

Tackling litter together

Support pack for local authorities

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1. Tackling litter together

Litter is everybody's problem. As well as being unsightly, it has broader social, environmental and economic impacts. When it is visible on our strategic road network ("network"), it affects customer satisfaction and ultimately our reputation as a customer-focused organisation.

Highways England and Local Authorities share the same customers on England's roads and they want to know what we are doing to tackle the litter issue.

We have launched this Support Pack for Local Authorities to provide guidance as to how we can better support you and work together in tackling the problem of litter. It includes tips and tools relating to:

- Meeting and communicating with your local Highways England Litter Champion;
- Resource sharing;
- Formalising arrangements with us via a Litter Partnership Agreement;
- Targeting litter hotspots;
- Consistent measurement and data logging of litter; and
- Education and engagement.

2. Who is responsible for litter clearing?

Litter clearing duties were assigned under Section 89 of the [Environmental Protection Act](#) (EPA) 1990. Highways England is responsible for the management of litter on England's motorways and a small number of trunk roads. Local authorities (Duty Bodies or Litter Authorities as identified in the [Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse](#)) are responsible for litter on all other roads including the trunk roads within the Highways England Network. See Figure 1 for the map of the litter clearing responsibilities on the Highways England Strategic Road Network.

In addition, Section 86, Part 9 covers some of the responsibilities that local authorities have regarding litter clearance on highways in your respective areas.

Nevertheless, we recognise that there has in the past been some confusion over responsibilities for litter clearing on all-purpose trunk roads (APTRe), and the public are also largely unsure who to contact when making a complaint about litter. We receive a large number of complaints relating to local roads for which we are not responsible for litter picking and we know that litter authorities can often be challenged by a lack of resources affecting your ability to undertake litter picking duties.

We want to make life easier for you to obtain safe access to our network to undertake your duties.

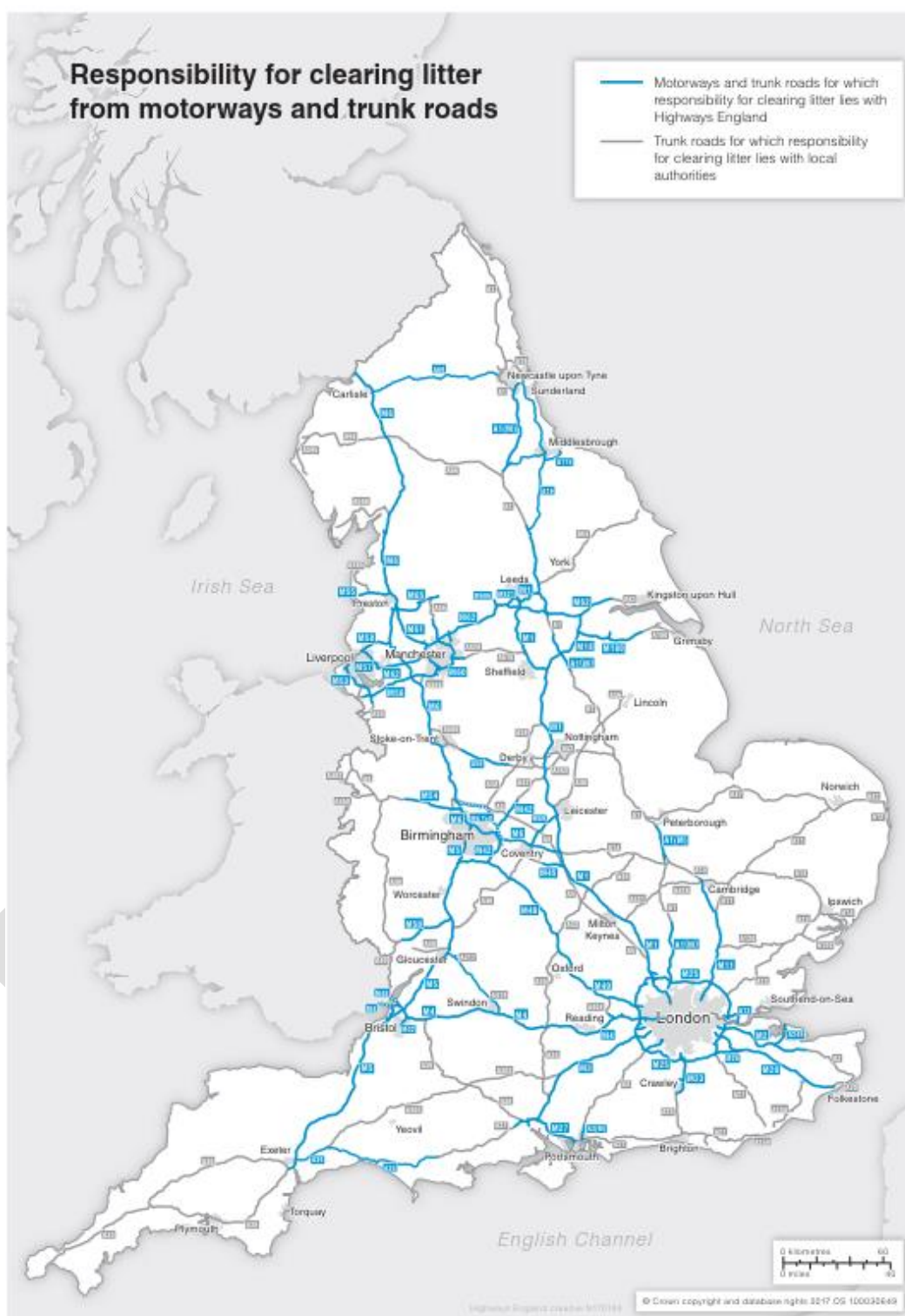


Figure 1: Responsibility for clearing litter from motorways and trunk roads

3. Delivering our litter strategy vision through collaboration

We first launched our **Litter Strategy in 2014**, the vision for which was: “A network predominantly free from litter, without compromising safety and delivered affordably”. This vision is underpinned by four workstreams:

- i. **Influence littering behaviour**
- ii. **Improve operational delivery and asset maintenance**
- iii. **Seek and respond to customer feedback**
- iv. **Improve partnership working**

Number iv, ‘Improve partnership working’ is an especially important element as it relates to working more collaboratively with local authorities.

4. Tips and tools for implementing collaborative working practices

There are a number of activities we can undertake and tools we can use to facilitate partnership working with you:

- **Arranging frequent meetings with your local Highways England Litter Champion and establishing a communications plan**

If we do not already have a strong relationship in place, your local Highways England Litter Champion will contact you to make an introduction and understand who your key contacts are in relation to litter picking duties.

By establishing a communications plan, it will enable your Highways England Litter Champion to keep you informed of planned roadworks and where traffic management may be in place that will facilitate you in litter picking. We want to better understand any challenges you face in undertaking litter clearing duties.

It may help to develop closer partnerships through the establishment of regional working groups that facilitate sharing best practice, developing new ideas and progressing initiatives to tackle litter.

- **Resource sharing**

To support you in managing your resources, we will give you advance notice of forthcoming programmes of work, along with a weekly list of all road closures. We recognise that early notification of any road closures is vital to avoid resource wastage. Wherever possible, we will identify opportunities to share resources for traffic management so that routine maintenance and litter clearing activities can be undertaken simultaneously. We can also work with you to agree a litter clearance schedule.

- **Health and Safety**

At Highways England we operate a safe systems approach towards road safety.

We will provide the necessary training to key local authority personnel, and require the training to be cascaded through the local authority litter clearing team prior to accessing our network.

This should include completion of the appropriate risk assessments and adherence to safe systems of work, including the use of appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).

When litter picking on an active site (e.g. where Highways England is undertaking other works), operatives are required to work within the confines of set traffic management. Access will only be granted after local risk assessments and/or method statements are agreed. Litter picking operatives must receive a site induction and briefing both prior to and upon arrival on site.

• **Litter Partnership Agreement**

Our relationship with many of you has been largely informal, which does not always facilitate the best coordination of activities. We have now developed a litter partnership agreement to help formalise your relationship with your local Highways England team to facilitate better coordination of litter clearing operations. Your local Highways England Litter Champion will contact you to discuss how the agreement can support you both.

• **Targeting litter hotspots**

Litter hotspots are typically locations where traffic tends to be slow-moving or stationary, as highlighted in the table below. Working together, we can agree an integrated plan for litter clearing at these hotspots while also developing an approach to prevent recurrences.

Prominent litter hotspots	Other potential litter hotspots
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Entry and exit slip roads ◦ Service areas, including on nearby routes ◦ Junctions or interchanges where queues form ◦ Laybys ◦ Locations of recurring litter complaints 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Underneath flyovers ◦ Near amenity and leisure facilities ◦ Land adjacent to the network ◦ Near waste or landfill sites ◦ Near pedestrian areas, central reserves, verges & urban areas

Keep Britain Tidy has a smartphone app that enables members of the public to report litter from the exact GPS location. The report is automatically sent to the relevant local authority and the individual who has reported the issue is kept up to date with its progress. This application may help in the identification of hotspots and, working together, we can determine how your local Highways England team can support you in undertaking your litter clearing duties.

• **Standards for litter picking and data recording**

The graded standards of cleanliness are detailed in the [Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse](#) as:

Grade A – No litter or refuse

Grade B – Predominantly free of litter and refuse apart from some small items

Grade C – Widespread distribution of litter and/or refuse with minor accumulations

Grade D – Heavily affected by litter and/or refuse with significant accumulations

The Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse requires that litter and detritus must be cleared to a Grade A standard on hard surfaces and on a regular enough basis such that it should not fall below a Grade B standard. On soft verges, cleansing must take place to a Grade B standard.

In order to demonstrate our commitment to the public in the litter clearing we do on the network, we record the number of bags of litter collected and take date-stamped before and after photos for reporting purposes. We kindly request that you also keep a record of the location the litter was picked and the number of bags collected and then submit this data to your local Highways England Litter Champion.

- **Education and engagement**

At Highways England we recognise that education and engagement are the most appropriate approaches to influence littering behaviour. We are aware that a lot of local authorities engage with local organisations and schools, and run education campaigns to reduce littering. Our Litter Champions would like to work with you in delivering education and engaging with the public wherever possible. That way we can deliver consistent and joined-up messages.

We also work with litter and environmental campaign charities including Keep Britain Tidy and Hubbub to test behaviour-change innovations and deliver high-impact campaigns.

- **Enforcement**

At Highways England we believe in positive methods to reduce litter (i.e. education and engagement) although we recognise that enforcement can be effective as a last resort to tackling litter offences. Since April 2018, new regulations came into force enabling litter authorities to issue a fixed penalty notice (FPN) to the owner of the vehicle if it has reason to believe a littering offence has been committed.

Not being a litter authority, Highways England is unable to issue FPNs. We would like to work with you at a local level to establish a process for providing evidence in order that you can issue FPNs on the relevant Highways England roads for which you are the litter authority.