

Tackling litter together

Your stakeholder collaboration pack



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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 ("the network"), it affects customer satisfaction and ultimately our reputation as a customer-focused organisation.

Our customers want to know what we are doing to tackle the litter issue. Crucially, our overall performance is being monitored by the Office of Rail and Road to make sure we achieve the 90% user satisfaction score set out in the Government's [Road Investment Strategy](#).

We received 1,331 negative enquiries regarding litter on roads from January to July 2015, with 17% of those related to local roads. Plus, we receive a significant level of complaints about litter on the Highways England network each year.

If you work in a service delivery or asset development team then this collaboration pack will help you develop effective working practices with local authorities and service area operators to tackle litter together. It includes tips and tools relating to:

- Meeting and communicating with your local litter authorities and service area operator site managers;
- Resource sharing;
- Formalising arrangements with local (litter) authorities (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 all 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 our network.

“It shall be the duty of the Secretary of State, as respects any trunk road which is a special road and any relevant highway or relevant road for which he is responsible, to ensure that the highway or road is, so far as is practicable, kept clean.”

In addition, [Section 86](#), Part 9 covers some of the responsibilities that local authorities have regarding litter clearance on highways in their area.

Nevertheless, there is confusion amongst some local authorities over their responsibilities for litter clearing on all-purpose trunk roads (APTR's), and the public are also largely unsure who to contact when making a complaint about litter. In addition, many local authorities are

challenged by a lack of resources affecting their ability to undertake these duties.

In order for local authorities to fulfil their duties, they are reliant on us to grant access to our network. Within Network Delivery and Development (NDD), to minimise traffic disruption, access tends to be granted only for late night operations, which requires lighting equipment along with expensive and disruptive traffic management procedures. The safety of our customers and of those involved in litter clearing is critical, which means verges can only be cleared where practicable. Safe access to central reservations and areas without a hard shoulder requires lane closures, causing disruption to traffic, which means litter clearing in these locations occurs infrequently.

If local authorities are unable to fulfil their litter clearing duty, our customers' perceptions of our network may be adversely affected, consequently impacting our reputation.

Litter clearing at service areas is the responsibility of the service area operator. However, the on-slips from service areas to motorways are our responsibility and many have been identified as litter hotspots.

3. Delivering our litter strategy through collaboration

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

i. Influence littering behaviour

This involves working with anti-litter organisations to tackle littering at source by influencing littering behaviour but we recognise that more needs to be done.

Our partnership with Keep Britain Tidy led to a litter intervention trial at Beaconsfield Extra service area on the M40 in Buckinghamshire in early 2015. 30 signs were displayed around the service area with ‘watching eyes’ encouraging visitors to the service area to correctly dispose of their waste. The posters produced a positive behavioural response, with a 23% reduction in the number of people observed littering.



Slip roads onto our network from service areas are common litter hotspots. We are therefore exploring opportunities for scaling a poster intervention at service area sites across the network. Other interventions

Poster intervention at Beaconsfield service area

in various areas across the country are also in the process of being trialled.

Many on-the-go beverage and food companies located in service areas and near to our roads have signed Keep Britain Tidy's Litter Prevention Commitment. Costa Coffee is one of the many companies working with Keep Britain Tidy. Costa Coffee and others are aware of the impact that litter has on the environment and we are using this opportunity to work in partnership together to make littering socially unacceptable.

ii. Improve operational delivery and asset maintenance

This requires identifying methods for improved litter clearing operations in accordance with our legal obligations. It includes improving operatives' safety, minimising disruption for customers and improving the environment for communities living alongside the network. The ability to record litter clearance activity and performance consistently across the regions is necessary as currently our litter clearing efforts largely go unnoticed. Yorkshire and North East developed a [Litter Dashboard](#) which is currently under review by the [Litter Action Group](#). A version of the dashboard will be circulated in due course.

The Area 9 team has developed its litter intelligence and identified litter hotspots

on a [map](#). The map is helping to:

- properly co-ordinate activities on the network;
- will be used in the future to identify those hotspots requiring temporary traffic regulation orders (TTROs); and,
- potentially be used to provide more detailed information to customers about litter collection programmes;
 - when a hotspot was last litter picked
 - how much litter was collected, and
 - when the next collection is due to take place.

iii. Seek and respond to customer feedback

Working with our customers is immensely important to building and maintaining our reputation as a customer-focused organisation.

The National Road User Satisfaction Survey has been used to gather feedback from our customers until now. In 2015 Transport Focus became the road user voice and will be collecting customer feedback about the network, and eventually launching a new customer satisfaction survey.

The [Library](#) is a bank of standard lines and latest approved information primarily for customer correspondence purposes. The content provides comprehensive information from the Litter Strategy Board, including the litter strategy document, links to this Collaboration Pack, campaign materials and template letters for responses about the collection of litter from both motorways and the APTR. This is a dynamic process that will refresh

content as and when new developments occur. Content can be influenced by anyone by simply contacting the named subject matter expert; in this case [Jackie Kilkenny](#).

Recently traffic officers piloted a smartphone application to report a number of issues highlighted by our customers including litter. The trial was deemed a success with some further development work required for the app to be available on any device. A regional app is being developed with a small scale trial planned in YNE, NW and potentially Area 9 area teams. Roll out to traffic officers is planned to begin in the new-year as a phased roll out, likely to start in those regions trialling the regional app.

There are imminent plans to conduct a three-month trial of a voice activation app allowing customers from the customer panel to report network observations safely whilst driving. The app will identify four types; potholes, litter, signs and lighting. Traffic information and other add on value services will be included to test technology and functionality.

iv. Improve partnership working

In 2015 we launched an external stakeholders' working group to provide a platform for idea sharing and relationship building across a range of public and private sector organisations. The group is led by Keep Britain Tidy and meets biannually.

This collaboration pack has also been created to provide you with tips and tools to improve partnership working with local authorities and service area operators.

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 collaboration:

■ Meeting and communicating with your local authorities

The first step to building a relationship with your local authority is to open a dialogue; you will need to identify the key personnel within local authorities with whom to establish and build strong relationships. Many service providers will already have a working relationship with local authorities and it may be an idea to maximise use of their contacts in the first instance. By maintaining frequent contact, it will keep you informed of priorities and allow you to understand any challenges your local authority is facing in undertaking litter clearing duties. To help you engage with your local authority and capture information relating to challenges it faces in undertaking litter clearing duties, a [sample questionnaire](#) has been developed with a [covering letter](#). Importantly, it is just an example and can be tailored to specifically target local issues. Questionnaires have already been issued to local authorities in Area 3 with positive results.

The information collected in the questionnaire will support mutually

beneficial coordination of working practices that will provide our customers with a comprehensive litter clearing service.

Closer partnerships can be built through the establishment of regional working groups that facilitate sharing best practice, developing new ideas and progressing initiatives to tackle litter.

■ Meeting and communicating with service area operators

It is our responsibility to clear litter from these locations on motorways. Working with service area site managers can identify and implement mutually beneficial initiatives to reduce roadside littering. In November 2015 our Senior Policy Advisor sent [an email](#) to motorway service operator chief executives about the poster intervention at the Beaconsfield Extra MSA. The advisor invited them to work with us to try similar initiatives across other service area sites. Please contact Wayne Carey, Stakeholder Manager, who has the contact details of service area site managers in your area to open a discussion around approaches to help reduce littering.

■ Resource sharing

To support local authorities in managing their resources, we should continue to supply annual and quarterly programmes of work, along with a weekly list of all road closures. We can also jointly agree a litter clearance schedule. Early notification to local authorities of any road closures is vital to avoid resource wastage and, consequently, continued and successful working relationships. Wherever possible, we should identify opportunities to share resources for traffic management with the relevant local authorities so that routine maintenance and litter clearing activities can be undertaken simultaneously.

The appropriate skills and training of those involved in litter clearing on our network are very important in terms of health and safety. We can support local authorities in this regard by providing the necessary training to key local authority personnel who will ensure training is then cascaded through the local authority's team. This will help to ensure that the appropriate risk assessments are undertaken and safe systems of work are adhered to, such as use of appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).

■ Health and Safety

When litter picking operatives are required to operate within the confines of set traffic management on an active site, access should only be granted after local risk assessments and/or method statements are agreed, in line with any relevant policies. All litter picking operatives should receive a site induction and briefing both prior to and upon arrival on site. Importantly, they should receive supervision throughout the task to ensure

that it is conducted within the confines of the previously assessed and designated safe working area.

Litter picking is not “construction work”, as defined under the CDM Regulations 2015. With adequate safety arrangements in place, operatives do not need to hold CSCS cards or equivalents. Further advice can be sought from Highways England's Health & Safety Team.

■ Litter Partnership Agreement with local authorities

Currently, our engagement with local authorities regarding litter is largely informal across all regions. A litter partnership agreement, which mirrors current agreements we have with local authorities about agreed off network diversions will help to formalise that working relationship and facilitate better coordination of litter clearing operations. A patch within the Midlands region, signed a partnership agreement in December with a number of local authorities formalising their collaborative approach to working. Litter partnership draft agreements can be accessed here.

Full agreement

<http://share/Share/llisapi.dll/overview/33154601>

Non traffic authorities litter agreement

<http://share/Share/llisapi.dll/overview/33135898>

■ Targeting litter hotspots

By working closely with local authorities you can quickly identify litter hotspots and agree an integrated plan for litter clearing while also developing an approach to prevent recurrences. Litter hotspots are typically locations where traffic tends to be slow-moving or stationary, as highlighted in the table below.

Prominent litter hotspots
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Motorway slip roads ■ Service areas, including on nearby routes ■ Junctions or interchanges where queues form ■ Laybys on all-purpose trunk roads ■ Locations of recurring litter complaints
Other potential litter hotspots
<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

The smartphone application currently being piloted by traffic officers may present opportunities in the future to you and the local authorities you work with as a tool for identifying litter hotspots.

In a similar regard, Keep Britain Tidy has a smartphone application 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 offers an opportunity to collaborate with your

local authority to identify and tackle litter hotspots. It may also enable the creation of a 'litter hotspot' database to facilitate more responsive and targeted litter clearing.

■ Consistent measurement and data logging of litter

The first aspect of litter measurement relates to customer satisfaction, and what visibly constitutes an unacceptable quantity of litter. For this reason we have standards of cleanliness to maintain, as given in the [Code of practice on litter and refuse](#)

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

There is always a concern that immediately after undertaking litter clearing activities on a section of our network to bring it up to Grade A standard further littering will occur, and this also makes the requirement to maintain the network to a Grade B standard extremely challenging with present levels of littering.

To help manage customer expectations and maintain our reputation, taking date-stamped photographs of areas before and following litter clearing will serve as evidence to show to our customers, Transport Focus and the Office of Rail and Road. You will need to talk to your local communications team about how our various online and offline channels can be

used to raise awareness of the litter issue and the effort we are putting in to tackle it. Photographic evidence will also support hotspot location validation, and the ability to data log the composition and quantity of litter.

For effective monitoring and evidence, it is important that any litter collected is quantified and data logged. The current approach involves data logging the volume of litter collected, which is determined by the number of bags collected. The ambiguity over bag size and what constitutes a full bag of litter can lead to inconsistencies in data; however, this method should be continued until a more suitable alternative has been established.

■ Education and engagement

Education and engagement are the most appropriate platforms from which to influence littering behaviour. By identifying and engaging with local organisations involved in education campaigns, we can seek to encourage positive behaviour that reduces the amount of littering. At a national level, we will continue our collaboration with Keep Britain Tidy and seek to deliver high-impact behaviour change campaigns.

It is especially important to engage with the younger generation if we are to help ingrain a culture in which littering is a socially unacceptable behaviour. Working with local authorities, you should identify opportunities and outline approaches with which to engage schools; Keep Britain Tidy provides a range of free educational materials for schools which can be downloaded from: www.keepbritaintidy.org/schoolslearningpack

We can all play an educational role by relaying the message about the negative social, environmental and economic impacts of litter to our own personal connections, who are ultimately our customers on the network.

■ Marketing and communications

As well as the range of operational tips and tools in this collaboration pack, our corporate marketing and communications activity can make a major contribution to tackling the litter problem. This includes raising awareness of how we're combatting litter so the wider public understands the scale of the issue, as well as delivering targeted 'behaviour change' campaigns to discourage littering on the network. Having a regular flow of accurate and up-to-date information from the area teams helps our communications directorate to do this job effectively. Please liaise with your regional communications manager to regularly share information and discuss any litter-related communications opportunities.

If you need help accessing this or any other Highways England information, please call **0300 123 5000** and we will help you.

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