

Lewes District Council

Litter and Fly-tipping Reduction Strategy 2022 – 2027

Our Vision

To reduce littering across the district, with the vast majority of residents viewing it as totally unacceptable. Volunteer litter picking groups feel supported by the council and all residents value the council's work to tackle litter, dog fouling, fly-tipping and graffiti.

Introduction

Litter, fly-tipping, graffiti, fly-posting and dog fouling blights our streets, parks and beaches and costs thousands of pounds to clear up every year. To tackle this antisocial behaviour, we need to fully understand the problems so we will adopt a multi-agency approach working with our residents, community groups, businesses, stakeholders and other agencies and the national organisation Keep Britain Tidy.

What is litter, fly-tipping, graffiti, fly-posting and dog fouling?

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.

Fly-tipping is illegal dumping of liquid or solid waste (usually more than a black bag) on land or in water. The waste is usually dumped to avoid disposal costs.

Graffiti and fly-posting is anything that is written, sprayed or painted on public or private property without permission.

Dog fouling is where dog owners and dog walkers do not clear up after their dogs when out in the open.

What are the causes of litter, fly-tipping, graffiti and dog fouling?

The causes of litter and fly-tipping are diverse and complex and require different approaches in dealing with them effectively.

This section aims to highlight what the council understand to be the key causes:

Eating on the go: With a move to eating on the go, take-away food and drinks has seen an increase in single use packaging, bottles and food trays. In addition to dropped litter this often means litter bins fill more quickly and can over spill.

Visitors: Lewes District is a destination for tourists largely to enjoy the seafront, outdoor recreation and historic attractions. While this brings many benefits, tourists do not always have access to facilities for disposing of litter in the same way as residents, e.g. not so easy to take litter home. Tourism also supports demand for eating on the go.

Smoking: Smoking related litter is a common type of litter found on our streets. Although cigarette ends are small, by law they still count as litter.

Casual litterers: Some people think its ok to drop litter, some people don't realise what impact leaving one item can have for example a single use coffee cup left on bench.

Drugs paraphernalia: This type of litter is relatively small terms of volume and often found at 'hot' spots. It can have significant potential impact on human health, both for the public and our staff dealing with the issue.

Packaging: An increase in packaging has led to an increase in overall waste some of which ends up as litter.

Vehicles: Litter from eating on the go, smoking, unsecured loads found on roadsides, verges and laybys often. These are common locations for fly-tippers disposing of both domestic and commercial waste.

Domestic and commercial waste collections: Litter can be caused by overfilled bins, waste that is not securely contained in bags or bins, refuse sacks and open bins accessible to foxes and seagulls.

Fly-tippers: Fly-tipping is a criminal offence with the majority of Offenders knowingly depositing their waste illegally. Offenders range from commercial waste removers using lorries and vans to domestic clearances by residents of one or two household items e.g. mattresses and white goods. Not all residents are not aware of their own legal requirement to dispose of their waste responsibly and the need to check the legal credentials of any waste handlers they may use.

Graffiti: The reasons behind graffiti can be complex and can be related to other crime and disorder problems.

Fly-posting: This falls into three main categories those promoting local events such as bands playing, car boot sales mainly on lampposts, railing, street furniture or building. Posters advertising products or events of larger organisations posted by professional poster companies mainly posted on vacant buildings. In addition, posters displayed by pressure groups or political bodies posted mainly ad hoc.

Dog ownership: Most dog owners clear up dog fouling and dispose of it correctly but there remains a small minority of dog owners that either fail to clear up after their pets or clear up but fail to bin it.

What the Law says

Councils are given powers under various Acts to use enforcement. However, our approach is to be proactive and find solutions to before they occur and apply a gradual approach to enforcement in line with our enforcement policy.

For Litter

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

For Fly-tipping

Follows the same rules as for littering but with the addition of incident investigation, penalties and prosecution

For Graffiti and Fly-posting

There are a number of Acts that cover graffiti and include fly-posting where penalties can be issued: Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, Criminal Damage Act 1971 and the Town and Country Act. Local authorities are required to remove graffiti and fly-posting from public properties with priority given to the removal of offensive graffiti, that which contains words or pictures related to hate comments, extremist sentiment, anti-faith and swear words.

For Dog Fouling

Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 enables dog fouling to be controlled by way of Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) for land that is open to the air which the public have access to.

Enforcements used

Fixed Penalty Notes (FPNs). It's an offence to drop litter on land or into water that's accessible to the public even if it's private land. This applies to private land that the public can access, for example a right of way.

Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) for problems in public spaces including owners of dogs who do not clear up after their dogs.

Community Protection Notices (CPNs) requiring businesses or individuals to clear litter from around their premises and or take steps to prevent future littering.

Apply powers to keep land clear by removing abandoned vehicles, shopping trollies and certain leafleting.

Enforcement can lead to Offenders being prosecuted in a magistrates' court and fined up to £2,500.

The Council's Responsibility

Lewes District Council is a 'duty body' referred to as a litter authority and responsible for all 'relevant land' where the following applies:

Land that is open to the air on at least one side

Under the council's direct control

Publicly accessible (with or without payment)

Beaches (above the average high-water mark)

Any highway for which the council is responsible

Other 'Duty Bodies' responsible for litter on their land are: Crown authorities, educational institutions, Network Rail and rail operators, water companies and some road agencies.

For fly-tipping we carry out investigations by assessing the waste type, land type and ownership, any harm that may be caused to people, animals and the environment and arrange the safe removal of the waste. The council will work with Sussex Police the Environment Agency and East Sussex County Council and other agencies where necessary.

Meeting Our Vision and Obligations

To achieve our vision, we have reviewed our approach to dealing with litter, fly-tipping, graffiti, fly-posting and dog fouling and set out a positive and collaborative Action Plan to help us achieve this, using the following approaches:

Education and behavioural change campaigns

Partnership working

Enforcement

Efficient and effective service design and infrastructure

Our Communications will:

Use various campaigns to promote our three key messages such as:

Littering is detrimental to the environment

Promote the work of volunteer litter pickers and opportunities to get involved

The council takes swift and tough action when responding to reports of littering, fly-tipping and graffiti

The council will use the full range of communications channels at its disposal including online, PR, posters, social media, email and more.

Work in partnership with Keep Britain Tidy campaigns.

Our Engagement will:

Be a point of contact for our partners and stakeholders. Community groups are well placed and often eager to tackle litter in the area where they live, and the council supports individuals, local groups and initiatives and shares knowledge, ideas and best practice.

Work alongside our Environment First, Neighbourhood First and Homes First teams.

Continue to support local groups such as Plastic Free Seaford and Litter Free Lewes by assisting with the supply of equipment and sacks and collecting the waste after their events. The council maintains a designated website page with details of local groups who hold litter picking events.

Continue to support the Be a Responsible Angler campaign along with the National Line Recycling Scheme, LISA Sussex Anglers and the Environment Agency to reduce fishing line waste left on the beach and quay sides. Fishing pipe bins for nets and lines are located on the coast at Seaford and Newhaven.

Our Neighbourhood First team will:

Work proactively with our local community, stakeholders and our partners Sussex Police, Environment Agency and East Sussex County Council to identify 'hot' spots for fly-tipping, establish the causes and to find solutions.

Investigate incidences of littering, fly-tipping, graffiti, fly-posting and dog fouling for evidence and ensure a graduated and robust approach to enforcement in line with our Enforcement Policy.

Along with our partners we will investigate options into campaigns for checking that those operating commercial waste collections and removals within our borough hold valid Waste Carrier Licences and Waste Transfer Notes.

Work proactively with our Parks and Open Spaces team and Homes First to find solutions to reduce littering, fly-tipping, graffiti and dog fouling on council owned property and areas.

Our Environment First team will:

Follow the Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse which explains how different types of land should be kept clear.

Carry out collections and clearances efficiently to minimize vehicle emissions.

Maintain access to public bins for litter, dog waste and recycling.

Improve our dog waste bins via our new programme to replace broken or damaged dog waste bins with a combined litter and dog waste bin.

Maintain our litter and recycling bins installed to help residents and visitors to our area recycling on the go.

Work with the Town and Parish Councils who install their own public bins in their local areas.

Maintain the cleanliness of our seafronts and beaches through routine cleanings schedules keeping to the standards within the Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse.

Lewes District Council works with our partners, National Highways - formerly Highways England - and their Network Contractor, other accredited traffic management specialists and neighbouring local authorities to clear litter from the arterial routes running through the district, including the A26, A27, A259 and C7.

The A26 and A27 are maintained by National Highways' Network Contractor via a series of Lane Closures and/or Temporary Traffic Management Controls.

National Highways provide LDC with a 20-week forward plan of their activity, which is updated weekly. Our highly trained and qualified waste operatives and supervisors can use the occasions when maintenance work is undertaken to safely carry out litter picking sessions, mainly at night-time.

Before such work can be carried out, all our roads, routes and areas require their own set of Risk Assessments and Safe Systems of Working documents. This is because of their own unique layout, including amongst other factors, speed, number of lanes, roundabouts, curves, and bends that can reduce visibility. There are also seasonal and weather conditions that need to be considered, heavy rain, snow, high winds, fog all add to the difficulties with litter picking these roads.

Our roadside communications campaign has been developed to promote key anti-littering messages along the roadside using the Variable Messaging Signs (VSM) such as 'Take your litter home with you', 'Keep it clean' and 'Don't Drop Litter'. In addition, we share messages on social media about our activities which have proven popular with residents.