



NATIONAL LITTER AND FLYTIPPING STRATEGY

CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Introduction to Scottish Environment LINK

Scottish Environment LINK is the forum for Scotland's voluntary environment community, with over 40 member bodies representing a broad spectrum of environmental interests with the common goal of contributing to a more environmentally sustainable society.

Its member bodies represent a wide community of environmental interest, sharing the common goal of contributing to a more sustainable society. LINK provides a forum for these organizations, enabling informed debate, assisting co-operation within the voluntary sector, and acting as a strong voice for the environment. Acting at local, national and international levels, LINK aims to ensure that the environmental community participates in the development of policy and legislation affecting Scotland.

LINK works mainly through groups of members working together on topics of mutual interest, exploring the issues and developing advocacy to promote sustainable development, respecting environmental limits. This consultation response was written by LINK's Aquaculture Subgroup.

Response

Litter

Objective 1 - Understand litter perceptions and behaviour to allow targeted approaches to be developed .

1. (a) Do you support the proposed action to conduct research to understand the full range of influences on littering behaviours (action 1.1)? Yes

It is imperative we fully understand the issues that drive litter and littering behaviour, and use the research and data gathered to develop a range of effective solutions. However, we would also urge Government to focus research solely where specific research gaps are identified. The consultation document does not refer to existing research – and there must be some – and we are keen that 'the need for research' does not unnecessarily delay next steps. Additionally, can we note that there often is a focus on initial research to understand the issues but there is less focus on implementing interventions and independently assessing their effectiveness (and tracking this over time).

Objective 2 - Develop and adopt a shared approach between Scottish Government, local authorities, public agencies and the third sector, to litter prevention and behaviour change across Scotland

2. (a) Do you support the proposed action to develop and adopt a national anti-littering campaign (action 2.1) YES

We support an anti-littering campaign to sit alongside policy and regulatory initiatives such as banning specific items and EPR which drive a transition to a more circular economy with the main aim of reducing the prevalence



of single-use items, requiring and incentivising reusable systems and fundamentally changing the way we produce, use and waste materials. There is little evidence that behaviour change campaigns work in isolation.

Littering is ultimately the consequence of individual behaviour driven in part by long-term, large scale social trends, such as our attitudes to consumption and a more 'on the go' lifestyle. To really fix this problem in Scotland, system change is required with a wholesale transition to a circular economy. We must champion reduce and reuse behaviour, moving up the waste hierarchy.

Large-scale behaviour change campaigns play a part in this – the changes achieved in our society over the past few decades, such as smoking in public places, and drink driving, have been preceded by sustained national level campaigning with consistent messaging rolled out over a generation which is necessary to embed behaviour change at this scale.

59% of respondents in the Keep Scotland Beautiful Scottish Litter Survey (2021) indicated strong support for education and awareness campaigns for tackling littering. Once embedded and easily recognisable, this messaging could be adapted to underpin campaign activity at a regional/local level or focused on a specific problem. We would want to see the effectiveness of such a campaign tracked and evaluated through collecting and analysing baseline and subsequent data.

In addition to the partners identified, it is important to involve the private sector to ensure they are invested in the aims of the campaign and play their part in litter prevention. The campaign should link to policy initiatives aiming to reduce single-use packaging and other problematic issues and be paid for through extended producer responsibility scheme fees.

3. Which topics should be a priority to address by behaviour change interventions?

The impact of litter on nature and wildlife. Litter causes harm to wildlife and nature on terrestrial and aquatic habitats. With 90% of marine plastic litter coming from Scottish littering on land¹ and estimates that 23 million tonnes entered the marine environment in 2016 alone², messaging around source to sea including rivers, canals, lakes and ponds would be vital. Understanding where litter can end up and the negative impact it can have on different habitats will be key for buy-in from multiple sectors and regions.

The cost of clearing up litter is substantial and ultimately paid for through our taxes which could be spent on other things if there was less litter.

The effect on local communities and economies. When places become heavily littered it affects community pride as well as opportunities for visitor based enterprises. The presence of existing litter is strongly predictive of littering behaviour. If a place is already highly littered, people are much more likely to litter than if they are in a place that's clean or free of litter³.

Roadside Litter - Litter discarded on roadsides is a particular problem because of how difficult, dangerous and costly it is to access and clean up. Roadside litter threatens the strength of Scotland's rich tourism sector; scenery and landscapes are the most important factors that motivate people to visit Scotland, and 91% of Scots⁴ believe that roadside litter creates a negative impression of Scotland. Current legislation is not effective in

¹ <https://bit.ly/3KkKRDR>

² <https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/science.aba3656>

³ <https://bit.ly/3DwZ2DW>

⁴

<https://www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/sites/default/files/Rapid%20Evidence%20Review%20of%20Littering%20Behaviour%20and%20Anti-Litter%20Policies.pdf>



preventing littering behaviours on roadsides, which should be addressed in the forthcoming Circular economy bill.

Visitor management - The sector both contributes to litter but also relies, in part, on litter free scenery. Tourism is an important part of Scotland's economy, and it is therefore important that local environmental quality is maintained. We therefore believe that visitor management should be a target of behaviour change interventions.

Product Specific – a number of particular products need to be addressed by behaviour change interventions (alongside bans or policies to disincentivise use or littering):

- Smoking related litter – Keep Scotland Beautiful found 63.5% of surveyed sites in 2020/21 with smoking related litter; this is the highest recorded level in ten years. Their survey of the Clyde⁵ found cigarettes to be most littered item along the river Clyde. The Marine Conservation Society's Great British Beach Clean 2021 data showed 9.4 cigarettes were found per 100m of Scottish beach and were in the top 10 items which is why the Marine Conservation Society along with ASH Scotland and Keep Scotland Beautiful have called for a ban on single use plastic filters⁶.
- Soft plastics – Keep Scotland Beautiful found 42.8% of surveyed sites had presence of confectionary litter. Their survey of the Clyde Snack packets were the second most littered item along the River Clyde. Marine Conservation Society's Great British Beach Clean 2021 data showed that plastic packets came in at 3rd place with an average of 19.4 pieces found per average 100m.
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – Keep Scotland Beautiful found more than 2 items counted for every km transect surveyed. Data from the Marine Conservation Society's 2021 Great British Beach Clean shows volunteers found PPE on 33 percent of the 129 beaches surveyed in Scotland.
- Other commonly observed items including packaging – drinks litter 38.9%; fast food 17.6%

We would like to note that different topic priorities are likely to vary between locations and age-group.

4. Is there a need to develop a standard definition for litter that can be used across Scotland? YES

Objective 3 - Improve our understanding of the sources, amount and composition of litter

5. (a) Do you support the following proposed actions to:

Action 3.1: Review available litter data and reach an agreement between stakeholders on a common approach to data collection? YES

We are supportive of an action to review available litter data and reach an agreement between stakeholders on a common approach to data collection. We know that we need to measure to manage. LINK member Keep Scotland Beautiful has coordinated a national local environmental quality audit for 18 years; providing training, validation of results, reports and a networking forum. The data collected has been used since 2004 to provide a set of indicator data to build up a national picture and trends for local environmental quality. The transition of the way KSB currently collect data to a new Litter Monitoring System continues to progress, providing a new digital platform, utilising spatial analysis and improving the ability to share and relate data sets. The Marine Conservation Society has run the Citizen Science project Beachwatch for nearly 30 years to monitor litter levels

⁵ <https://www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/media/1568879/upstream-battle-clyde-phase-2-report.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.mcsuk.org/news/ban-single-use-plastic-cigarette-filters/>



on beaches throughout the UK harnessing the enthusiasm and dedication of thousands of volunteers. The methodology used is in line with the OSPAR beach litter monitoring guidelines. Due to the longevity, legacy and ongoing commitment of the Beachwatch project to UK and OSPAR monitoring, the method of beach litter data collection would not be able to be drastically changed. We would therefore recommend that any new terrestrial-based data collection methodology is developed to ensure that the datasets can be comparable for analysis.

Action 3.2: Identify commonly littered items and litter hotspots and work with local authorities to develop targeted interventions? YES

Gathering high-quality data is crucial in helping us to identify drivers of our litter problem, where the problem is worst and what effective solutions may be. Data collection and constant review uncovers trends that can be addressed through campaigns specific to problems and local areas. As we move towards future Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes, where producers pay for the costs of correct management of their products when they become waste, we will need to know what products are being littered and not reused, recycled or repurposed. We also know that local environmental quality is particularly poor in more deprived neighbourhoods, and that street cleanliness in more urban local authorities is generally somewhat lower than in more rural ones. Cross-referencing LEAMS and SIMD data enables a more detailed understanding of issues. This helps us know how best to target action aimed at tackling litter and improving local environmental quality.

The Marine Conservation Society has multiple data sharing agreements set up with various Scottish Local Authorities, public bodies, and academic institutions as well as the Scottish Government itself. Once a data sharing agreement has been signed the data is provided free of charge to enable relevant interventions based on the Beachwatch data as evidence. For example, Scottish Water have a data sharing agreement set up with us and use the data to help identify hot spots of sewage related debris to target local action, feed into national campaigns and provide evidence for future investment. Marine Conservation Society would welcome setting up data sharing agreements with any Local Authority or public body that could use their data for local interventions.

Action 3.3: Increase the use of citizen science to support data levels and composition of litter? YES

Citizen science is a great engagement tool and can help people connect with the issue of litter and littering behaviour. It also helps to demonstrate that the issue is a concern at the community level, encourages ownership and strengthens the ability of communities to confidently engage with local authorities, businesses and other stakeholders. Citizen science should not be seen as an 'easy' or 'cheap' answer to monitor litter. It should be appropriately funded and supported through a comprehensive Extended Producer Responsibility Scheme.

LINK members are involved in running relevant citizen science data gathering. For example, the Marine Conservation Society organise Beachwatch which provides the largest known data set of beach litter for Scotland. It would make sense to roll out the project into areas where there are data gaps. We would also welcome a compatible terrestrial based version that can be analysed alongside Beachwatch data to demonstrate the interventions needed to prevent litter entering inland waters, addressing its impact in these habitats and preventing it reaching the sea where it is harder to collect.

We also welcome the clear ties to the Marine Litter Strategy and would recommend any litter database is shared or connected to the two strategies so both marine and terrestrial litter can be analysed in the round. This is important to ensure that all litter data is systematically recorded in both inland waters and coastal locations in a complimentary way. It would also ensure that all the data contributes to overall litter analysis and policy development and does not fall through any gaps between the two strategies.



6. What would encourage increased participation in citizen science data collection?

We would recommend referring to the 10 principles of Citizen Science paper by Robinson L.D. et al (2018) during the design or review of any Citizen Science Project⁷

In designing a new project we would recommend involving the public in all aspects of project design and as early as possible - including setting the scientific question and collaborating with scientists to create methodologies that are both easy to carry out and robust enough to collect credible data. It is also vital to carry this through to any scientific reporting and writing with appropriate collaboration and credit given to the citizen scientists themselves.

We would also recommend high levels of effective communication and sharing with participants throughout the entire project. There should be particular focus on sharing the scientific context and project question with open and honest feedback about the results provided in an accessible way.

Focus must also be given to the fact that most Citizen Scientists will be volunteering their time and effort to the project. The data collection should be as fun and easy to take part in as possible which can be aided with accessible training resources and engaging web content.

It is important to recognise that developing and implementing local interventions that build on citizen science requires a source of funding that is often beyond the scope of local authorities and communities.

Objective 4 - Encourage a shared approach to services that will effectively support litter prevention

7. (a) Do you support the proposed actions to:

Action 4.1: Review of CoPLaR (2018) and its implementation by duty holders? YES

We are supportive of a review of the purpose and operational function of CoPLaR (2018), and how this could be translated into a user-friendly framework that allows the general public to hold duty bodies accountable whilst also enabling local authorities to align their services with CoPLaR criteria. A review must therefore examine who CoPLaR is for and how it can best function, rather than an examination of the criteria within the CoPLaR statutory document. There is a need for clear and consistent application of CoPLaR across duty bodies as current application lacks a transparent and joined-up approach.

Action 4.2: Explore the use of flexible and innovative interventions to support litter prevention and removal?
YES

We welcome the use of flexible and innovative interventions as well as increased collaboration. This has been tried on a very local scale - for example with regards to different kinds of bin infrastructure and nudge initiatives. We would recommend impact analysis and reviews for each intervention to inform scaling or investment to the interventions with the biggest impacts on reducing litter. The aim should be to embed sustainability into delivery with a focus on long-term activity that is backed by sustained spending over a longer period of time.

We would encourage collaboration between stakeholders involved in both the Marine and the Terrestrial Litter Strategies to ensure best practise can be shared and supported. Innovative projects such as the Beachwatch

⁷ <https://www.sei.org/publications/ten-principles-citizen-science/>



Bute beach cleaning bench project should be expanded out to other areas and support for the removal of collected litter and the infrastructure required should again be provided through an EPR scheme⁸.

Action 4.3: Establish an action focused group to encourage collaboration and share best practice between local authorities, national parks and other duty bodies? YES

In general we are supportive of any action that encourages duty bodies, local authorities, national parks, and other organisations to collaborate together and engage in dialogue. No one organisation alone can deliver the action required to tackle the challenges we face. It is important that any action focused groups established have a clear rationale and be adequately resourced so as to deliver a shared approach to services that is both strategic and consistent in outlook. This should be accompanied by an audit and rationalisation of any existing groups / projects to ensure efficiency. This would ensure a long-term focus on and commitment to the prevention of littering and other related issues.

8. Please provide examples of flexible or innovative interventions that have or have not worked well.

Policy interventions such as Deposit Return Schemes are known as one of the most effective ways to change behaviour. As well as the upcoming Scottish scheme for bottles and cans this intervention can be applied to other items such as cups and in specific settings such as festivals.

A number of other examples are provided in consultation responses from individual LINK members.

Developing and delivering any intervention carries substantial financial costs and therefore require to be supported in a sustained manner in order to see the kinds of successful outcomes that are needed to tackle the looming litter crisis. Interventions should be backed by education, sustained generational anti-littering campaigns, and an effective enforcement system.

9. How can increased collaboration and information sharing across local authorities, national parks and other duty bodies be achieved?

The importance of a reinvigorated approach to sharing information across networks cannot be understated. Dedication to existing networks, particularly in cleansing services demonstrates the need and enthusiasm for partnership building and sharing best practice. Collaboration needs to link local authorities, duty bodies and other organisations with local communities, to encourage collaboration and to identify relevant prevention techniques tailored to the local area. Members recommend following a similar model to the Marine Litter Strategy Steering Group which was set up with key stakeholders delivering actions within the strategy, meeting several times a year to discuss progress and encourage collaboration. Updates were shared via email as well as face to face and online meetings and were useful to spot opportunities to work together.

Objective 5 - Empower community groups to take action

10. (a) Do you support the proposed actions to:

Action 5.1: Create a national litter hub to provide information to community groups? YES

⁸ <https://www.scottish-islands-federation.co.uk/new-project-to-tackle-marine-litter-at-beachwatch-bute/>



The creation of a national litter hub to provide information and advice to community groups is a crucial part of tackling litter and littering behaviour. Such hubs can sign post people to existing networks and resources such as those provided by the Marine Conservation Society⁹. Through Keep Scotland Beautiful's 'Clean Up Scotland'¹⁰, the growing network of Community Clean Up Hubs have all been able to access information, guidance and support from the project team and each other. It is essential that a National Litter Hub acts as a link between the national level marketing campaign and the locally implemented interventions and activities across communities.

Action 5.2: Create a community-focused litter education programme? YES

Although most people have opinions about litter, there is still real confusion about the facts, the legislation, and the simple solutions to make it easy for people to do the right thing. A community-focused litter education programme to support individuals and communities to fully understand the scale of the challenge and the role they can play in monitoring and tackling it is needed. Learning shouldn't be confined to the classroom, it should be embedded in informal settings in community groups across the country so that every member of society, young or old can access and benefit from it. Several LINK members have established resources and experience of delivering such learning including Marine Conservation Society, Keep Scotland Beautiful, Whale and Dolphin Conservation. Please see their responses for details.

11. What advice, information and support should be included in a national litter hub?

Based on LINK members work to support communities to take action on litter and littering across Scotland over the last two decades, we have a good idea of what a 'national litter hub' might look like. This would be an online hub open to anyone looking for support in their litter picking activities along with support for litter prevention. This support might include the following:

- Information - The law and enforcement regulations; who is responsible for what; data on the problems across Scotland; details to report litter instances to duty bodies; contacts for useful agencies.
- Resources - Litter picking guidance; posters, bin stickers, car stickers, education packs with ideas for workshops with kids; document templates; online learning to understand behaviour change and nudge campaigning; guidance and links to funding opportunities
- Case Studies and Publications - Case studies on interventions and local trials; reports from campaigns and research; ideas for trying; litter pick/clean Up 'next steps'
- Network and Contacts - Opportunity to talk with others and share ideas; links to joining active groups
- Citizen Science: - Information on the importance of gathering data; how to use collected data to identify local problems, behaviours and monitor interventions; accessible overview of what is collected

12. What topics should be included in a community-focused litter education programme?

A litter education programme should complement education around recycling and waste management within the context of the circular economy, and also link with other broader initiatives including the twin emergencies of climate change and biodiversity. There is already established content that can be used, for example the

⁹ <https://www.mcsuk.org/what-you-can-do/join-a-beach-clean/useful-guides-and-resources/>

¹⁰ <https://www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/community-and-place/clean-up-scotland/>



Marine Conservation Society pack¹¹, and Keep Scotland Beautiful are developing an innovative community-focused education programme 'Litterate'¹².

We would recommend a focus on how the messages of a circular economy like repair and reuse link to littering as this appears to be a gap in current available education resources. With many resources currently available for Primary Schools we would also recommend a focus on secondary schools and the wider community as part of this community education programme. It would also be important to link the other actions in this strategy, such as the research into littering behaviour, to this programme. Greater success could also be achieved if specific resources were created linked to specific issues so communities could make it relevant to their experience and situation. Finally, we would highlight the important of co-designing these resources and the whole programme with stakeholders from the target audiences.

Objective 6: Develop a more effective enforcement model

13. (a) Do you support proposed actions on enforcement of litter offences to:

Action 6.1: Conduct an evidence review of barriers to enforcement? YES

Action 6.2: Explore raising current fixed penalty notice amounts?

Action 6.3: Explore potential alternative penalties to monetary fixed penalties?

Action 6.4: Create powers to issue fixed penalty notices to registered keepers of a vehicle from which littering occurs (This action was consulted on for the Circular Economy Bill. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 crisis, the Bill was not introduced.) YES

When this action was consulted upon for the previous Circular Economy Bill it was found that of the more than 50% of Scottish local authorities that responded to a KSB survey, 100% were in favour of a change to the legislation which would allow their enforcement officers to tackle littering from cars more effectively.

Objective 7 - Improve the consistency of enforcement practices

Action 7.1: Review and further develop guidance on enforcement best practices and seek agreement for this to be voluntarily adopted by local authorities and national parks.

14. (a) Do you support the proposed action to review and further develop guidance on enforcement best practices (action 7.1)? YES

We are supportive of a review and consultation on the current guidance in place across local authorities but remain mindful that effective enforcement is a challenge. We believe that further guidance and training for local authorities and national parks on best practice in relation to enforcement would be useful to ensure consistency.

(c) What should be included in this guidance?

We recognise that some local authorities are challenged by changing priorities and changing budgets. This can lead to fewer enforcement officers or to officers whose duties are expanded. This results in less time spent in

¹¹ <https://www.mcsuk.org/what-you-can-do/fun-learning/>

¹² <https://www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/news/march-2022/glasgow-city-council-the-first-to-trial-our-innovative-community-focused-education-programme/>



direct enforcement. The guidance should enable provision for current enforcement officers to attend refresher training courses and for new officers to attend training specific to their duties.

Flytipping

Question 15 - (a) Do you support the proposed action to conduct research to understand behaviour that leads to flytipping (action 8.1)? Yes

We support research to understand behaviour that leads to fly tipping and would also recommend looking at cases of domestic or individual fly tipping separately to 'commercial' fly tipping. Fly-tipping is likely to occur on a much less frequent basis per individual than littering and motivations often differ. Commercial fly-tipping is a very different issue in the sense that acts are largely driven by economic savings through disposal fee avoidance or making commercial profit.

Question 16

(a) Do you agree with the proposed actions to:

- Action 9.1: Develop a sustained, evidence based, national anti-flytipping behaviour change campaign? Yes
- Action 9.2: Create a single information point containing advice on disposal of commonly flytipped materials? Yes

(b) Please give reason(s) for your answer. Are there topics that should be a priority to address in this campaign?

We support the development of a national anti-flytipping behaviour change campaign and recommend that the difference between 'commercial' fly tipping and one off 'domestic' flytipping is treated separately. The research in the previous action should be used in the development of this campaign.

We would also support the creation of a single and accessible information point containing advice and support for the responsibility disposal of commonly flytipped materials.

Question 22

(a) Do you think we should continue to use Dumb Dumpers as the national reporting tool?

(b) Please give reason(s) for your answers.

(c) What are barriers to reporting flytipping incidents that occur on private land?

(d) Who would you report flytipping to?

We recommend the continuation of a national reporting tool for fly tipping but would call for the name of the tool to be changed.



This response was compiled on behalf of LINK Marine and Economics Groups and is supported by:

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For further information contact:

Phoebe Cochrane

phoebe@scotlink.org



Scottish Environment LINK the voice for Scotland's environment



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Registered Headquarters: 13 Marshall Place, Perth, PH2 8AH

Advocacy Office: Dolphin House, 4 Hunter Square, Edinburgh, EH1 1QW