

# North East Lincolnshire Council Litter Strategy

# 2021



# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Background

In 2020, in response to the early publication of the 2018 National Waste Strategy (Our Waste, Our Resources: A Strategy for England) by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), North East Lincolnshire Council (NELC) published its Waste Strategy. As a Unitary authority, NELC is responsible for the management of all 'Local Authority Collected Waste'. The 2020 NELC Waste Strategy covered how waste collected by NELC is managed and ambitions for the future. Litter, litter bin and street collected waste form part of the waste collected by NELC. The 2020 NELC Waste Strategy highlights the role the authority plays in and the importance of collecting litter, not only to keep streets tidy but also as part of our environmental responsibility.

In April 2017, the UK government published the National Litter Strategy for England. The strategy aims to reduce litter in England and establish an anti-littering culture, with an aim to educate young people on the importance of not littering and the effects litter can have. The strategy also places a focus on engaging with local communities with an emphasis on empowering them to help tackle littering. This was brought about after a national survey found that 81% of respondents were angry and frustrated with the amount of litter in England. In response to the national litter strategy and the guidance provided by WRAP in their 'Binrastructure' guidance document, NELC has produced this litter strategy to complement its earlier 2020 Waste Strategy and provide a focused and strategic response to managing litter.

## 1.2. Purpose of the strategy

Between 2016 and 2017 there were 11,900 incidents of litter in England reported via apps (Source: DEFRA), with 744 items of litter per 100 meters of beach reported during the Great British Beach Clean. It is estimated that the cost to local authorities between 2016 and 2017 for dealing with littering was £682 million, or £29 per household. These statistics highlight the issue faced in England and the need to produce effective strategies to tackle this issue on a local level.

North East Lincolnshire (NEL) has a diverse range of areas and environments, with urban towns such as Grimsby and Immingham; the coastal town of Cleethorpes; surrounding villages to these urban and coastal areas; and the Lincolnshire Wolds which is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). In consideration of the diverse areas of NEL and the current need to tackle litter in England, this strategy details how NELC currently manages litter; the extent to which litter is an issue in our area; and planned projects to aid in tackling litter.

The strategy will set out the legal context for how NELC manages litter and what we intend to do to manage litter over the lifespan of this strategy. Context will also be provided for how current and future litter management will meet our outcomes framework and WRAP's 'binrastructure' guidance.

### **1.3. NELC's 2020 Waste Strategy**

The circular economy is central to NELC's 2020 Waste Strategy, with an emphasis on ensuring the key principle of 'resource recovery and waste management' is fulfilled. As part of our commitment, it is important to set a strategic framework for managing litter effectively to ensure that the waste produced is recovered and managed in an environmentally responsible way that adheres to the principles of a circular economy.

In NELC's 2020 Waste Strategy, six priorities were outlined as the basis for the strategy and were supported by 93.27% of respondents during a waste strategy consultation. These priorities are that NELC aims to be:

- Resilient
- Customer Friendly
- Environmentally Responsible
- Education Focused
- Collaborative
- Responsible Commissioners and Effective Contract Managers.

Our litter strategy builds on these priorities, using them as the basis for the strategic framework for managing litter in NEL.

#### 1.4. NELC's Local Outcomes Framework

In a wider context, we want North East Lincolnshire to be an attractive place to live, work, visit and invest. Our Council's priorities are underpinned by a strategic framework which sets out five high level outcomes:

- **Learning and Growing:** All people in NEL fulfil their potential through skills & learning.
- **Investing in our Future:** All people in NEL benefit from sustainable communities.
- **Vitality and Health:** All people in NEL enjoy good health & wellbeing.
- **Economy and Strength:** All people in NEL enjoy and benefit from a strong economy.
- **Safe and Secure:** All people in NEL feel safe and are safe.

The litter strategy has been commissioned to support our commitment to **sustainable communities** and a **strong economy**. The outcomes framework includes various indicators which relate to our strategies on waste management and waste related services, including clearing and deterring litter.

Built in to NELC's outcome framework is the commitment to a place-based approach to social value. Social value is defined as "outcomes and activities that will improve the quality of life and life chances of our residents and enhance the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the local area" (source: Social Enterprise UK).

Our Social Value Policy aims to:

- Involve local people and organisations in how we meet the needs of local communities through the commissioning cycle.
- Tackle disadvantage and address inequalities of health, wealth, and opportunity across the borough.
- Promote the local economy by supporting micro, small and medium sized enterprises, and the voluntary and community sector to thrive.
- Further our sustainable procurement objectives to protect and enhance the environment.

In developing our strategy, we have considered these aims and will adopt them as guiding principles when delivering our service priorities.

## 2. Legal Context

There are two key pieces of legislation that govern the control and disposal of litter. The details of these can be seen in the table below.

Legislation/Regulation	Key Details/Targets
<b>Environmental Protection Act 1990</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Made it a criminal offence to drop, throw or deposit and then leave litter.</li> <li>• A person found guilty of dropping litter can be fined up to £2500 in a magistrate’s court.</li> <li>• Places a legal responsibility on the six ‘duty bodies’ (this includes Local Authorities) to ensure that land, as far as is practicable, is kept clear of litter.</li> <li>• Section 91 states that a person who is fed up with a long-standing litter problem can use a Litter Abatement Order against those organisations listed under Section 89 (the ‘duty bodies’) if they are failing in their duty to keep that land clean.</li> </ul>
<b>Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005</b>	<p>The Act provides local authorities with the power to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issue fixed penalty notices for littering and fly tipping.</li> <li>• Immediately remove and impound abandoned vehicles involved in fly-tipping.</li> </ul> <p>The Act also gives councils more powers over waste services and recycling.</p>

### **3. Causes of Litter**

This strategy sets out to identify the main issues in NEL, any gaps in knowledge and what resources and authority we have available to us to tackle these. It outlines opportunities where community action, collaborative working, education and stakeholder engagement can be best used to compliment current work or provide alternative ways of tackling litter.

#### **3.1. Location of Litter Bins**

Wraps 'Binrastructure' guidance document, [The Right Bin in the Right Place](#), emphasises the importance of having strategically placed bins. Research on the placement of bins shows that the closer people are to a bin, the less likely they are to litter. It also shows that location is an important factor to encourage people to dispose of their litter in a bin. Factors which influence whether a bin is placed in the right location include:

- Messaging/logos on the bin and how these relate to the location.
- The type of bin for the location.
- The types of materials the bin collects.
- The footfall at the location the bin is installed.

If an unsuitable bin is placed in an unsuitable location, it has been found that people are more likely to litter than if the type of bin and the location of the bin are suitable and convenient for people to use.

#### **3.2. Lack of Public Awareness on the Impact of Litter**

The National Litter Strategy sets out a need for greater education and public awareness on the issue of litter. Whilst there is a growing public perception that litter is an issue in England, there is still a disconnect in how litter should be managed and why litter is an important issue.

Smoking related litter was found to be the most abundant form of litter in the 2017/18 [national litter survey](#) carried out by Keep Britain Tidy. 79% of sites surveyed were found to have smoking related litter present; an increase of 6.2% from the 2014/2015 survey. Confectionary packets and related waste were the

second most abundant form of litter with 60% of sites found to have this type of litter present. Littering issues are found to be particularly high in less affluent areas. Education and the raising of awareness to needs to have a focus on these areas across England and in NEL.

### **3.3. Tourism and Leisure**

Cleethorpes resort is a historic tourist destination, with 3.4 million people visiting the area in 2017 and 10.2 million people visiting wider NEL. These visitors form a crucial part of the local economy, but they increase footfall in certain areas of the borough, in particular the beach, parks and open spaces. Increased footfall generates increased volumes of litter that need to be managed effectively. It is therefore important to consider where bins are placed to provide enough facilities for visitors and tourists.

### **3.4. Irresponsible Dog Ownership**

Dog fouling can cause serious health problems and is the cause of considerable numbers of complaints about street and beach cleanliness. While there is increasing public pressure on dog owners to clear up dog mess there remains a small minority of dog owners that either fail to clear up after their pets or pick up but fail to bin it. The presence of dog foul in an area causes concerns around health of people, livestock, wildlife and in some instances water quality. It is important to try to tackle dog fouling in a strategic manner, providing appropriate waste facilities for dog foul and educating people on the issues of dog fouling.

Prior to the implementation of the dog control [Public Space Protection Order \(PSPO\)](#) in 2019, NELC consulted with the public and out of 2,955 who responded, 87 per cent said they wanted to see a more robust, zero tolerance approach on litter, fly-tipping and dog fouling. In a separate consultation 99 per cent said public places should be safe and free from dog foul and wanted to see more enforcement against people spoiling the borough.

### **3.5. Smoking**

Smoking was the most abundant form of littering in the Keep Britain Tidy survey for litter in both 2014/2015 and 2017/2018. There is a significant issue with some smokers disposing of smoking related litter, such as cigarette ends, irresponsibly. Whilst the reason for this is unknown it is possible that there is a lack of disposal



facilities for smokers or that there is a lack of awareness of the environmental impact smoking related litter has.

### **3.6. Eating on the Go**

As national habits and behaviours have changed, there has been an increase in 'eating on the go'. This increase has led to more litter from packaging dropped by people in a rush to eat or by people discarding packaging or other items such as chewing gum from out of their car. To tackle this education and behavioural change is needed so that those who drop litter in this way understand the implications on the environment and the local area. It is worth noting that this issue has been less widespread during the Covid-19 pandemic, with more people working from home. It is possible that 'eating on the go' litter will become less of a problem if changes in working practices continue for some after the pandemic.

### **3.7. Beach Debris**

A specific issue for the Cleethorpes resort is debris that gets washed up on the shoreline. This can include:

- Plastics
- Cans
- Glass
- Industrial Waste
- Animal Carcasses
- Oil (including Palm Oil)

This is hard to prevent but must be managed by the local authority. A wider national and international approach is required to tackle this issue at source.

## 4. Litter Management in North East Lincolnshire

According to Keep Britain Tidy (2020) there are two million pieces of litter dropped per year in the UK, costing over £1 billion per year to manage. Between June 2018 and May 2019 NELC collected 2,632 tonnes of litter in street sweepings alone. This figure does not include other forms of litter collected in NEL, such as litter bin contents or litter collected during litter pick events. To manage this amount of litter, NELC has several processes and procedures in place to ensure a clean environment is maintained.

### 4.1. Types of Litter Collected

The following are the different types of litter prevalent in NEL, which the council must collect and dispose of:

- Plastics (including Plastic bottles)
- Paper and Cardboard
- Glass (including Glass Bottles)
- Polystyrene
- Tetra Packs
- Bulky Items (including industrial sized appliances)
- Discarded Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Clothing
- General Household Items
- Nappies
- Cigarettes
- Gas Bottles
- Chewing Gum
- Food Waste
- Packaging
- Drug Paraphernalia
- Dog Foul and Human Waste
- Tyres

NELC also removes animal carcasses that wash up on Cleethorpes Beach or are found on the highways.

## **4.2. How NELC Collects Litter**

NELC has a variety of methods for collecting litter, this is due in part not only to the types of litter that are collected but also due to the locations the litter is deposited. Methods of collecting litter include:

- Mechanical road and pavement sweepers to tackle road and pavement litter.
- Street litter bins and street litter bin compaction vehicles to manage street litter.
- Walk behind pedestrian barrows.
- Caged vehicles for collecting fly tipping waste and bulky items.
- Dedicated clinical waste vehicles and collection crews.
- Dedicated vacuum mechanical faeces removal equipment.
- Hydro static battery powered compact leaf/litter collector.
- Tractor towed beach/surf rake for litter that is left on the beach.
- River boat for any litter deposited in local rivers such as the River Freshney.

All litter collecting methods are accompanied by cleaning rounds carried out by our Street Cleaning team. The rounds include regular checks for litter on streets, roads, Cleethorpes beaches, parks and in water bodies such as the River Freshney. As with all other waste any litter collected is currently sent to the Energy from Waste Plant in Stallingborough where it is incinerated to create energy.

Support is also given by residents and community groups holding litter picks, river and beach cleans. We engage with local community groups and where possible provide equipment, support and waste disposal. Community engagement is a vital part of NELC's response to litter management, helping local communities take a more active role in the management of their local environment. Community engagement plays a vital role in shaping attitudes towards littering as well as promoting the importance and benefits of a clean environment.

## **4.3. Litter Bin Locations and Audits**

The council collects data from each collection round that provides information on how full each litter bin is. Data is collected every time a bin is emptied and the ‘fullness’ of the bin is graded as one of six categories.

1	Empty
2	Small amounts of litter
3	Half Full
4	Nearly Full
5	Full
5+	Full and Side Waste

Once bins have been assessed and categorised the data is stored and used to determine how much each bin is used over a longer-term period. This helps us to determine whether a bin is appropriately placed and how often the bin needs to be emptied. It helps us make evidence-based decisions for the future.

The council also collects footfall data in key areas of the borough. This is used alongside the bin assessments to inform on the number of people that are present across the borough: helping to identify those areas where the highest footfall occurs. Areas with the highest footfall can then be targeted to have more litter bins and more regular bin collections.

#### **4.4. Community Engagement**

The installation of a stainless-steel recycling bin in the shape of a fish in October 2020, on Cleethorpes promenade has been used to promote environmental issues, beach cleaning and litter management. Designed and sponsored by a local engineering firm it acts as place to dispose of plastic bottles and is linked to Grimsby’s history as a large fishing port. The installation was named ‘Hammy the Haddock’ in honour of a former NELC Beach Safety Officer following a public naming competition. ‘Hammy the Haddock’ has helped to promote recycling and reduce litter along the resort through community involvement and engagement.

A second similar installation depicting a globe with migrating birds is due to be installed at another key location in the resort, at the time of this strategy being written. The council will continue to engage with the community by supporting local volunteer groups, holding community road shows and working on projects like Hammy the Haddock to raise awareness of litter management and the environmental impacts of littering.

#### **4.5. Enforcement**

The council takes a zero-tolerance approach to littering. Patrols and enforcement are undertaken in relation to litter left by an individual or left/deposited whilst driving (vehicle litter). Those who are caught littering in NEL are given £100 Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN). During 2020, a total of 1,245 fixed penalty notices were given for littering, 110 of these individuals were taken to court for failing to pay these fines and were prosecuted accordingly. On average, offenders came away with court bills of £339 for littering.

NELC also has a dog control [Public Space Protection Order \(PSPO\)](#) in place which is a borough-wide order for failing to pick up dog foul, not carrying the means to pick up dog foul and putting dogs on a lead when told to do so by an authorised officer. There are also PSPOs for specific areas with conditions that exclude dogs or require them to be on a lead. This is for such things as play areas and organised events. People who breach the PSPO can be issued with a fixed penalty of £100. During 2020 a total of 145 fixed penalties were issued for dog fouling and dog control offences.

Mobile rapid deployment cameras through the CCTV network are also used as part of enforcement to target litter and fly tipping hotspots in suburban areas and battery powered cameras are used in rural litter and fly tipping hotspots.

In March 2021, a 'Caught on Camera' campaign was introduced to help tackle fly-tipping in the borough. The campaign involves releasing CCTV images in connection with fly-tipping incidents asking for the public to help identify people who may have knowledge of the offences committed. During 2020, officers issued a total of

53 £400 fixed penalty notices (FPNs) to people who had been responsible for fly tipping in NEL.

NELC is also part of the SCRAP campaign, an award-winning campaign developed by the Hertfordshire Waste Partnership as a nationwide crackdown against fly-tipping. The campaign aims at reminding people to check whether their waste is being taken away for disposal by a licensed carrier: either by asking to see a Waste Carriers Licence or by looking up the company on the Environment Agency website.

In March 2021, a spring dog fouling campaign was launched, this included increased social media and new signs to remind dog owners to pick up after their pets. Signs have been installed in parks and other hotspot areas to warn dog walkers that they face a fine if they do not carry a dog poo bag or other means to pick up dog foul. As part of the campaign, people are also being encouraged to submit reports about problem areas so enforcement officers can target their patrols more effectively. Enforcement officers make spot checks and will offer advice to educate dog walkers about the means to pick up rules until the end of April 2021. From May 2021 any dog walkers found not carrying a bag or other means to pick up after their dog will be given a verbal warning and from June 2021, they will be fined £100.

To promote awareness on littering and help with enforcement NELC's Environmental Education Officers use a variety of literature to advise residents on litter. Social media is used to educate residents and inform them of current litter issues: including updates from NELC on how best to dispose of litter around the borough.

## **5. Future Litter Management in NEL**

This section sets out the Council's strategic vision for litter management in the borough and how we plan to achieve it.

### **5.1. Objectives of the Litter Strategy**

NELC recognises that its strategy for litter management will need to meet the challenges and aims of the 2017 national litter strategy. To meet these NELC will continue providing effective litter management, embracing the principles of WRAP's 'right bin right place' guidance. We aim to reduce litter over the lifespan of this strategy and continue making progress in the sustainable management of litter under the six priorities set out in our wider Waste Management Strategy.

### **5.2. Right Bin, Right Place**

All future litter bin placements will align with WRAP's 'right bin right place' guidance. New litter bins for NEL will only be installed following an assessment of the footfall data of the area to demonstrate a specific need in the selected location. Bins placed at locations where there is an identified need will be placed with ease of access to the bin in mind, both for the public and for maintenance and emptying of the bin.

A standardised approach will be used for most street bins, with most consisting of a lockable housing unit with a 240L bin inside. This gives a large bin capacity reducing the chances of overflow and the need for frequent visits to empty bins. Bins that need to be emptied too frequently are inefficient, putting a higher strain on council resources and raising our carbon footprint due to increased vehicle travel.

We also plan to expand the number of solar bins in the borough, particularly in areas like open spaces and parks where there is high footfall. Solar bins are particularly suitable for these locations because they typically have less litter bins and the open sites give them high exposure to sunlight. Solar bins work by using the energy from sun to operate a sensor and compactor inside the bin. The compactor allows for a higher volume of waste to fit in the bins and the sensor sends a message to the council's street cleaning team to let them know when the

bin needs emptying. A compacting solar bin reduces the number of times a bin will need to be visited and emptied. At the time of writing this strategy, NELC has 4 solar bins in the borough with a plan to install several more in throughout 2021.

### **5.3. Projects for the future**

Future litter bin projects will focus on targeted litter bin placement in litter hotspots using more environmentally friendly bins. Any new bin requests will be assessed based on the evidence we hold for that area, taking in to account footfall, current provision, the incidences of littering and the type of location.

Future projects will also explore the potential for the use of underground bins and other emerging trends and technologies to encourage innovation and value for money. For example, underground bins provide a large disposal capacity without the need for a large bin to be placed on a street, so bins will need to be emptied less often but not be unsightly on the street.

All new projects and installations will account for the maintenance and cleaning of litter bins, incorporating it into the current schedule of work. Appearance, sanitation and 'fullness' of litter bins are regularly monitored, and this will continue over the lifespan of this strategy.

### **5.4 Communication and Collaboration**

To promote awareness on littering issues NELC will use varied communication platforms such as social media, radio advertising and press releases. Collaboration with local businesses will be fostered to share information and help further raise awareness of the issues and impacts of littering in our area.

Further communications will include continued utilisation of the advertising space on bin housings to promote our aims. NELC will increase 'no litter' signage in targeted areas over the lifespan of this strategy.

Collaboration with partner agencies will also continue and be fostered for tackling litter, working with agencies such as Highways England, Keep Britain Tidy, the Environmental Agency, Anglian Water and other local utility companies.

### **5.5. Education and Enforcement**



To ensure continued enforcement on dog fouling, the dog control PSPO with current measures shall remain in force as a means of tackling a range of dog related offences and will be reviewed June 2022.

NELC currently has Environmental Education Officers who help to raise awareness and provide insight to residents on environmental issues including littering, fly tipping and dog fouling.

Visits to schools and local community groups will continue and these will focus on delivering presentations to educate on environmental issues. Further plans include a competition for children to have their posters displayed on litter bins at the local parks, to cultivate community engagement on the issue of littering. Environmental Education Officers will continue to promote the bulky waste service at any campaign or event relating to waste and littering to help tackle fly tipping. NELC also commits to engage in and support Keep Britain Tidy's future 'Great British Spring Clean' campaigns.

Recent campaigns such as the caught-on camera and the SCRAP campaign will continue to be supported, with a planned repeat of anti-dog fouling campaigns and other similar initiatives scheduled.

## **6. Future Monitoring of Progress**

Annual progress reviews against the objectives of the litter strategy will be held with regular reviews of the area's 'binrastructure'. These will check that the Right Bin, Right Place guidance, Waste Strategy priorities and council's Outcomes Framework are being adhered to and that the plans in this strategy are being implemented.

As 'binrastructure' is assessed continuously by NELC's Street Cleansing department, any necessary changes in response to either an operational or legislative need will be made as and when it is necessary to do so.

To reflect national changes, expected to be introduced by government in 2023 NELC will complete a full review and update of this strategy in 2024.