*
- (2) *On an appeal under this section the First-tier Tribunal may withdraw or confirm the requirement to pay the fixed penalty.*
- (3) *The requirement to pay the fixed penalty is suspended pending the determination or withdrawal of the appeal that is the final appeal made by the person against the decision to require payment of the penalty.
(This is subject to subsection (4).)*
- (4) *Where the requirement to pay the fixed penalty is confirmed at any stage in the proceedings on appeal, payment must be made before the end of the period of*

28 days beginning with the day on which the requirement is so confirmed unless the person makes a further appeal before the end of that period.

(5) The reference in subsection (4) to the requirement to pay the fixed penalty being confirmed on appeal includes a reference to an appeal decision confirming the requirement to pay the fixed penalty being upheld on a further appeal.

Facts

8. The Respondent has decided that Tewkesbury Street is detrimentally affected by wheelie bins being left on the pavement outside of normal household waste collection times. The collection day for Tewkesbury Street is Thursday. The Respondent has therefore issued a Notice under s. 46, requiring wheelie bins to be placed at the kerb no earlier than 7pm on Wednesdays and to be removed by 7am on Fridays.
9. An officer of the Respondent authority visited Tewkesbury Street on Monday 16 September 2019 and Monday 21 October 2019, and on both occasions took photographs of a wheelie bin marked with the number '63' on the pavement. On 16 September 2019 the Respondent issued a warning notice to the Appellant's address. Having consulted council tax records, on 22 October 2019 the Respondent posted a s. 46 Contravention Notice to the Appellant, and a second Notice to the other occupier of the address who the Appellant describes as his partner. Both of these were sent by post.
10. On Tuesday 29 October 2019 the Respondent returned to Tewkesbury Street and again photographed the wheelie bin marked '63' on the pavement. On the same date the Respondent sent the Appellant a Notice of Intent, which notified him that he had 28 days to make representations about the imposition of a Fixed Penalty.
11. The Appellant's partner contacted another department of the Respondent council by telephone and explained that they were unable to remove the wheelie bin from the street. This was because the couple did not have a key to the gate to a shared alley, which provided the only access from the street to the rear of their house. The Respondent gave the Appellant's partner a telephone number for a council department, which it thought might be able to assist in getting a key. The Respondent also advised the couple to contact their landlord and neighbours, to ask for a spare key or to make a copy.
12. On Tuesday 26 November 2019 the Respondent again photographed the bin marked '63' on the pavement of Tewkesbury Street. On 29 November 2019 the Respondent sent the Appellant a Fixed Penalty Notice for the sum of £80.
13. No further representations having been received, on 18 December 2019 the Respondent sent the Appellant a Final Notice in connection with the bin for 63 Tewkesbury Street.

Grounds of Appeal

14. In a Notice of Appeal dated 17 January 2020, the Appellant submits that he and his partner did not receive the initial warning notice, but contacted the Respondent having received the Compliance Notice, to explain that they did not have a key for the gate at the street end of the communal alley way. The Appellant submits that the gates are locked shut and he, like the majority of other residents, does not have a key, which is why the bin is left on the street.
15. The Appellant submits that his partner called the telephone number given by the Respondent for assistance several times but was unable to get through. He states that his partner also contacted the estate agent, who manage the let of the property, and who stated that they did not have a key for the gate. The Appellant submits that they have spoken to many of their neighbours, all of whom have either refused to lend them a key for copying, or have explained that they are in the same predicament.
16. The Appellant states that they have only once discovered that the gate unlocked, and on that occasion used the alley way to take the bin to the rear of their house. Thereafter the gate was locked again, which left the Appellant unable to put the bin out for collection until his partner resorted to wheeling it through the house.
17. The Appellant contends that they have done everything reasonable to rectify the situation. He submits that the wheelie bin has become a source of stress, that they keep it by the wall on the street in order to avoid causing an obstruction and that he would be happy to move the bin after collection if given an option to do so. He requests the Respondent's assistance in resolving the issue.
18. The Respondent submits that the Appellant made no representations in reply to any of the Notices served. It contends that four notices were sent to he Appellant, which provided ample time for liaison with the Respondent about difficulties accessing the alley way.

Decision

19. The Appellant has explained his difficulty in complying with the Respondent's requirements. His partner made similar representations to the Respondent on receipt of the Notice of Intent in her own name, and the couple have followed the advice they were given by the Respondent, albeit without success.
20. The Appellant submits that he did not receive the Penalty Notice for some weeks as the couple were away due to a family bereavement. I accept that this

is most likely why the Appellant's partner failed to renew her representations to the Respondent before the Final Notice was issued.

21. I have considered whether, in the absence of a key to the gate, it is reasonable to expect the Appellant to wheel the bin through their home. I conclude that it is not.
22. Having considered the steps the Appellant has taken to obtain a key to the gate, I find that his inability to use the alley way amounts to a reasonable excuse for his failure to comply with a requirement imposed by the Respondent under section 46(3)(d).
23. The requirement to pay the Fixed Penalty Notice is therefore withdrawn.

Signed:
Judge Moira Macmillan

Date:
13 May 2020