

**From:** Matthew Balfour, Cabinet Member Environment and Transport  
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**To:** Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee - 4 December 2015

**Subject:** Highway Operations Anti-litter

**Past Pathway of Paper:** N/A

**Future Pathway of Paper:** N/A

**Classification:** Unrestricted

**Summary:**

Litter is a problem across the county and Highway Operations has been working with the Kent Resource Partnership and the KRP Street Scene Project Group (a sub-group of KRP) on three key joint anti-litter projects; fly-tipping, high speed road litter clearance, and a county wide anti-litter campaign.

**Recommendation:**

The Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee is asked to note this report; and comment on Highway Operations continued work with the Kent Resource Partnership.

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Litter in the public realm is a problem across the country and this includes litter on the highway. As well as being unsightly and marring the appearance of the county, there is also a high cost to collect and dispose of this waste. The responsibility for waste collection and street cleansing lies with the borough/district councils whilst KCC is the disposal authority.
- 1.2 Contracts are in place for the disposal of waste collected by the districts and similar arrangements have been in place for many years and are discussed with the district councils as necessary.

## 2. Financial implications

- 2.1 The cost of clearing fly-tipping across Kent is in the region of £1.2m. In the six months from April to September 2015 the cost to KCC Highway Operations of clearing fly-tipping from the carriageway was £82,000.

### 3. Kent Resource Partnership (KRP)

3.1 The Kent Resource Partnership is a partnership between the district councils and KCC which as a group looks at ways to improve waste management in Kent. The KRP Street Scene Project Group (a sub-group of KRP) has been set up for two years and its membership includes all 13 Kent councils, Highways England and Balfour Beatty. The group has discussed joint working initiatives on issues such as littering on the highway, fly tipping, fly posting, grass cutting, weed spraying, overgrown vegetation, graffiti removal etc. Prior to this KCC had been a part of the Clean Kent initiative. Involvement in the Project Group has provided the opportunity for Highway Operations to explore areas for joint working with the district councils and Highways England.

#### 3.2 Projects

Highway Operations involvement in the group has focused on three key areas: a county wide litter campaign; a fly tipping protocol; and joint working on litter clearance on Kent's high speed roads

3.2.1 **Litter campaign** - Supporting district councils to deliver a county wide campaign in June 2014 with regards to highway littering. The Kent Resource Partnership (KRP) Members Board had agreed the development and delivery of the '**Love Kent, Hate Litter**' initiative for 2014/15. This initiative encouraged districts, Highways England and Balfour Beatty to implement their existing plans simultaneously over 3 months in June, November and February to maximise impacts. Activities included;

- Local Radio advertising played for each of these months on Heart FM (Aim of behavioural change to those tempted to litter via their vehicles)
- Kent Districts Anti-Litter activities including deep cleans, litter picks on high speed roads, facilitating community litter picks, roadshows delivered in town centres etc.
- VMS signage promoting the 'Take Your Litter Home, Others Do #LoveKent' via KCC, Highways England and Balfour Beatty.
- Social media exposure on Kent Councils' Facebook and Twitter accounts using the #LoveKent hashtag.

3.2.2 **Fly-tipping** – Prior to March 31<sup>st</sup> 2015, the arrangements and responsibilities for the clearance of fly-tipping from the public highway across the county varied depending upon which District / Borough the material was fly-tipped in. The responsibility for the clearance of fly-tipping was determined via differing criteria such as volume, the type of waste, or the location the material was fly-tipped in.

- 3.3 This lack of clarity often resulted in confusion for the residents of Kent regarding whom they should contact to report a fly-tip, with customers being passed between authorities, and also who was then responsible for the clearance.
- 3.4 Following discussions, the members of the KRP Street Scene Project Group (SSPG) agreed to a 12-month trial of a new countywide consistent approach to fly-tipping clearance on the public highway. This clarified who has responsibility for the clearance based on where the material has been deposited, and also simplified the reporting of fly-tipping for the public, with a view to provide an improved service to the residents of Kent.
- 3.5 From April 1<sup>st</sup> 2015 all reports from the public about fly-tipping now go to the local District or Borough council in the first instance; this has improved reporting for customers and allowed accurate collection of fly-tipping data.
- 3.6 Roles & Responsibilities (KCC & District / Borough):
- All fly-tipping incidents will be reported by the public to the relevant District / Borough council in the first instance, and not KCC.
  - KCC responsibility – Those reports where the fly-tipped material is causing an obstruction of the carriageway will then be passed to Highway Operations for clearance.
  - District / Borough responsibility - Reports of fly-tipped material on the footway and verge are the responsibility of the local District / Borough council to clear.
- 3.7 During this trial the members of the KRP SSPG are meeting regularly to discuss the progress of this trial, and to monitor the clearance costs for each authority, and to improve sharing of information to assist with enforcement of fly-tipping.
- 3.8 **Enforcement**
- 3.9 In addition to the trial outlined above, KCC HTW continues to work with other authorities to prosecute fly-tipping offences. The KCC Waste Enforcement Advisor liaises with all the District / Borough councils in Kent and shares intelligence (via KCC Intelligence Unit) with them and Surrey, East Sussex, 8 London Boroughs, Police forces in Kent, Sussex, Surrey and the EA regarding cross border offences.
- 3.10 Recently there have been a number of successful fly-tipping prosecutions including one where a serial fly-tipper operating in Kent and South London was fined £15,000. Action is also currently being taken to seek approval for the installation of a covert camera re fly tipping along a highway in the Sevenoaks District.

- 3.11 **High speed roads** – Highway Operations has an annual programme for carrying out repairs on all the high speed roads in the county. Arrangements are made for the roads/lanes to be closed and highway works carried out as needed. Clearing litter on these roads is essential, particularly in the grass verges. As this is a district function, co-operation is vital so that the works can be programmed and litter clearance done at the right time.
- 3.12 In the past there have been agreements in place with some district councils which have enabled the litter to be cleared at the right time in the programme of works. However in many districts this has not been the case resulting in either the litter not being cleared or being done at the wrong time (e.g. after the grass has been cut resulting in ‘confetti’ on the road).
- 3.13 Through the SSPG, more agreements have been made with districts to have the litter cleared within the KCC programme. This year’s high speed road programme has recently been completed. The results of the trial are still being assessed and whilst there is still some work to be done to engage more effectively with some districts, there have been improvements in some districts which will be built on for the coming year(s).

#### **4. Future activity**

- 4.1 The Kent Resource Partnership is continuing its focus on joint working especially in light of funding reductions across all local authorities. On 19<sup>th</sup> November 2015 it held an Anti-Litter and Anti-Fly Tips Workshop involving all 13 authorities, Highways England, Braintree District Council as well as other representative organisations including the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE), Country Land and Business Association (CLA) and businesses such as McDonalds and KFC. The workshop provided an opportunity to exchange best practice and to identify areas of activity that the Partnership can develop in the coming year. There was a strong desire amongst those present to reinvigorate the Partnership and continue the work programme already identified and to progress new areas going forward, especially more involvement with the Kent business community and more educational and campaign work aimed at changing the behaviour of people leading to cleaner streets. One such campaign will be the ‘Clean for the Queen’ campaign being championed by Keep Britain Tidy.
- 4.2 Other areas of work identified by the SSPG include:
- Monitoring the flytipping project on the Highways and extending it to Public Rights of Way.

- Tackling the littering issues on high speed routes across Kent – further work with the districts to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of litter clearance
- A combination of joint enforcement and continued community initiatives.
- Fly posting – including a pilot project with Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council
- Grass cutting, overgrown vegetation and weed spraying –opportunities to be explored for joint working
- Graffiti removal

## 5. Conclusion

Littering across the county costs money and blights communities and can be dangerous for road users. The work that Highway Operations has done with the KRP SSPG as outlined above, has made a positive contribution toward the overall objective of addressing these problems. The joint working that has resulted has been beneficial for the residents of Kent and people who visit the county. Going forward Highway Operations will continue to work with KRP and district colleagues to share expertise, benefit from economies of scale and help shape the actions that will be taken in the coming year(s).

## 6. Recommendations

The Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee is asked to note this report; and comment on Highway Operations continued work with the Kent Resource Partnership.

## 7. Contact details

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