

Consultation National Litter Strategy

To: All Chief Executives, Main Contacts and APSE Contacts in Scotland

For information only to England, Northern Ireland and Wales

Key Issues

- Scottish Government issued a consultation on a strategy to tackle and prevent litter and flytipping
- The strategy takes forward Scottish Government's commitment to tackle litter and help create cleaner, safer communities
- Zero Waste Scotland's July 2013 research report "Scotland's Litter Problem: Quantifying the scale and cost of litter and flytipping" was used to underpin this consultation
- Scottish local authorities currently spend £45 million on the clearance of litter and flytipping each year
- APSE's performance networks service can provide local authorities with robust benchmarking data to support the implementation of local measures to tackle the problems of litter and flytipping and to share and learn from best practice across local government

1.0 Introduction

The Scottish Government issued a National Litter Strategy consultation to take forward its commitment to tackle litter and help create cleaner, safer communities. This consultation will complement the Scottish Marine Litter Strategy with both recognising the cost of litter, to both society and the environment and seeking to reduce levels by 2020. The use of litter within the strategy refers to litter and flytipping which is caused by people, dog waste, fly posting and graffiti are not directly covered. Currently Scotland spends more than £50 million on tackling the problem of litter and flytipping, with the large majority of spend coming from local authorities, £45 million on clearance, £6.5 million on enforcement and £0.86 million on education and awareness. In addition Scotland is spending at least a further £25 million on addressing wider consequences. It is also highlighted that over and above these costs, further value is being lost as approximately 80% of the litter could potentially be recycled, generating £1.2 million for Scotland's low carbon economy.

The consultation looks at a package of measures which build on existing actions and recognises the current efforts of a range of organisations including Scottish local authorities. The consultation proposes actions within three strategic directions:-

- Information: communication, education and support for business
- Infrastructure: providing/ servicing bins, product design, guidance and future funding
- Enforcement: improving the effectiveness of legislation and training

The Scottish Government wish to see the National Litter Strategy start to make a difference in Scotland from 2014 with a shift in attitudes, reductions in litter and flytipping, reduced costs and increased recycling.

The full consultation document for reference can be found at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/07/6925> and Zero Waste Scotland's research report <http://www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/LitterResearchReport%20>

2.0 Content of the Strategy

The consultation highlights a number of draft objectives which will be developed and clarified within the final version of the National Litter Strategy and are taken forward as actions within the three strategic directions. These objectives are:-

Short-term delivery: to build on existing legislation and structures to enable efficient and effective clean up and appropriate enforcement action ahead of and throughout 2014.

Medium to long-term delivery: to support greater personal and organisational responsibility (working in partnership with stakeholders to develop and communicate this, highlighting the importance of litter-free urban and rural environments).

Personal responsibility: to foster new social norms so that people appreciate that individual actions to dispose of waste responsibly (recycling where practicable) helps make our communities attractive places to live, work and invest.

Local authorities, land managers and waste management industry: through Zero Waste Scotland (ZWS) to provide targeted support to these key stakeholders, encourage partnership working (during 2014 and for long-term strategy implementation) and including infrastructure where necessary.

Business and corporate responsibility: through ZWS to engage businesses in tackling litter locally and nationally through staff training, customer engagement and product development by 2020.

Third sector and community groups: through ZWS to provide practical advice to charities, Non-Governmental Organisations and local volunteers so that efforts to tackle litter and promote recycling can be integrated into their activities and communications by 2020.

Financial: to devise interventions that provide value for money, for initial short-term investment, ahead of and during 2014, to longer-term action which will by 2020 lower costs for cleaning up litter and flytipping.

The key actions from this strategy have been grouped within the previously stated strategic directions:-

Information: communication, education and support for business

- Communicate positive behaviours throughout Scotland
- To raise awareness of litter-related issues through education resources for 3-18 year olds

- Explore the potential to update or develop online training materials to help businesses and other organisations to reduce litter associated with their activity
- Pilot a recognition scheme which provides support to businesses and other employers to ensure that their staff set a good example and are aware of the consequences of littering. I should enable employers to take the credit for participating

The consultation highlights various ways in which these action points could be achieved, including ZWS working with stakeholders to improve existing litter and flytipping communications through the development of a toolkit to allow all to update their communication materials.

Infrastructure: providing/ servicing bins, product design, guidance and future funding

- Look at how product design can help reduce litter
- Help people when they are out and about to recycle more, through ZWS support for local authorities and others with litter control responsibilities
- Work to reduce accidental littering/ wind-blown material from household and commercial waste bins, recycling containers waiting to be collected and waste collection vehicles
- Review guidance to help organisations with clean-up responsibilities to do so effectively and efficiently
- Develop a robust monitoring system, working with stakeholders to measure the impact and progress of the final strategy
- Support community action
- Focus future funding on projects that support the strategic directions and consistency of delivery
- Produce further evidence to inform Scottish Government's future approach to flytipping

These actions would include looking into the powers of local authorities under the Environmental Protection Act and reviewing the Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse (Scotland) 2006.

Enforcement: improving the effectiveness of legislation and training

- Scottish Government propose to identify suitable legislative opportunities to strengthen the Fixed Penalty System in Scotland
- Increase the Fixed Penalties for litter to £80 and for flytipping to £200
- Review training for litter enforcement officers
- Scottish Government will also work with organisations that have enforcement powers to identify whether future changes to the enforcement system would support them in requiring individuals and businesses to take responsibility for the disposal of their waste

These actions offer the opportunity for local authorities to receive more powers to better manage litter and flytipping, through a strengthened Fixed Penalty system with possibly the ability to offer an early payment discount. The consultation also suggests that the authority to issue fixed penalties be extended to National Parks and other public bodies.

3.0 Comment and Conclusion

The consultation seeks to significantly improve Scotland's litter and flytipping problem and in turn help reduce the unwelcome wider implications on areas such as health and wellbeing, crime and property values.

APSE welcomes Scottish Government's engagement with local authorities throughout all stages of the development of the National Litter Strategy. It is vital that local authorities are continued to be engaged and are kept closely involved especially in areas of raising awareness of litter related issues in the young, through Education and Social Work departments. Data collected via the APSE Performance networks service highlighted that 24% of Scottish local authorities returning data in 2011/12 had undertaken some form of litter awareness education within their schools.

The consultation also highlights the need to support community action. Scottish local authorities already currently play a pivotal role in supporting local community action in the fight against litter. Examples of this include the "Clean Up Perth & Kinross Campaign" and Falkirk Council's "Community Litter Plan 2012 – 2015". It is important to highlight the commitment already being shown by local authorities to help meet the actions within this area of the strategy.

APSE's Performance networks service can also support local authorities through the measurement of trends and impacts and progress of the Strategy, allowing local authorities to utilise existing data sources which in turn would help reduce any additional levels of reporting which may be required. Performance networks currently collects data for street cleansing including litter, flytipping, dog waste, fly posting and graffiti. Information already collected from Scottish participating authorities highlights an increase of 23% in the average number of litter bins per 1000 head of population, with an increase from 6.79 (2010/11) to 8.35 (2011/12). Data collected also highlights that the average number of fixed penalty notices for litter has risen from 193 in 2010/11 to 271 in 2011/12*, an increase of just over 40% which suggests a much higher focus on enforcement action by Scottish local authorities. This is particularly relevant when you consider that across UK participating authorities the average number of incidents of flytipping/ dumping has increased by almost 7% from 2,026 in 2010/11 to 2,164 in 2011/12.

APSE can provide local authorities with various levels of support within **performance networks** including training on data collection and the effective use of performance information within your organisation; for more information on this and other aspects of benchmarking please contact the APSE Performance Networks team on performance.networks@apse.org.uk

Finally, Zero Waste Scotland will be presenting on "Towards a litter free Scotland" at the next Scottish Parks, Grounds & Street services advisory group which will be taking place at Chatelherault Country Park, Hamilton on Wednesday 27th November 2013. Please contact the APSE Scotland office on 01698 459 051 should you wish to attend this meeting.

Louise McMillan
Principal Advisor

* Excludes one participating Scottish local authority's figures due to a significant variance in data which would require further clarification