

Public

Key Decision - Yes

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: **Litter Minimisation Strategy 2021 - 2025**

Meeting/Date: Overview and Scrutiny Panel
(Customers and Partnerships) –
2nd December
Cabinet – 9th December

Executive Portfolio: Executive Councillor for Operations and Environment,
Councillor Marge Beuttell

Report by: Matthew Chudley, Operations Manager for Environmental Services

Ward(s) affected: All

Executive Summary:

The Litter Strategy responds to the main challenges faced by the Council Street Cleansing and Litter Minimisation service. The Vision for the Street Cleansing service is set out in the Council's own vision and ambition of ensuring our streets and open spaces are kept clean and safe as well as our commitment to good environmental stewardship and long-term sustainability.

We must also respond to the challenges presented by Huntingdonshire being an area that is growing quickly, and where the street cleansing service must grow or adapt to absorb this growth.

This strategy lays out the principles for where we intend to take litter minimisation over the next four years and appendix 1 provides an overview of the strategy highlighting the key themes we will be working on.

These include:

- Reduce litter
- Being innovative
- Reduce our environmental impact
- Leading by example
- Engagement
- Enforcement

The action plan (Appendix 2) explores the projects we will be focusing on to support our key objectives and themes.

Our Vision

This strategy aims to tie in with the wider Government strategy (Litter Strategy for England 2018) and provide a broad framework for managing litter in our district over the coming months and years.

It is not only cost which is an issue. Litter blights the local environment, reduces overall quality of life, influences people's choice of where to live, discourages investment and visitors to our area and can be damaging to wildlife and habitats. We want Huntingdonshire to be a place that people want to live and visit to enjoy our towns, villages and beautiful countryside.

Our nation's future prosperity will greatly depend on how well we manage our environment and therefore it is important that we all play our part in reducing litter and stopping people from dropping litter in the first place.

- Change the behaviour of people who feel it is acceptable to drop litter through enhanced education and consistent messaging
- Make it easy to dispose of litter, provide the appropriate facilities in the right places, and provide an efficient and effective street cleansing service
- Improve enforcement by exercising council powers to deal with anyone who drops litter
- Engage with, support, and celebrate those who are doing the right thing

Recommendation(s):

To endorse the Litter Strategy and Litter Minimisation Action Plan

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To seek the endorsement of the council's new Litter Strategy and Litter Minimisation Action Plan.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Rising demand for local government services, the growth of our district, and continued pressure on the resources available, ensure that efficiency and productivity must be cornerstones of our Street Cleansing Service.
- 2.2 In addition, over recent years, climate change has been increasingly identified as a major global threat. Good management of litter - preventing or minimising the amount of litter generated and maximising the repair, re-use and recycling of litter/waste materials, are some of the most immediate things that we can do as individuals to contribute to a reduction in carbon emissions.
- 2.3 Litter is both a global and local issue and communities need to become more responsible about the litter they generate. We all have a part to play - as individuals, employers or employees, governments, and consumers.
- 2.4 In future, we must prevent litter from being generated. Where we cannot prevent, we must work to reduce, re-use and recycle as much as we can. We must think of litter as being a resource from which as much value as possible should be recovered.
- 2.5 Recycling of glass bottles & cans within town centre locations has already started but we cannot become complacent. We know from litter analysis that there is more material that can be captured and recycled.
- 2.6 Through working with residents, we have seen a 70% recyclable material rate within the town centre locations. Further work is underway to ensure this level is increased and only through continued resident engagement can this be achieved.
- 2.7 As it stands, over the last 3 years the service has seen a significant improvement in performance and value for money. Over this time period the Council has delivered a reduction on cost per household, marking us amongst the best of our comparable local government group (APSE Benchmarking) despite diesel hitting an all-time high during parts of this period and increased housing of around 1500 new properties per year.
- 2.8 At the same time, we have seen the number of litter complaints fall and attain a customer satisfaction rating of 88.6% (either average or above satisfaction with the service) in addition we have also managed to keep the full Street Cleansing service running throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

2.9 However, we are not complacent or content. This strategy lays out the principles for where we intend to take litter minimisation over coming years.

2.10 Where we are now

The council currently provide a Street Cleansing service whose services cover the adopted Highways, Town Centres, and Parks and Open Spaces.

The service is predominantly focussed on high footfall sites, with three dedicated Town Centre Operatives across Huntingdon, St Ives and St Neots (Ramsey is covered within a rural round). In addition to this the team operates a rural round, parks round and ad-hoc street cleansing team, due to the nature of the District having dispersed towns of high density and rural villages intercepted with major A-Roads.

Each town centre is cleansed a minimum of once a day, 6 days a week

The Street Cleansing Service has already run the below innovative pilot projects:

- On Street Recycling in St Neots, Huntingdon & St Ives
- Smart Bin Sensors within Town Centre locations
- Business Community Pledge
- Community Litter Pick – Easier to arrange

Street Cleansing will continue to pilot new ways of working to combat litter

2.10.1 Litter Generation 2016/17 to 2019/20

The main sources of litter generation within Huntingdonshire are:

- Litter dropped or placed in places other than litter bins
- Dog waste that has not been removed by the dog's owner
- Commercial or domestic waste incorrectly presented. With large amounts of side waste and overfilled bins.
- Waste that has been 'carefully littered' on ledges, walls and street furniture
- Litter from 'food on the go'
- Litter on school routes
- Smoking related litter
- Drug related litter
- Litter from moving vehicles
- Litter around parked vehicles
- Litter from open spaces & private property
- Chewing gum
- Fly tipping

The table below shows the amount of litter, in tonnes, collected from all litter sources along with tonnage of litter/detritus from Street Sweeping machines. These figures have remained constant over the last four years even with growth in housing within the area

Year	Litter (Tonnes)	Street Sweeping (Tonnes)	Total Litter/Detritus (Tonnes)
2018	56	1386.9	1443
2019	86	1148	1204
2020	116	1014	1130
2021 YTD	41	810	852

The impact of COVID 19 on littering has been significant, in 2020 HDCs Street Cleansing Service reported a 34% increase in littering across the district. Parks and Open Spaces recorded record numbers of footfall and areas which the public visited were more widespread, resulting in higher volumes and more distributed littering.

2.10.2 Enforcement

The Council recognises the importance of achieving and maintaining consistency in its approach to enforcement. For many areas of its enforcement activity, government guidance already exists in the form of Codes of Practice, Planning Policy Guidance, and Government Circulars. When considering what action should be taken, the Council will look to:

- Be proportionate to the nature of the offence and the harm caused
- Change the behaviour of the offender
- Eliminate any financial gain or benefit from non-compliance
- Address the harm caused by regulatory non-compliance, where appropriate
- Deter future non-compliance
- Be responsive and consider what is appropriate for the particular offender and regulatory issue.

The Council's position is that the first step in enforcement is to promote good practice, ensure policy compliance and prevent contravention of the law by raising awareness. However, in order to change behaviour effectively we also need to back up this social message with appropriate and proportionate enforcement.

This table shows enforcement action taken for littering and fly tips over the last 4 years.

It is important to recognise that during the Covid pandemic (2020) there has been a huge increase nationally in fly tipping. Along with other pressures on Council officers' resources at this time from working in a challenging environment it has proved difficult to gather evidence for successful prosecutions.

Year	Littering FPNs	Fly Tips	Fly Tip Prosecutions
2018	10	971	4

2019	14	752	8
2020	11	1976	4
2021 YTD	4	902	5

2.10.3 Cost of the Street Cleansing service

Despite an increase in the number of properties the cost per household has decreased through absorption of growth achieved through innovative service changes. We continue to benchmark the service through APSE (Association For Public Service Excellence) Benchmarking

We are consistently below the average cost per household whilst achieving award nominations for improved service delivery.

	Cost of service	Cost per household	Apse Avg Cost Per household
16/17	£ 829,933	£12.24	£26.93
17/18	£ 793,949	£12.18	£23.11
18/19	£ 772,646	£11.56	£26.02
19/20	£ 721,433	£10.42	£21.64

*Cost per household does not include Central Establishment Cost

2.10.4 Satisfaction Survey (Appendix 3)

The latest customer satisfaction survey took place in June 2019 and gave us an opportunity to gather residents' opinions on communication methods as well as more insight in to how they dispose of their litter/waste

- **Overall, 88.6% were satisfied or very satisfied with the Street Cleansing service**
- 74.5% of respondents were satisfied with the frequency that the litter and dog waste bins were emptied
- 61.5% of respondents believe that enforcement was the best way to tackle littering
- Residents on average rated the cleanliness of Huntingdonshire 3.6 out of 5 (5 being excellent)

The below table shows cleanliness scores of key locations based on survey scoring:

Location	Percentage Average, Good or Very Good
Town Centres	94.8
Main Roads	83.16
School routes	86.17
Public Footpaths	83.33
Parks and Playgrounds	92.63
Playing fields	87.24
Other open spaces (e.g. Verges)	66.31

3. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

3.1 The comments of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel will be included in this section prior to its consideration by the Cabinet.

4. KEY IMPACTS / RISKS

4.1 Population/housing growth

This will increase litter production therefore there will be a need for more resources to service the areas of growth. In its current format, the service will continue to grow as the District does, this will continue to increase the revenue budget of the service by around £71K for every additional new crew that goes into service.

Although the proposed Litter Minimisation Strategy does not require or suggest any changes to the current bin collection model, we will need to be open minded and examine all possible service delivery options moving forward if we are to mitigate

the growing financial pressures of operating the service. These could include – investment in Smart Bins and re rationalising litter bins and locations.

Despite continued service innovations and efficiencies, it is not envisaged that these will be significant enough to absorb the population growth in the future.

4.2 Financial environment

We are working in an environment of continued and sustained financial pressure which may result in difficult decisions having to be made on what we prioritise, including reduced budgets and less resource.

The clearance of litter is an avoidable cost but to reduce this requires significant culture change alongside well designed and planned infrastructure and services to meet current and future needs. Changing culture is challenging and requires ongoing investment in education, engagement and, occasionally, enforcement. Given that much of our infrastructure is old and designed and planned for a different time, updating this to meet current and predicted need in the current economic environment will be a challenge and new and innovative ways to deal with this will be necessary.

In addition to council staff, the council engages with the prison service and probation service to support work across the district, as part of community service programme. Furthermore, many volunteer groups and individual volunteers regularly litter pick in the areas where they live, some of whom will also separate materials into recyclables and waste. Volunteers, parish and town councils in rural areas carry out cleansing where it is difficult for the council to do so due to a lack of resources. Volunteers are often able to undertake additional regular deep cleans of their local area. The council provide volunteers with equipment and collect bagged litter from these activities.

Through improvements to the application process, guidance notes and social media campaigns and community engagement we have achieved a large rise in the number of volunteer's litter picking. This is reflected in the table below.

We regularly publicise the success of these groups and their comments of how rewarding they find voluntary in their community on social media.

This has resulted in many more people volunteering in their community.

	2019	2020	2021 YTD
Litter Pick Volunteers	350	596	1482

4.3 Litter Strategy for England

Our Litter Minimisation Strategy is in line with the governments litter strategy for England (Appendix 4)

The Litter Strategy For England sets out, in detail, how the government will work with communities and businesses to reduce litter.

4.4 National Pandemic

We have seen more litter being produced due to changing habits and working arrangements. Over the course of the pandemic, we have seen on a 34% increasing in litter tonnages collected

5. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN, STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND/OR CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

5.1 Local Framework

5.1.1 Corporate Plan 2018-2022

The corporate plan sets out a programme identifying areas which working together to meet the council's vision:

We want to support a safe and healthy environment, deliver economic growth, provide value for money services, and create opportunities for the people of Huntingdonshire

We want Huntingdonshire to be a good place and we work to Create, protect, and enhance our safe and clean built and green environment

Ruling administration manifesto - We will provide district-wide verge-side clearance during winter months

5.2 National Framework

Litter is controlled under the legislative framework of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, which was amended by the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005.

6. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

6.1 The Council set a target to reduce litter and fly tipping which we are working towards achieving. This reflects the importance of litter Minimisation and its activities.

Minimising litter is a key component of the Council's commitment to Climate Change ensuring Huntingdonshire is a clean place to live

Litter minimisation also makes financial sense, minimising costs of collection

This strategy continues to re-affirm our commitment to the environment, the impact of Huntingdonshire's litter/waste on our climate and focus to strive further whilst accommodating the challenges of COVID19 and Housing Growth.

7. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Appendix 1 – Litter Minimisation Strategy at a glance
Appendix 2 – Litter Minimisation Action Plan
Appendix 3 - Litter Strategy For England
Appendix 4 – National Framework

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Appendix 1 – Litter Minimisation Strategy at a Glance



Litter Minimisation Strategy

The Litter Minimisation Strategy is designed to respond to the main challenges faced by the Street Cleansing service. We want to provide a high-quality service for the increasing population of Huntingdonshire and to make the service more cost efficient

Our Vision

To make littering unacceptable behaviour and to seek new and innovative ways to reduce littering and to clear it promptly where it turns up. The following key objectives will deliver recognisable improvements within Huntingdonshire:

- ▶ To have a strategy that provides a framework for action
- ▶ To reduce litter and fly tipping within Huntingdonshire
- ▶ To build on the success of our community engagement and build an even stronger connection within the local communities
- ▶ To develop an effective communication plan for the prevention of litter and fly tipping
- ▶ To have an improved understanding within the local community of the issues around litter and fly tipping
- ▶ To provide effective and efficient council services that make best use of the resources available to tackle litter and fly tipping, including enforcement
- ▶ To encourage the public and business to take responsibility and ownership of their litter

Measuring Our Success

We will be measuring our progress against the following criteria:

- ▶ Measuring the cost of the Street Cleansing service against budget
- ▶ Increase the number of recycling litter bins across the district
- ▶ APSE benchmarking against other comparable local authorities
- ▶ Collaborative working between litter minimisation and enforcement will ensure the same messages and policies are being followed throughout the district
- ▶ Community engagement to spread the message will be measured from the social media insights
- ▶ Listening to the voice of residents through annual customer satisfaction survey
- ▶ Carbon modelling of service – working with the energy saving trust and other consultants

Reduce Litter

- Re rationalise litter bin locations
- Identify litter hotspots

Being Innovative

- To improve both litter minimisation as a service at a local level and to encourage neighbourhoods and communities to manage litter more sustainably
- Active volunteer programme, work with DWP and the probation service
- Local ambassadors promoting litter minimisation in their communities
- Investigate community projects to minimise litter
- Partnership working with RECAP, Keep Britain Tidy
- Enforcement to take appropriate action on littering & fly tipping.

Reduce our environmental impact

- To develop a long-term sustainable approach that limits the environmental impact of the collection service that we run
- Reduce the carbon footprint of the service where possible

Leading by example

- Reducing litter produced by the council
- Getting our own house in order
- Be the first

Engagement

- Maximise the use of social media
- Communications planning
- Linking to local and national campaigns including 'Great British Spring Clean'



Appendix 2 – Litter Minimisation Action Plan

Project	Objective	How	Measure	Review	Timescale
Cover entire litter bin infrastructure with Smart Bin Sensors	Reduce the amount of litter collected across Huntingdonshire	Procure additional sensors	% Total bins covered by smart technology	Annually	22/25
		Publish real time data on litter bin fill levels on HDC website	Website live	Annually	22/24
Right Bin Right Place	Reduce the number of litter bins across the district	Using data from bin sensors to re rationalise bin locations across the district	No of litter bins across the district	Quarterly	21/22 - Ongoing
	To adopt a litter bin policy	research and publish a litter bin policy	Policy agreed by members	n/a	21/22
Sustainable Business Pledge	Increase the number of business signed up to the pledge	Active comms and promotion	Increased no of customers by 50% - Inc HDC run premises (Lead by example)	Quarterly	22/25
Community Litter Picks	To improve accessibility for community litter picks	Support local events with litter pick equipment	No of litter picks carried out across the year	Annually	22/25
	To Improve data collection from community litter picks	Provide a document as part of the litter pick pack to record waste collected	Quarterly report on waste collected from litter picks	Quarterly	22/25
Enforcement	To evaluate and improve current litter enforcement policy across Huntingdonshire	Enforcement team to evaluate current policy and report back options to improve the current policy to increase effective enforcement	New policy to be adopted by the Council	Quarterly	22/23
			No of FPN's handed out LAMS inspections Public awareness	6 Month	22/25
Communications/Accessibility	To provide a single point of access for community and voluntary groups	Set up a 'Love Huntingdonshire' Stand alone website. Dedicated to serving our communities and volunteers	Website live	Annually	22/24
	Promote 'Schools Environment Week'	Feasibility study on how to make 'Schools Environment Week' into an annual event	Decision based on feasibility study	Annually	21/23
Performance	Benchmark annually against other comparable councils	To provide annual data to APSE performance networks	Performance Network League Tables	Annually	21/22
	To introduce the 'Land Asset Management System' LAMS to carry out performance inspections	Training on the system to be arranged via APSE. Technical support to be arranged via HDC IMD	Scorecards	Monthly	21/22

Appendix 3 – Litter Strategy For England

The below is a summary of the Litter Strategy for England that can be found using the below link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/litter-strategy-for-england>

Send a clear and consistent anti-litter message:

- developing, seeking funding for, and delivering a world class national anti-littering campaign
- developing an anti-littering culture which aims to educate young people not to litter
- inspiring and engaging local communities, and empowering them to take action, including introducing a new 'litter innovation fund' to pilot, implement and evaluate small scale local research projects that could be replicated more widely

Summary:

- making a compelling business case for businesses of all kinds to invest in anti-litter activity
- exploring voluntary and regulatory measures that aim to increase recycling and reduce litter
- working with stakeholders to look at innovative 'nudge' techniques' to tackle littering behaviour

Improve enforcement against offenders, including:

- delivering on our Manifesto commitment to review the case for increasing fixed penalties for littering and related offences
- introducing new regulations to help councils tackle littering from vehicles –
- providing improved guidance for councils on how to use their enforcement powers proportionately and appropriately, and
- raising councils' and magistrates' awareness of the range of sanctions available to tackle littering and fly-tipping.

Clean up the country, including:

- supporting national clean-up days
- working with Highways England to put in place measures to deliver a lasting improvement in cleanliness at 25 priority litter hotspots on the Strategic Road Network, including updating the Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse to clarify the expected standards of cleanliness on the Network
- producing new guidance on "binrastructure" (the design, number and location of public litter bins and other items of street furniture) for local areas to help them reduce levels of litter
- working with the relevant industries to tackle certain types of particularly problematic litter, including fast-food packaging, smoking-related litter and chewing gum
- exploring the ways in which packaging and packaging design can contribute to reducing litter

Appendix 4 – National Framework

It is an offence to drop or leave litter and not pick it up. It applies to all land that is open to the air, including land covered with water and privately owned land. A person found guilty of dropping litter can be fined up to £2500 in a magistrate's court.

Most offences can be dealt with through serving a Fixed Penalty Notice on the perpetrator by an authorised body such as a local authority or police force. Fixed Penalty Notice charges are set locally at between £75 and £150.

Litter is generally accepted to be anything below the size of a sack of household waste and is mostly understood as items related to smoking, chewing gum or eating and drinking on the move where unwanted items have not been properly disposed of or have been dropped inadvertently.

Section 89 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (EPA 1990) places a legal responsibility (a 'duty') on certain organisations to ensure that land, as far as is practicable, is kept clear of litter.

Section 91 of the EPA 1990 goes on to state that a person who is fed up with a long-standing litter problem can use a Litter Abatement Order against those organisations listed under Section 89 (the 'duty bodies') if they are failing in their duty to keep that land clean.

There are six 'Duty Bodies' – local authorities, statutory undertakers such as rail and road agencies, Crown Estate, colleges, schools and universities. Privately owned land not open to public access does not qualify for a Litter Abatement Order.