



Title of Report:	Towards a LitterSmart Borough Litter Strategy 2021 to 2025
Committee Report Submitted To:	Environmental Services
Date of Meeting:	14th September 2021
For Decision or For Information	Decision

Linkage to Council Strategy (2021-25)	
Strategic Theme	Healthy and Engaged Communities and Climate Change and Our Environment.
Outcome	The development of a Litter Strategy.
Lead Officer	Director of Environmental Services

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	
Included in Current Year Estimates	NO
Capital/Revenue	
Code	
Staffing Costs	

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 This report is in response to Members Notice of Motion to create a Litter Strategy for Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Litter is an ongoing environmental challenge for Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council. It has a negative impact on the aesthetic beauty of the borough and its natural habitats. Litter impacts both residents and visitors experience of the area.
- 2.2 Council spends c £2.4million annually on services relating to litter and street cleansing. Reducing littering in our Borough requires best practice in education, engagement, enforcement and infrastructure.
- 2.3 This Litter Strategy identifies the legislation, behaviour change, communication requirements necessary to make a significant difference within our Borough through the LitterSMART action plan.
- 2.4 The Strategy has been compiled by our inhouse officers (primarily through our Environmental Resource Officer (ERO) Team) in order to create buy-in from all our internal stockholders.

3.0 Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that the Environmental Services Committee recommends to approve the draft Litter Strategy 2021-2025 and proceed with a 12week public consultation period.

Towards a LitterSmart Borough

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council's

Litter Strategy 2021 to 2025



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FOR CONSULTATION

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. Litter impacts both residents and visitors experience of the area.

There are many causes of littering - behaviour, infrastructure, strategy, effectiveness of messaging or enforcement, understanding of the impact, societal changes. Littering is not an issue that we can tackle alone.

For these reasons Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council are committed to reducing litter. As outlined in the corporate plan Councils themes include 'Healthy and Engaged Communities' and 'Climate Change and Our Environment'.

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council spends c £2.4million annually on services relating to litter and street cleansing. Some of this expenditure is avoidable – if no litter was dropped, no fly tipping occurred and there was no dog fouling.

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.

While Council provides regular kerbside household bin collections, 11 Household Recycling Centres and a bulky household collection service, nearly two-thirds of fly-tipping involves household waste.

Every day around 1,400 plastic bottles are littered around our Borough. There are 1,300 disposable coffee cups being littered every day in Causeway Coast and Glens 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; behaviour which we want 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 three areas of outstanding natural beauty encompassing Binevenagh, the Causeway Coast and the Glens of Antrim.



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 have responsibility for managing litter in the borough. Key pieces of legislation that direct the Council's functions regarding street cleansing is 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 aims to reduce litter through education, encouraging responsible disposal and supporting local communities, to clear litter promptly and enforce when necessary.

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, who routinely dispose of litter responsibly. We want to mobilise our whole community to take personal and collective action to reduce, and ultimately eliminate, littering in our Borough. In addition, we want to clear up incidents of littering promptly and use our enforcement powers where necessary.

5.0 Changing Behaviour

Improving or changing behaviour with regards to littering will require a multi-faceted approach. Communications to reduce litter dropping. Collaborations between community, social and statutory organisations to change attitudes towards the dropping of litter and how it affects residents and the perception of communities.

Reducing littering will require behaviour change in the one in five people who admit to dropping litter. We want to make using the bin, or holding on to litter until you can properly dispose of it, the norm. Combined with enforcement and infrastructure, education and engagement of our community are key.

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



Education and awareness, combined with enforcement and infrastructure, are key to behaviour change. Our residents and visitors need to understand the impact of littering, the cost to clean it up, danger to pets, wildlife and farm animals, the pollution it causes to our land, rivers and seas and 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. Some messaging home from school to those with children may also encourage behaviour change.



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 and many schools and community groups are carrying out litter picks around our Borough.

Litter picks have already been carried out on many of our beaches, towns and villages in the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area where hundreds of bags of rubbish have been collected, some of which have been washed ashore, thrown out of car windows or just discarded carelessly by a small number of people. The **LitterSmart** section of our **LiveSmart** story map not only encourages the public to be part of the solution – which many groups, schools and businesses are and it raises awareness of the harmful effects of litter. The story map and 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:

- Work with colleagues and external agencies to run anti-litter campaigns
- Support our community to carry out clean-ups including advising on groups insurance requirements
- Encourage young people to care about their local area
- Support schools to raise awareness of litter
- Encourage businesses to work with us and customers to deal with local litter
- Ask catering establishments to stock products which will reduce litter
- Research new ways to encourage more recycling and reducing litter
- Target offenders through education, nudge signage and enforcement

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

We have developed a range of interactive workshops 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 is litter, where it happens, why we shouldn't litter, the damage and expense 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.

8.0 Cleaning up the Borough

We will:

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

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 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 to be paid within 14 days (or £50 if paid within 10 days) or is liable on summary conviction to a maximum fine of level 3 on the standard scale (£1000)

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 place 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 to be paid within 14 days (or £50 if paid within 10 days) or is liable on summary conviction to a maximum fine of level 4 on the standard scale (£2500)

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 or 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 and 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 blitz - Carry out 4 scheduled enforcement initiatives per year focusing on problem areas with a view to issuing Fixed Penalty Notices. This will involve all available staff patrolling an identified problem area to detect and action offences.
- Focus on town centres - Provide focused enforcement patrols in town centres where litter is commonly dropped. Offenders will be dealt with initially by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice.
- 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
- 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 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

10.0 Monitoring and Review

- Make our performance and information accessible via Council reports and by publishing relevant information through websites and/or social media
- Design and carry out training to enable staff to self-assess performance during daily monitoring of work
- Carry out customer surveys
- Monitor complaints for trends or local issues
- Publish key indicators to use as evaluation

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11.0 LitterSmart Action Plan

Stakeholder	Objectives	Message content	Delivery methods	By when
Cafés	Reduce take-out coffee cup littering	Promote reusable coffee cups, avoid SUP, receive discount	Posters promoting SmartCup in cafés	November 2021
Cafés	Reduce take-out clutter litter	Promote reusable cutlery and alternatives to SUP	Via CaféSmart audits	December 2025
Cafés	Increase number of CaféSmart cafés by 10	Promote CaféSmart audits	Interactive map, social media	Annual
Schools	All schools to sign up to anti-litter policy/pledge	Clear anti-litter policy/pledge	Down-loadable anti-litter policy/pledge	March 2022
Schools	To engage 20 schools in anti-litter presentations	Impact of litter on local and marine environment & wildlife/animals	Presentations in school	Annual
Schools	Support 20 schools to run litter clean-ups	Support available – litter pickers, bags, collection	Presentations, direct contact, Eco Schools	Annual
Schools	Increase number of PlasticSmart schools by 5	What are Single Use Plastics? How can we reduce them?	PlasticSmart presentations	Annual
Groups	Increase tonnes of litter collected by groups by 10% OR Support 30 groups to run clean-ups	Support groups by making litter pickers, bags, collection available	Website, social media	Annual
Groups (adult)	Engage 10 groups in anti-litter presentations	Impact on local & marine environment,	Presentations to adult groups	Annual

		financial costs, spoiling pristine beaches/environment		
Groups (child & young people)	Engage 20 groups in anti-litter presentations	Impact of litter on local and marine environment & wildlife/animals	Presentations to child & young people groups	Annual
Groups	Show public opposition to littering (Climate Justice type protests)	Littering is anti-social, offensive, dangerous and expensive. Stop it!	Street protests	December 2025
Eco Schools	Increase number of Eco Schools	Promote Eco Schools programme with focus on litter & waste	Advice, presentations, assessment	Annual
Street Cleansing Crews	Target schools, groups and businesses in particularly bad areas	Feedback from crews	Offer posters, presentations and clean-up support	Quarterly
Street Cleansing Crews	Reduce obstructed routes	Crews can't clean obstructed routes	Small flyer for windscreens of vehicles	Ongoing
Enforcement Team	Reduce/monitor number of dog fouling and fly tipping complaints	Officers will investigate if you keep us informed	Website, social media, bin stickers, presentations	Annual
Enforcement Team	Increase/decrease number of fixed penalties issues by 10%	When we catch you littering, you will be fined	Presentations, website, social media, presentations	Annual
IT Team	Formalise clean-up groups	Area, times, key contact, accessibility	Interactive map, website, WhatsApp	February 2022
Community	Respond to litter and fly tipping as fast as possible through	Encourage public to report littering and fly tipping	Publicise dedicated number & email on our website, on	Sept 2021

	creation of dedicated email and phone number		bins and during presentations	
Community	Reduce litter	Raise awareness with public of fines issued, cost of littering, tonnes of litter cleaned up	Presentations, websites, social media, media	Annual
Community	To clean our whole coastline	Keep our coast litter free	Support and map clean-up to cover whole coastline	Ongoing
Community	Respond as promptly as possible to overflowing and damaged bins	Ask public to phone in or email overflowing and damaged bins	Sticker on bins	March 2022
Community	Install 3 x Two Minute Beach Clean boards	Two minute beach cleans have been show to reduce litter on beaches by 61%	Two Minute Beach Clean board	June 2024
Community	Reduce littering of Single Use Plastics	Help people understand what Single Use Plastics are and how to avoid them	Website, social media, presentations, CaféSmart audits, CupSmart posters	Annual
Community	Increase beach litter picks	Take part in the Beach Bucket Challenge	Information and equipment at participating venues	Ongoing
Community	Reduce fly tipping by 10%	Promote bulky household collection and HRCs	Website, social media, signs, presentations	Annual
Community	Reduce littering among 18 to 34 year olds.	Make using a bin the norm.	Targeted social media	Ongoing

Drivers	Reduce littering from vehicles	Rural roads are difficult to clean up	Flyer distributed at MOT test centres and take-away outlets	May 2022
Dog walkers and Dog Licencing Team	Reduce dog fouling	Bagged dog foul can go in any bin	Bin stickers on dog walking routes	May 2022
Dog walkers and Dog Licencing Team	Sign up 50 people to Green Dog Walkers* scheme	Clean up after your dog	Green dog collars, dog foul bags, pledge sign-up	July 2024
Dog walkers and Dog Licencing Team	Increase number of dog walkers picking up plastic litter	Sign up to Paws on Plastic* and pick up 2 pieces of plastic when you're walking	Email flyer via dog registration service	Ongoing
Smokers	Reduce cigarette litter	Keep your ugly butts off our streets	Stickers on butt bins	December 2025
Smokers	Reduce cigarette litter	Can be amended but linked to cigarette litter	Install 4 cigarette ballot bins* in town centres	December 2025
Gum chewers	Reduce chewing gum litter	Bin your gum	Stickers on bins, special gum bins	December 2024
Translink	Reduce litter and chewing gum litter outside bus/train stations	Use the bins	Signs, stickers, messages on electronic boards	December 2022
Business	Help retail and businesses understand the importance of litter free environment.	Litter can put consumers off shopping.	Encourage customers to use a bin.	Annual

Business	Encourage litter picking of premises and surrounds area.	Customers are attracted to litter-free and clean environment.	Encourage litter picks.	Ongoing
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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 for each team

Operations Department

Environmental Resource Officers (EROs)

Enforcement

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