



Title of Report:	Litter Strategy / LitterSmart Action Plan – Update
Committee Report Submitted To:	Environmental Services Committee
Date of Meeting:	14th May 2024
For Decision or For Information	For Information
To be discussed In Committee YES/NO	No

Linkage to Council Strategy (2021-25)	
Strategic Theme	Climate Change and our Environment
Outcome	Minimising litter and promoting behaviour change
Lead Officer	Head of Operations

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	N/A
Included in Current Year Estimates	
Capital/Revenue	
Code	
Staffing Costs	N/A

Legal Considerations	
Input of Legal Services Required	NO
Legal Opinion Obtained	NO

Screening Requirements	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	N/A	Date:
	EQIA Required and Completed:	N/A	Date:
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	N/A	Date:
	RNA Required and Completed:	N/A	Date:
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	N/A	Date:
	DPIA Required and Completed:	N/A	Date:

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on actions taken following the implementation of the Litter Strategy / LitterSmart Action Plan in October 2022.

2.0 Background (to include any previous decisions of Council)

- 2.1 Council's Litter Strategy, entitled 'Towards a LitterSmart Borough', covers the period 2022 to 2026, see Appendix 1.
- 2.2 Prior to the strategy implementation in October 2022, a consultation exercise was conducted between February and May 2022.
- 2.3 Integral to the Litter Strategy is the LitterSmart Action Plan. The Action Plan is sub-divided into three sections – (1) Communication (2) Cleaning of the Borough / Infrastructure and (3) Enforcement.
- 2.4 Similar to other local authority areas, litter is an ongoing environmental and resource challenge for council. Many of the actions in the Action Plan reflect the continuous need to influence and reinforce behaviour change.
- 2.5 Council spends c.£2.5 million annually on services relating to street cleansing, litter collection/prevention, litter bin provision and education. Additional spend is made in respect of enforcement. Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful Cleaner Neighbourhoods Report 2022/23 is attached as Appendix 2.

3.0 Service Provision

- 3.1 To mitigate the generation of litter/fly-tipping, council operates 11 Household Recycling Centres, open six days a week, and provides a bulky household waste collection service. This supplements the weekly kerbside household and commercial bin collection service.
- 3.2 The street cleansing service operates every day of the year, except for Christmas Day. In recognition of the Borough as a prime tourist destination in Northern Ireland, additional resource is allocated to the street cleansing service during the summer months with the recruitment of 'Wombles' to carry out litter picking duties. Litter bin provision is increased with temporary bins placed at popular locations for visitors/holiday makers and when events are taking place. Recently introduced electronic signage promotes the 'Take your Litter Home' message.
- 3.3 The Environmental Health section oversee litter/fly-tipping enforcement throughout the Borough.

4.0 Actions

4.1 Further to section one (Communications) of the Action Plan, the following actions have either been completed or are ongoing:-

- The ERO team has delivered presentations/talks raising awareness on LitterSmart and PlasticSmart to a combined total of 36 schools, churches, community organisations and youth groups between April 2022 and March 2024 reaching an audience in excess of 2,150. During the same period the ERO team has attended various community/public events, engaging with a further 2,100 participants.
- To counter and reduce littering of single use plastics, the Environmental Resource Officer (ERO) team has promoted and developed 'H2O on the Go' with over 70 businesses/venues providing a water refill service, linked up with NI Water to publicise water refill points in the district and secured funding to provide a water refill station on Rathlin Island.
- Introduced CupSmart to promote reusable coffee cups and reduce single use plastic.
- Carried out audits at businesses to identify and assist in delivering more sustainable practices, including advice on reducing products which may lead to littering.
- Promotion of individual/organisation activities and achievements via the story map on council website LiveSmart page.
- Contact information provided on council website for those who wish to report littering.

4.2 Further to section two (Cleaning of the Borough / Infrastructure) of the Action Plan, the following actions have either been completed or are ongoing:-

- Organisations have been able to avail of funding via the LiveSmart Community Environmental Grant Programme since 2022-23. In 2024-25, organisations will be able to apply for grant funding up to £750 for projects aimed at improving general cleanliness and removing litter in their local area.
- As part of the LitterSmart initiative, support is provided to individuals, businesses, schools and groups who wish to participate in community litter picks by loaning litter pickers and arranging for the collection of bags.
- Over 2,300 participants have engaged with the LitterSmart initiative since April 2022, collecting approximately 4,000 bags of litter at 79 litter pick events.

- Installation of cigarette butt boxes at four locations to assist in reducing cigarette litter.
- Operations Supervisors regularly monitor areas prone to littering and deploy resources where and when available to collect and remove litter.
- There is a continual review of litter bin provision, particularly during the busier summer season. Additional temporary bins are provided in areas of high footfall and visitor numbers and when events are taking place.

4.3 Further to section three (Enforcement) of the Action Plan, the following actions have either been completed or are ongoing:-

- Environmental Health section lead on enforcement regarding littering and dog fouling.
- Issuing of fixed penalties for dog fouling and litter:-

Year	Number of Dog Fouling Penalty Notices issued	Number of Litter Fixed Penalty Notices issued
2021*	52	1730
2022*	60	1624
2023	5	7

* Private litter enforcement contractor worked alongside council Enforcement team from August 2021 for one year.

- Level of fixed penalty notices (FPN) increased from £80 to £200 for dog fouling and litter offences. Enforcement Team carried out educational patrols to raise awareness of this change.
- Enforcement Team now using additional powers to deal with fly-tipping under the Waste and Contaminated Land (NI) Order 1997. This includes higher FPN and court prosecution fines.
- Engaged with Keep NI Beautiful, erecting signage in litter and dog fouling hot spots.
- Dog Control team promotes awareness of dog fouling disposal options by stickering bins on dog walking routes and leads on the Green Dog Walkers scheme.
- Officers participate in educational talks in schools.

5.0 **Legislation**

5.1 Proposals currently being considered by central government may result in a reduction in littering when implemented.

5.2 These include deposit return schemes (DRS) which would see consumers paying an up-front deposit for certain items such as drinks. The return of the empty packaging after use would allow the deposit to be redeemed, helping incentivise correct disposal and recycling of packaging.

5.3 It is envisaged that Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) legislation will see producers contribute to the cost of litter prevention (e.g. behaviour change/education campaigns). EPR will also increase recyclability of packaging through fees that producers will have to pay.

6.0 **Recommendation**

Members are asked to note actions taken to date and that are ongoing in the delivery of council's Litter Strategy / LitterSmart Action Plan.

Towards a LitterSmart Borough

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council's

Litter Strategy 2022 to 2026



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1.0 Introduction

Litter is an ongoing environmental challenge for Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council. Litter has a negative impact on the aesthetic beauty of the Borough and its natural habitats and creates negative experiences for residents and visitors.

There are many causes of littering. Behaviour, how we communicate, approaches to enforcement, infrastructure, strategy and societal attitudes are all factors. Littering is not an issue that can be tackled alone.

For all these reasons, Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council is committed to reducing litter. As outlined in the corporate plan, Council's five main strategic priorities include 'Healthy and Engaged Communities' and 'Climate Change and Our Environment'.

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council spends over £2million annually on services relating to litter and street cleansing. This level of expenditure would be greatly reduced if no litter was dropped, no fly tipping occurred and no dog fouling was left uncollected.

Reducing littering in our Borough requires best practice in education, engagement, enforcement and infrastructure.

Research suggests there are 1.3 million pieces of litter on Northern Ireland's streets at any one time. This equates to 28 tonnes of rubbish, of which 1 tonne is made up of dog waste. (*Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful Cleaner Neighbourhoods Report 2019/20*).

Most people agree that discarded litter is unsightly, damaging to our environment, poses a danger to wildlife, pets, livestock, our seas and oceans and is expensive to clean up.



Every year our Council spends precious financial resources cleaning up litter and illegally dumped rubbish from our towns, villages, housing estates, verges, roads, countryside and beaches.

Council provides weekly kerbside household bin collections, 11 Household Recycling Centres and a bulky household waste collection service, however, despite this, nearly two-thirds of indiscriminate fly-tipping involves household waste.

Every day around 1,400 plastic bottles and 1,300 disposable cups are littered around our Borough. Much of this discarded litter makes its way into our rivers and eventually the North Atlantic Ocean. An estimated 80% of beach litter contains plastic, which if not lifted, will enter our oceans and cause untold damage to marine life and its ecosystem.



25% of smokers do not think discarding a cigarette butt is littering, however, cigarette butts are so light and small that the vacuum brushes on our mechanical street sweepers cannot pick them up and they are nearly impossible to lift with litter pickers. This leaves staff having to brush and pick up around half a million cigarette butts in our Borough every year.

It is a minority of people who are littering in our Borough. 80% of people agree that littering is wrong and practice positive behaviour with their rubbish. We want this behaviour to become *the norm*.

2.0 Our Borough

Our Borough covers an area just under 2,000 square kilometres. We have a coastline which stretches over 140 kilometres along the Atlantic Coast from Lough Foyle to the Glens of Antrim. There are also four areas of outstanding natural beauty encompassing Antrim Coast and Glens, Binevenagh, Causeway Coast and Sperrin.



Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council recognises that an awakening of civic pride and duty among all sectors of society is required if the problem of littering is to

be tackled successfully. Individuals need to take personal responsibility for the litter they generate and how they dispose of it.



3.0 Legislation

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council has responsibility for managing litter in our area. Key pieces of legislation that direct the Council's functions regarding street cleansing are as follows:-

- *The Litter (Northern Ireland) Order 1994 and the associated Code of Practice on Litter*
- *Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment (Northern Ireland) Act 2011*
- *The Fouling of Lands by Dogs (Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council) Order 2018.*

4.0 LitterSmart Vision

LitterSmart is a strand of the wider LiveSmart project. Its aim is to reduce litter through education and engagement, encourage responsible litter disposal and support local communities to live in areas free from litter.

We want to create a litter conscious population who are aware of the sources, cost (environmental and financial) and impacts of litter in our Borough, and who take it upon themselves to routinely dispose of litter responsibly. We want to mobilise our whole community to take personal and collective action to reduce, and eliminate as far as possible, littering in our Borough. In addition, we want to facilitate the removal of littering promptly and use available enforcement powers where necessary.

5.0 Changing Behaviour

Improving or changing behaviour with regards to littering will require a multi-faceted approach. Communication is a key aspect to reducing littering. Collaboration between community, social and statutory organisations to change attitudes towards the dropping of litter and how it effects residents and the perception of communities is necessary.

Reducing littering will require behaviour change in the one in five people who admit to dropping litter. We want to make using the nearest bin, holding on to litter until you can properly dispose of it or taking litter home the norm. Combining enforcement and infrastructure with education and engagement will together help address the problem.

Communications have a key role to play in engaging and motivating people to change their behaviour through effective and accessible messaging.



Our residents and visitors need to understand the impact of littering, the cost to clean it up, the danger it presents to pets, wildlife and farm animals, the pollution it causes to our land, rivers and seas and the negative psychological impact it has on people. We must all understand the personal responsibility we have when we want to be rid of our rubbish. Behaviour change, which requires a range of interventions, including education and awareness-raising, is key to stopping the minority of people who drop litter. Those who responsibly dispose of their litter, and particularly those who are engaged in volunteer litter picks, must be acknowledged and thanked.

6.0 Communication

Messaging must be positive. If people believe the problem is insurmountable or “everyone does it” we are making it the norm to litter. We want being responsible for your litter to be the norm and anything else frowned upon and socially unacceptable.

Research suggests littering behaviour is affected by location, amenity, time of day, social situation, audience and perception of individual litter types. Therefore, context-specific communication materials will be developed to target relevant audiences.

Generally found to be the worst when it comes to littering, 18 to 34 year olds are a harder group to reach with anti-littering messages. This group is best targeted via social media, the shops and retail outlets they frequent and advertising with target market specific messaging. Messaging taken home from school may also encourage current and future behaviour change in both children and parents.



Litter picks are a great way to engage our community in practical and positive action on littering. It's amazing how many people want to be involved and do their bit.

Urgent action is needed, however, many businesses, community groups, individuals, sporting organisations and schools are already carrying out litter picks around our Borough.

Litter picks continue to be carried out on our beaches, in our towns and villages, in the countryside, resulting in the collection of thousands of bags of rubbish. Some of this litter has been washed ashore, thrown out of car windows or just discarded carelessly.

The **LitterSmart** section of our **LiveSmart** story map encourages the wider public to be part of the solution and it raises awareness of the harmful effects of litter. The story map, and associated campaign, aims to encourage others to join in and to ensure people feel they are part of a larger movement acting positively to address littering.

7.0 Send a clear message

We will:

- Participate in anti-litter campaigns
- Support our community to carry out clean-ups
- Encourage people of all ages to care about their local area
- Support schools to raise awareness of litter
- Encourage businesses and their customers to eradicate littering
- Ask catering establishments to stock products which will reduce litter
- Research new ways to encourage more recycling and reduce litter
- Target offenders through education, nudge signage and enforcement

Council's Environmental Resource Officer (ERO) Team has developed an engaging and proactive LitterSmart campaign.

A range of interactive workshops have been developed for target audiences including pre-school, primary and post-primary school children, young people and adults. The aim of the workshops is to raise awareness of what litter is, where it happens, why we shouldn't litter, the damage and expense it causes and what we can all do about it. Many of our schools already engage with the ERO team for education, practical action and policy change to reduce litter in and around their premises.

For details on our Communication Plan(s), please see blue / section one of our Action Plan.

8.0 Cleaning up the Borough / Infrastructure

We will:

- Work to reduce littering from vehicles
- Make it easier for people to dispose of their rubbish properly
- Clear up litter promptly as resources allow
- Support and advise organisations and event organisers to ensure they have the means to deal with litter
- Support and encourage our stakeholders to share their experience of what works to reduce littering
- Make it easier for the public to report overflowing and damaged litter bins
- Identify partner groups who can contribute to the solution and provide guidance on how to get involved
- Continue to develop and expand relationships with statutory and community groups currently collecting litter
- Celebrate community involvement with events to recognise and thank those groups and individuals for giving up their time to improve the look and environmental well-being of their communities
- Review our assets and infrastructure regularly to match service requirements and developments
- Continually review bin location and type, collection vehicle type, staff numbers, shift patterns, signage type and location

For details on our plans to Clean up the Borough / Infrastructure, please see green / section two of our Action Plan.

9.0 Enforcement

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council is currently responsible for enforcing two relevant offences in relation to this strategy

- (a) Failing to remove dog foul from open spaces
- (b) The illegal deposition of litter

The main legislation for these offences are

Dog foul – Under Article 40 of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment (Northern Ireland) Act 2011, District Councils have the power to make dog control orders in relation to several aspects of responsible dog control. In 2018, Council passed The Fouling of Lands by Dogs (Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council) Order 2018. This Order makes it an offence for anyone to fail to remove their dog's faeces from any open land. Anyone who commits such an offence is liable to a Fixed Penalty Notice of £80.

Litter – Under Article 3 of the Litter (Northern Ireland) Order 1994 it is an offence for anyone to throw down, drop or otherwise deposit and leave litter in any space open to the air. Article 2(2) of the 1994 Order provides a definition of litter which states litter is any refuse, filth, garbage or any other nauseous, offensive or unsightly waste or any waste which is likely to become nauseous, offensive or unsightly but not animal droppings. This definition is regarded as 'wide' and includes smoking-related litter such as cigarette ends, cigars and like products, and discarded remains of other products designed for chewing such as bubble gum. In practice, litter is assumed to include materials that are discarded and left by members of the public otherwise than in proper receptacles such as litter bins. Anyone who commits such an offence is liable to a Fixed Penalty Notice of £80.

We will:

- Take a firm enforcement approach to any detected offences of littering and dog fouling and all detected offences will be dealt with by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice. Failure to pay any Fixed Penalty Notice will result in prosecution for the original offence.
- We will increase the levels of Fixed Penalty Notices issued for the offences of dog fouling and littering comparable with other District Councils.

- **Litter Clearing Notices** – Under Article 12 of the Litter (Northern Ireland) Order 1994 (as amended), District Councils have the power to issue Litter Clearing Notices. These notices require the owner or occupier of open land to clear the land of litter where there is a problem of litter that is detrimental to the amenity of the area. The notice can also require the owner/occupier of that land to take reasonable steps to prevent the land from becoming so defaced again. Any person who fails without reasonable excuse to comply with any requirement imposed by the notice is guilty of an offence & liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 4 on the standard scale (£2,500).

Where Litter Clearing Notices have not been complied with, council may carry out the work in default and recover reasonable costs from the landowner for so doing. Where appropriate council will serve Litter Clearing Notices upon owners or occupiers of relevant land that is substantially littered.

Street Litter Control Notices – Under Article 13 of the Litter (Northern Ireland) Order 1994 a District Council can serve a Street Litter Control Notice. These notices can be served upon commercial or retail premises whose activities are giving rise to recurring litter problems on the street. The Notice allows council to specify reasonable requirements the premises should take to remedy the litter problem. If it appears to the council that a person has failed or is failing to comply with any requirement imposed by a notice, the council may apply to a Magistrate's Court for an order requiring the person to comply with the requirement within such time as may be specified in the order.

A person who, without reasonable excuse, fails to comply with an order from the Court shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 4 on the standard scale (£2,500).

Where appropriate we will use the provisions of Street Litter Control Notices where there is a substantial problem of littering outside commercial premises.

We will:

- Continue to provide education and encouragement to the public to be responsible for their own litter through the use of press releases.
- Carry out daily patrols across the Borough to detect littering and dog fouling offences. Anyone found committing any such offences will be dealt with initially by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

- Enforcement - carry out up to four scheduled enforcement initiatives per year focusing on problem areas with a view to issuing Fixed Penalty Notices. This will involve a cross-section of staff patrolling an identified problem area to detect and action offences.
- Employ the services of an external enforcement organisation - Waste Investigations and Support Services (WISE) - to work alongside our Enforcement Officers.
- Focus on town centres - provide focused enforcement patrols in town centres where litter is commonly dropped.
- Implement a programme of “out of hours” working patterns to detect offences at the weekend or other times beyond ordinary working hours especially at events or other large gatherings of crowds where litter is likely to be a problem.
- Provide an increased focus on detecting and investigating litter from vehicles.
- Investigate the use of detection tools such as CCTV in problem areas.
- Continue to promote the Green Dog Walkers scheme to increase responsible dog ownership with a view to reducing dog fouling.
- Further develop internal policies and procedures to ensure the best outcomes when investigating incidents of dog fouling and littering. We will also ensure all Officers are adequately trained and competent to carry out successful enforcement.
- Promote a “whole Council” approach whereby other employees of the council can easily refer observations of offences for the enforcement team to progress.
- Work with the Police Service of Northern Ireland, Northern Ireland Environment Agency and other partners to detect and progress enforcement of offences.
- Promote good enforcement results such as successful prosecutions through the use of press releases.

For details on our Enforcement Plan(s), please see pink / section three of our Action Plan.

10.0 Monitoring and Review

- Make information accessible via council reports and by publishing relevant information via website and/or social media.
- Design and carry out training to assist and inform staff.
- Seek customer feedback.
- Monitor complaints for trends or local issues.
- Use performance indicators as an evaluation tool.

11.0 LitterSmart Action Plan

Below you will find the strategy's communication, enforcement and infrastructure objectives, key messages, delivery methods and timeframes planned with stakeholders.

Communication blue / section 1.

Cleaning of the Borough / Infrastructure green / section 2.

Enforcement pink / section 3.

Stakeholder	Objectives	Message content	Delivery methods	By when
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Section 1

Cafés	Reduce take-out coffee cup littering	Promote reusable coffee cups, avoid single use plastic (SUP)	Posters promoting SmartCup in cafés	December 2022
Cafés	Reduce take-out cutlery litter	Promote reusable cutlery and alternatives to SUP	Via CaféSmart audits	March 2023
Cafés	Increase number of CaféSmart cafés	Promote CaféSmart audits	Interactive map, social media	Ongoing
Schools	Encourage local schools to sign up to anti-litter policy/pledge	Clear anti-litter policy/pledge	Downloadable anti-litter policy/pledge	June 2023
Schools	Engage 20+ schools in anti-litter presentations	Impact of litter on local and marine environment & wildlife/animals	Presentations to school (in person and virtual)	Ongoing
Schools	Support schools to carry out litter clean-ups	Support available – litter pickers, bags, collection of bags	Presentations, direct contact, virtual meetings	Ongoing

Schools	Increase number of PlasticSmart schools by 5+	What are single use plastics? How can we reduce them?	PlasticSmart presentations (in person and virtual)	June 2023
Groups (adult)	Engage 5+ groups in anti-litter presentations	Impact on local & marine environment, financial costs, spoiling pristine beaches/environment	Presentations to adult groups	December 2023
Groups (child & young people)	Engage 15+ groups in anti-litter presentations	Impact of litter on local and marine environment & wildlife/animals	Presentations to child & young people groups	December 2023
PR & ICT Team	Publicise clean-up activity by groups and individuals	Area, times, key contact, accessibility	Interactive story map, website	Ongoing
Community	Raise general litter awareness	Raise awareness with public of fines issued, cost of littering, tonnes of litter cleaned up, benefits of a litter free environment	Presentations, websites, social media, print media	Annual
Community	Help keep our coastline free from litter	Minimise litter along our coast, highlight benefits of coastline free from litter pollution	Support and map clean-ups	Ongoing
Community	Reduce littering of single use plastics (SUP)	Help people understand what single use plastics are and how to avoid them	Website, social media, presentations, CaféSmart audits, CupSmart posters	Annual

Community	Reduce littering among 18 to 34 year olds.	Make using a bin the norm.	Targeted social media	Ongoing
Vehicle drivers and passengers	Reduce littering from vehicles	Rural roads are difficult to clean up	Provide information to engage drivers and passengers	March 2023
Dog owners	Increase awareness of dog fouling disposal options	Bagged dog foul can go in any bin	Bin stickers on dog walking routes	March 2023
Dog owners	Promotion of Green Dog Walkers* scheme	Clean up after your dog	Green dog collars, dog foul bags, pledge sign-up	Ongoing
Dog owners	Encourage dog walkers to pick up plastic litter	Sign up to Paws on Plastic* and pick up 2 pieces of plastic	Provide information via dog licensing service	Ongoing
Gum chewers	Reduce chewing gum litter	Bin your gum	Stickers on bins, special gum bins	Ongoing
Business	Help retail and businesses understand the importance of a litter free environment	Litter can put consumers off shopping	Encourage customers to use a bin	Annual

Section 2

Groups & Individuals	Support groups and individuals wishing to organise clean-ups	Support groups/individuals by making litter pickers, bags, collection of bags available	Website, social media	Annual
Street Cleansing	Co-operate with schools, groups and businesses in areas prone to littering	Feedback from crews	Offer posters, presentations and clean-up support	Ongoing
Street Cleansing	Help reduce obstructed routes for street cleansing vehicles	Crews can't clean obstructed routes	Information/advice provided to vehicle owner(s)	Ongoing
Street Cleansing	Make best use of litter bin provision	Provide litter bins where most needed	Review litter bin usage and re-locate under-utilised bins. Provide additional litter bin capacity at select locations and during busy periods.	Ongoing
Street Cleansing	Respond to reports of littering	Litter impacts negatively on general cleanliness and can attract more litter	Deploy council resources where and when available to collect and remove litter	Ongoing

Community	Respond to littering efficiently with creation of dedicated point(s) of contact	Encourage public to report littering	Publicise point(s) of contact on website, social media, at talks	October 2022
Community	Respond promptly to overflowing and damaged bins	Ask public to report overflowing and damaged bins	Sticker on bins	Ongoing
Smokers	Reduce cigarette litter	Keep butts off our streets	Installation of cigarette ballot bins, butt bins	December 2022
Business	Encourage litter picking of premises and surrounding area	Customers are attracted to litter-free and clean environment	Encourage litter picks	Ongoing

Section 3

Enforcement Team	Reduce/monitor number of dog fouling incidents	Officers will investigate complaints and carry out patrols	Website, social media, bin stickers, presentations	Annual
Enforcement Team	Target areas identified as litter hot spots	When caught littering, you will be fined	Presentations, website, social media, presentations	Annual

12.0 Other Initiatives

* Paws on Plastic

A new initiative, which started in Scotland, based on the mind-set that simple changes can have a big impact.

Paws on Plastic encourages dog owners to pick up 2 pieces of plastic when out walking their canine friends. Dog walkers are a powerful force. With around 9 million

dogs in the UK alone, imagine the impact if we all did our own small bit in stopping plastic pollution!

The instructions are simple - pick 2 items up using a spare poo bag and take them home to empty, into a recycling bin if possible, saving the bag to use again, then post your efforts on the "Paws on Plastic" Facebook page to celebrate your efforts and spread the word.

With nearly 8,000 members spread across over 50 countries, that's over 16,000 pieces of litter a day, or 6 million pieces a year being saved from ending up in the sea! To join in, find Paws on Plastic on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram.



Green Dog Walkers

The Green Dog Walkers scheme is a UK wide community-based campaign to change attitudes about dog fouling. It is an innovative approach to dog fouling, one of the most controversial and most complained about issues we deal with in Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council.

Dog owners and dog walkers support the scheme by signing a pledge to clean up after their pets. They support other owners to do the same by giving free poop bags. They are responsible dog owners demonstrating the importance of cleaning up dog mess.

If you see a dog wearing the **Green Dog Walkers** collar, this means the owner has taken the pledge:

- to always clean up after their dog
- to carry extra poop bags

- to give other dog walkers free dog poop bags



Cigarette ballot bins

Highlighting the issue of cigarette butt littering in an eye catching way whilst directly linking it to the problem.

A cigarette butt may look insignificant but it can pollute up to 7.5 litres of water in one hour and have a hugely detrimental effect on marine life.



Business case study: Bruce Bailie, McDonald's, Coleraine.

McDonald's has set standards and guidance for all its restaurants to take action in litter control. Restaurants carry out daily litter patrols in the area, collecting all the litter found (not just McDonald's-branded items). For operators that are open 24 hours, at least four litter patrols are carried out each day. Working with Keep Britain

Tidy and its equivalents in the devolved administrations, McDonald's restaurants also delivered over 400 clean up events in their communities in 2017 alongside their daily litter patrols. As part of their 2017 litter campaigns, many restaurants contacted local authorities and community groups to identify areas which they could support in collecting litter or spruce up. McDonald's also has a number of other anti-litter projects ongoing, including: • A roadside littering intervention with Keep Britain Tidy looking at methods to reduce roadside littering in carefully selected locations; • A partnership with a media platform using gamification techniques to encourage drive thru customers to dispose of their litter responsibly. McDonald's have also altered their guidance to all restaurants to ensure that any customer that wishes to refill their water bottle or to have a coffee in a reusable coffee cup can do so.

13.0 Get in touch - contact details

1. Operations Department (street cleansing enquiries)

Ballycastle – (028) 2076 2225

Ballymoney – (028) 2766 0222

Coleraine – (028) 7034 3453

Limavady – (028) 7776 0305

2. Environmental Resource Officer Team (EROs)

(028) 2766 0248

or/

email: recycle@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk

3. Health & Built Environment (enforcement and fly-tipping)

(028) 2766 0233

or/

email: enforcement@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk

Cleaner Neighbourhoods Report 2022/23

KEEP
NORTHERN
IRELAND
BEAUTIFUL



**CLEANER
NEIGHBOURHOODS**





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What is the Cleaner Neighbourhoods Report?

The Cleaner Neighbourhoods Report provides a detailed yearly analysis of Northern Ireland's local environmental quality.

The report sets out to give clear, unbiased information about anti-social behaviours, such as littering, dog fouling and graffiti. In total, the report is based on surveying Northern Ireland's cleanliness levels in the following areas:

- **Litter** – anything that is dropped, discarded or thrown down by a member of the public. It includes cigarettes, chocolate wrappers, crisp bags, bottles, cans, PPE and many more things, as well as dog fouling.
- **Detritus** – comprising small, broken down particles of synthetic and natural materials. This includes dust, mud, soil, rotted leaf and vegetable residues, and fragments of twigs, glass, plastic and other finely divided materials.

- **Graffiti** – writing or drawings scribbled, scratched, or sprayed illicitly on a wall or other surface in or visible from a public place. Murals and cultural artworks are not considered graffiti.

- **Flyposting** – the placing of unauthorised advertising or posters in a public place, and includes stickers, bills and large posters.

- **Staining** – all the substances that mark a pavement, and commonly includes chewing gum, oil, drinks stains and heavy discolouration.

All sites, or transects, are assessed to establish the extent to which they are degraded by the presence of each of the pollutants noted above. The transect is then given a pass or fail award and allocated a respective cleanliness score, both of which contribute to creating the overall picture of Northern Ireland's environmental health and performance.



To generate the most accurate and insightful analysis of pollution in Northern Ireland's different landscapes and communities, the Cleaner Neighbourhoods Report collects local environmental quality data from a diverse and standardised range of transects that extend to all parts of the country. The full set of land-use types surveyed are:

- Primary Retail
- Secondary Retail
- Rural Area
- Main Road
- High Obstruction Residential
- Low Obstruction Residential
- Recreational
- Industry/Retail Sheds

Finally, as well as providing a summary of the NI Litter Survey, which looks at pollution indicators around the country, the report includes details on enforcement actions taken by councils, including the number of fixed penalties issued for littering and dog fouling, and the associated estimated cleansing spend costs for taxpayers.

Methodology

The 2022 Northern Ireland litter surveys were carried out between the months of July and September.

The Litter Pollution Index is the percentage of transects that failed to reach an acceptable standard of cleanliness.

The LEAMS approach of measuring litter assigns scores based on an assessment of litter presence, type and source. LEAMS scores record standards of cleanliness (Grades A to D).

This year's report is based on a reduced number of surveys of 397 transects (previous reports were based on c.1,000 transects) also a reduced geographical spread which has raised the statistical confidence limits compared to previous reports. Samples informing this report have only been collected and processed from Antrim and Newtownabbey Council, Belfast City Council, Causeway Coast and Glens Council as well as Mid and East Antrim council.

A sample of this size has a margin of error of +/- 5%.

Summary

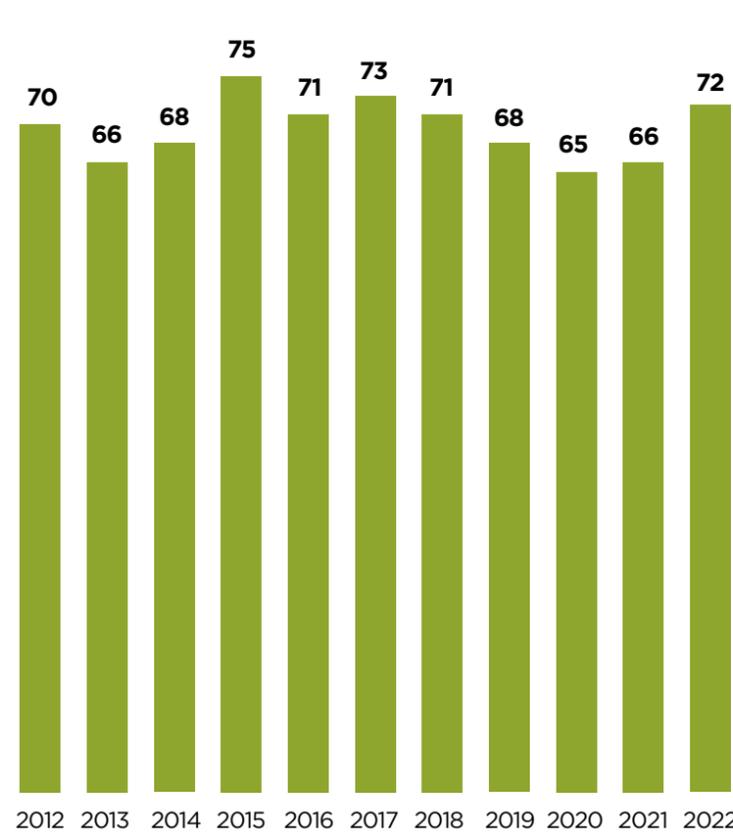
The Big Picture

Findings and insights

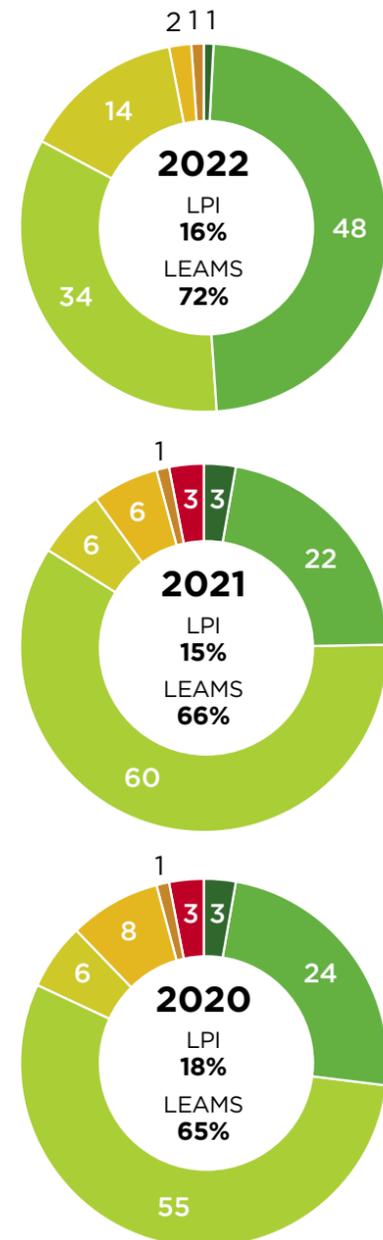
- **16% of transects*** surveyed in 2022 failed to reach the acceptable standard for cleanliness (Grade A to B). This is a 1% deterioration on the 2021 results.
- **The LEAMS score**, which reflects the average score out of 100 of all transects surveyed, increased to 72 and represents an improvement in cleanliness from the surveyed councils. Similar levels of cleanliness were recorded from surveys pre 2018.
- The percentage of transects with dog fouling continues to decrease from **6% in 2021** to **2% in 2022**.
- However, levels of takeaway packaging across transects skyrocketed, increasing by **117% year on year in 2022**.

* This year's report is based on a reduced number of surveys of 397 transects (previous reports were based on c.1,000 transects) also a reduced geographical spread which has raised the statistical confidence limits compared to previous reports. Samples informing this report have only been collected and processed from Antrim and Newtownabbey Council, Belfast City Council, Causeway Coast and Glens Council as well as Mid and East Antrim council.

LEAMS



LEAMS is an alternative method of measuring litter and other indicators which is used in both Scotland and Wales. Unlike the pass/fail 'Performance Indicator' used in Northern Ireland, LEAMS scores are generated by assigning a value to each grade (A=3 B=2 C=1 D=0), and then calculating the average value of all the grades assigned. This average is presented as a percentage of the total available points for the transects surveyed. It differs from the Performance Indicators, in that LEAMS scores take account of how clean or littered a transect is, rather than just whether it is a pass or fail. Scores closer to 100 indicate better performance. It is easier to set a target under the LEAMS system; 66 is the point at which performance is considered acceptable, as it equates with an average grade B.



KEY

- Grade A (pass)**
Completely free of indicator (litter, detritus, graffiti etc.)
- Grade B+ (pass)**
Predominantly free of indicator apart from some small items
- Grade B (pass)**
Many small indicator items or one larger item
- Grade B- (fail)**
A few larger indicator items
- Grade C (fail)**
Many larger indicator items
- Grade C- (fail)**
Accumulations of larger indicator items
- Grade D (fail)**
Transect is heavily affected by indicator, both widespread and accumulated

The rings (left) show the percentage of transects surveyed that were allocated each of the seven grades available (see key above).

Litter Pollution Index (LPI) denotes the percentage of transects that failed to meet acceptable standards.

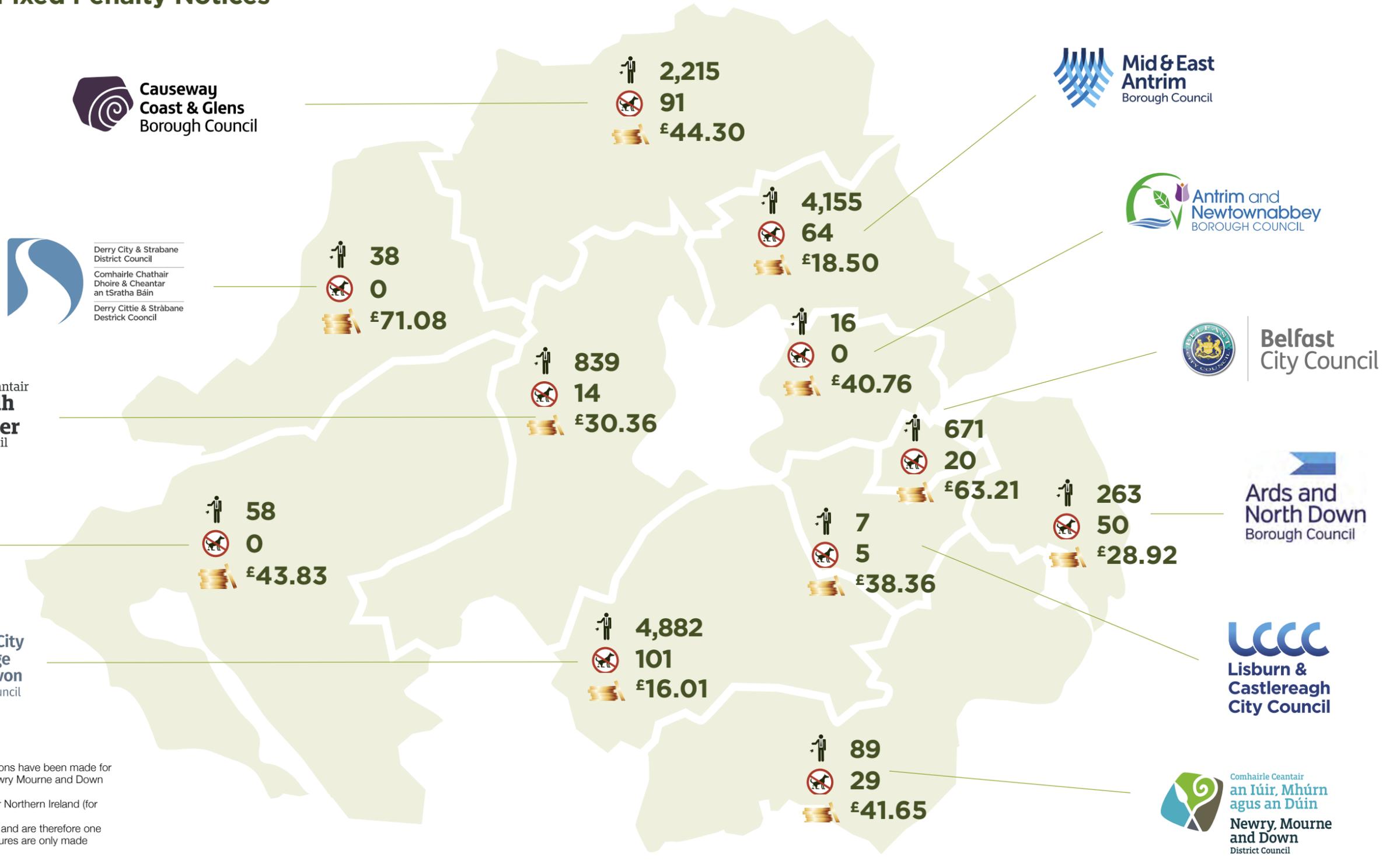
Totals may not equal 100 due to the rounding up or down of figures to make whole numbers.



Total Cleansing Spend and Use of Fixed Penalty Notices

The overall cost of street cleaning in Northern Ireland in 2021/22 was £30,961,701¹. There are an estimated 1,901,631 people living in 744,754 households in Northern Ireland², meaning that each rate payer had an average annual bill of £41.57 for street-cleansing services³, irrespective of whether they personally dropped litter or not.

AVERAGE FOR ALL OF NI:



KEY

- Fixed penalty notices Litter
- Fixed penalty notices Dog Fouling
- Cost per rate payer

1. This is an estimation as cleansing spend projections have been made for Ards and North Down, Derry and Strabane and Newry Mourne and Down based on previous year's data.
 2. NISRA Population and Household Projections for Northern Ireland (for 2021), 2016-2041 (HHP16_NI).
 3. Please note that these figures relate to 2021/22, and are therefore one year behind the figures in the rest of this report. Figures are only made available in autumn of the following year.



What We're Seeing on the Ground

Gareth Lamrock is one of Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful's Field Officers, and a trained assessor.

He conducted many of this year's litter surveys. Here, he shares some of his first-hand observations:

"I definitely notice a pattern of more litter on rural roads, and also in high obstruction housing- housing estates. High obstruction housing tends to suffer more than other land uses from graffiti, staining, litter.

Parks in housing estates seem more likely to be vandalised. For the most part it's just graffiti tagging, juvenile stuff. I've been pleasantly surprised at how little sectarian graffiti I've seen.

In my experience, rural roads are among the worst areas affected. It's crazy what you find – we found Burger King packaging in a road out by Sion Mills, and the nearest Burger King is 45 miles away! And I'm not talking one box, I'm talking several. The likelihood is that it was all thrown out of a car.

Main roads can also pose a problem- it's not always safe to send a litter picking team out if it's a main road, so litter can start to accumulate.

Cigarette litter is the most common type of litter I find. I don't think I've ever done a transect without at least one cigarette butt! Vapes, disposable vapes, they are also becoming much more prominent. They are of particular concern – not only are they plastic, but there's a battery in them too. You can find them everywhere. They come in a metallic foil packaging, so you'll find those as well.

Energy drink packaging is another form of litter you frequently find. Stickers, too – that is something I hate to see. There are stickers everywhere!

I'm pleasantly surprised by how little dog poo I've found, you do find it, but not that often.

I've found a few nitrous oxide cannisters, and a plastic toy gun- but never anything really bonkers!"

Gareth Lamrock

FIELD OFFICER,
KEEP NORTHERN IRELAND BEAUTIFUL

"Cigarette litter is the most common type of litter I find. I don't think I've ever done a transect without at least one cigarette butt!"





Litter Louts in 2022

The usual suspects became more entrenched and progress was lost elsewhere.

Cigarette litter and confectionary litter were more widespread than in our previous report, while there was a big step backwards on takeaway packaging.

Cigarette Litter

As with our previous report, the miscellaneous aspects of cigarettes – butts, cardboard packaging, plastic film – emerged as the most frequently encountered form of litter across transects last year. Worryingly, this grew from 65% coverage in 2021 to 78% in 2022, representing a 20% increase. It is also worth interpreting this finding within the context of a bigger uptake of e-cigarettes (vapes) in Northern Ireland. Although this may bring improved health outcomes for smokers, this has not resulted in a reciprocating decline in cigarette litter across our environment and the chemical pollution that this causes. In fact, we anticipate a growing litter problem with these products, which will create plastic-pollution problems of their own.

Dog Fouling

It is encouraging to see more linear progress on dog fouling, falling to 2% of transects and building on the positive decrease to 6% that we observed in 2021. However, nothing spoils our environment more than dog litter, which poses the threat of toxocariasis. We hope to see more Councils legislate for the recently introduced £200 maximum fixed penalty notice for dog fouling and back this up with proportionate enforcement action that can drive this visceral form of litter even closer to total elimination.

Confectionary Litter

Confectionery litter shot up to 60% presence across transects last year, up from the 47% that we recorded in 2021. It is interesting to note that, despite the increasing availability of soft-plastic recycling facilities at supermarkets nationwide for items like chocolate and sweets packaging, we have yet to witness a corresponding dip in the pervasiveness of confectionery litter across the country. Lack of convenience, awareness or incentivisation may explain why this service has yet to yield meaningful returns for reduced confectionery litter.

Takeaway Litter

The most shocking individual finding last year was that takeaway packaging more than doubled to 26% from 12% in 2021, undoing the drop that we signalled in our previous report. Most problematically, there is a considerable portion of takeaway packaging that is made from non-recyclable polystyrene, and this material has a propensity to fragment and find its way on to our beaches and into our waterways. More behaviour-change campaigns are required to tackle this litter problem and to encourage businesses to transition to more sustainable packaging options.

Drinks-related Litter

Drinks-related litter was the second most frequently recorded item across transects, rising from 47% in 2021 to 66% in 2022. Encompassing everything from cans, bottles, paper cups, lids and packaging labels, drinks litter is a perennial litter problem that will continue to remain a challenge going into the future. Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful is hopeful that the introduction of a Deposit Return Scheme and Extended Producer Responsibility legislation will make a significant difference in eradicating this issue.



78%



60%



26%



66%



2%

Recommendations for Individuals, Government and Businesses

Individuals

1. Be active in tackling pollution

- Use less plastic and more reusable containers (bottles, cups, food containers)
- Choose products with less packaging or more recyclable packaging
- Challenge yourself to make a change in your purchasing habits.

2. Get involved with the local community

- Get involved with Live Here Love Here
- Adopt A Spot in your area and receive equipment and support.
- Write to your MLAs and local councillors and demand change.



Government

1. Litter legislation

We need a litter strategy. A joined-up approach is essential to tackle the causes of litter in Northern Ireland. This would need to include education, enforcement and public engagement. Litter legislation is directly linked to the Deposit Return Scheme and Extended Producer Responsibility, as well as the Plastics Directive (part of the NI Protocol). It is extremely encouraging to see that a Litter Strategy has been referenced within the draft Northern Ireland Environmental Strategy.

2. Courts must produce coherent guidelines for the treatment of those who litter.

Fair and reasonable penalties must be applied consistently to avoid discrepancies across the various courts dealing with these cases. Fines issued by a court should never end up being less than the cost of paying a fixed penalty. Councils' costs must also form part of the payment due, for those found guilty of littering.

3. Joined up approach for councils on litter enforcement.

We propose policy across all councils to ensure that best practice on enforcement of litter and dog fouling is followed. Enforcement practices need to be fair, clear and consistent across Northern Ireland. We advocate a single NI-wide level for fixed penalty notices.

4. Deposit Return Scheme

Deposit return schemes (DRS) would see consumers paying an up-front deposit for certain items such as drinks. The return of the empty packaging after use would allow the deposit to be redeemed. This practice would help incentivise correct disposal of packaging, as it would now have a monetary value. DRS would also greatly reduce the number of plastic items reaching our seas. It would therefore help Northern Ireland play its part in tackling marine plastic pollution and would support the good work being done to achieve Good Environmental Status for Descriptor 10 in the Marine Strategy Framework Directive. The joint DRS for Northern Ireland, Wales and England is due to launch in 2025.

5. Extended Producer Responsibility

EPR for packaging across the UK was widely consulted on in 2019 and 2021. Costs to councils for packaging in street bins will be met by producers of packaging from 2024. In addition, producers will contribute to the costs of litter prevention such as campaigns. EPR will also increase recyclability of packaging through fees that producers will have to pay. Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful would like to see the scope of the scheme widened, to ensure that duty bodies (e.g. Translink) also benefit fairly from the shared approach to waste management. At present, duty bodies pass on these costs to customers.

6. The EU Plastics Directive.

This legislation is being implemented (in part) in Northern Ireland as part of the NI Protocol. England, Scotland and Wales (as well as the Republic of Ireland) have already introduced regulations to ban certain items. Northern Ireland is still to consult on this issue. We ask for a rapid conclusion to the consultation and the implementation of bans. Furthermore, for items out of the scope of the bans, we urge government to build on the highly successful carrier bag levy by broadening the legislation to include a 'call-up' list of single use plastic containing items (including cigarette butts, single use plastic lined paper cups and a wide array of packaging) that can be levied in Northern Ireland. This will help generate funds to further support delivery of the litter strategy and will help producers consider ways to decrease the amount and types of packaging they place on the market. Where other legislation comes into effect, such as DRS and/or EPR, items can then cease to be levied.

7. Prioritise spending on prevention in order to reduce spend on clean-up.

Behaviour change through education needs to be a higher priority if we are to seriously tackle the issues of dog fouling and litter. Increasing spending on clean-up will not change behaviour. There is an opportunity for funding to be reallocated to projects and campaigns that work towards changing the behaviour of individuals as well as corporations. The Live Here Love Here Campaign is a well-established, collaborative, litter prevention platform. Through education and empowerment, it builds a sense of civic pride in our

local communities. Individual actions and small scale campaigns can only, at best, achieve incremental improvements and the global crises, including marine plastic pollution, now requires transformational change. Additional litter prevention-focused investment in Eco-Schools is needed to maximise the awareness of young people and to help drive messaging into individual households.

Businesses

- Sadly, investment in litter prevention from this sector has dwindled in recent years. Successful businesses will be looking at making changes even before legislation (Extended Producer Responsibility/Deposit Return Schemes) come into force. They should be supported and encouraged to do so.
- Legislation to reduce the use of Single Use Plastics is on the horizon, which will improve the situation regarding takeaway containers. Education and support for small businesses in particular needs to be increased.
- Proposed solutions should have industry input.
- We would encourage businesses to engage with the Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful 'Tackling Plastics' team to receive a free toolkit and would also encourage them to sign the Plastic Promise as a starting point on their journey towards sustainability and circularity. Get the ball rolling [here](#).



To discuss how we can work together to tackle littering please contact:



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