

# **National Litter and Flytipping Strategy**

## **Fairer Scotland Duty Summary**

**June 2023**

## **Title of Policy, Strategy, Programme**

National Litter and Flytipping Strategy

## **Summary of aims and expected outcomes of strategy, proposal, programme or policy**

The National Litter and Flytipping Strategy is intended to present a new approach to litter and flytipping prevention – one which considers the whole life cycle of commonly littered and flytipped items in recognition of the loss of resources from the circular economy and the resulting contribution to the twin crises of climate change and biodiversity loss. The overarching ambition of the Strategy and associated Action Plan is to seek to prevent littering and flytipping behaviour in Scotland through the application of a systems approach, to identify where the necessary incentives are not in place to ensure a product is disposed of legally and in a way which maximises the value of that product or the materials within it. This involves looking at the entire lifecycle of products in question and those actors who are involved in influencing individuals at the point of disposal.

Actions are then based on the Individual, Social and Material (ISM) model, which identifies the need to address a broad range of influences on behaviour in order to achieve behaviour change. For the purposes of the strategy these are divided into the following themes:

### **Behaviour change**

- This theme recognises the need for improved communications and engagement, but also the need to take a holistic approach to behaviour change; understanding key audiences, issues and developing a framework to identify solutions that enable behaviours to be changed. It should also be noted that the key behaviours related to litter will differ from those for flytipping. Successful measures under this theme would improve the accessibility, consistency and nature of messaging that motivates people to change their behaviour.

### **Services and Infrastructure**

- In order for prevention of litter and flytipping to be effective there needs to be services and infrastructure in place to support people to behave responsibly. This includes services offered by local authorities, but also more widely looking to businesses and community groups. Successful measures under this theme would ensure Scotland's services and infrastructure are fit for purpose and prioritise action and innovation that proactively prevents litter and flytipping and supports a circular economy.

## Enforcement

- Enforcement and deterrents have been identified as an important link in the chain for achieving the prevention of litter and flytipping, identified from numerous stakeholder calls to review the enforcement process, procedures and to understand if alternative solutions are available (such as education or volunteering for those who cannot afford to pay fines) with collaborative measures seen as crucial. Success in relation to this theme would ensure there is a strong and consistent enforcement model across Scotland that acts as a proportional deterrent.

Underpinning any next steps, improved **data and evidence** are crucial to successfully understanding the root causes of the issue, evaluating the success of any interventions, collaborating successfully and monitoring progress. This includes reporting of issues by the public and communities, national reporting and monitoring, citizen science and measurable outcomes. Success for this theme would include an improved understanding of the behaviours, attitudes and drivers behind both littering and flytipping behaviours and develop an evidence base that can facilitate the implementation and monitoring of effective interventions.

The Strategy has a lifespan of six years. It will be reviewed at its mid-point and at the end of its lifespan. It will be published with an associated action plan, which will be reviewed annually through the governance and delivery framework which will comprise of a high-level strategy delivery group to drive implementation, agree priorities, review progress and adapt plans. This will be supported by topic-focused delivery working groups and other mechanisms for engaging key stakeholders and sectors to ensure a wide level of input into and scrutiny of future action plans.

## Summary of Evidence

There is evidence to suggest that litter and flytipping are more prevalent in more deprived areas, with potential for greater negative impacts on local people and businesses associated with this.

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation provides an area-based measure of relative deprivation. Whilst not every person in a highly deprived area will themselves be experiencing high levels of deprivation, it provides a tool to improve understanding about the outcomes and circumstances of people living in the most deprived areas in Scotland. Over half of the zones ranked in the top 20% for multiple deprivation are located within six local authority areas, while some other local authorities have no zones at all in this category, demonstrating that poverty is concentrated in certain areas.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation  
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-index-multiple-deprivation-2020/>

Adults living in the 20% least deprived areas were more likely to rate their neighbourhood as a very good place to live than those in the 20% most deprived areas (77% in the least deprived areas, and 32% in the most deprived areas).<sup>2</sup>

This finding is assumed to partially reflect environmental quality and neighbourhood problems. In terms of the population overall, 45% of all adults reported that they did not experience any neighbourhood problems in 2019. Those living in the 20% most deprived areas were more likely to experience neighbourhood problems, with top problems recorded as 'animal nuisance' (32%) and 'rubbish or litter lying around' (31%).

There is evidence that there may be a relationship between areas with more litter and higher crime rates. In rural areas, some evidence suggests possible links between flytipping and other rural crimes. In both rural and urban areas, litter and flytipping can impact negatively on house prices and increase disamenity.<sup>3</sup>

A flytipping evidence review conducted in 2017 identified that 45% of 'those living in self-identified more deprived areas' had seen a flytipping incident in the last year compared to only 20% of those in 'well-off' areas and 25% of those in 'middling' areas.<sup>4</sup> Respondents living in tenements or flats were more likely than those in houses to have seen flytipping in the previous year (35% vs. 24%).

While some groups are slightly more likely to litter (and admit it) than others, there is no evidence that a particular 'littering demographic' exists. The 2022 Scottish Litter Survey results indicate a possible correlation between deprivation and the distribution of litter. For example, 81% of respondents residing in the most deprived fifth of neighbourhoods reported that they see litter often in their local area compared to 68% of those residing in the least deprived areas.<sup>5</sup> Further research suggests the gap in litter levels between the most and least deprived areas is widening.<sup>6</sup> The potential link between litter and flytipping in areas of social deprivation suggests that a combination of specific behavioural and contextual factors are contributors. We have identified a need to better understand these factors, which will be taken forward throughout the strategy's lifespan through the cross-cutting theme of research.

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<sup>2</sup> Scottish Household Survey 2019: annual report

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-household-survey-2019-annual-report/pages/5/>

<sup>3</sup> Zero Waste Scotland – Exploring the indirect costs of litter in Scotland

<https://www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/resources/exploring-indirect-costs-litter-scotland>

<sup>4</sup> Zero Waste Scotland - Rapid Evidence Review of Littering Behaviour and Anti-Litter Policies

<https://www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/resources/rapid-evidence-review-littering-behaviour-and-anti-litter-policies>

<sup>5</sup> Keep Scotland Beautiful (2022) - Scottish Litter Survey 2022

<https://www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/media/1570921/littering-in-scotland-survey-2022-final-301122.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Keep Scotland Beautiful (2022) - Time for a new approach: tackling the litter emergency

[https://www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/media/1570958/tackling-the-litter-emergency\\_dec-2022.pdf](https://www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/media/1570958/tackling-the-litter-emergency_dec-2022.pdf)

## Summary of Assessment findings

The overarching aim of the strategy is to prevent litter and flytipping, which would be a positive outcome across all levels of society.

The Strategy sets out a vision and set of outcomes and objectives to reduce litter and flytipping in Scotland with an accompanying action plan that outlines how we will achieve this vision over the strategy's six-year lifespan. Whilst setting a clear direction of travel, both the strategy and the action plan are high level in nature and as such cannot be assessed in detail. Individual actions will be co-designed through the governance and delivery framework, which will consist of a high level delivery group as well as topic-focussed working groups and other mechanisms to engage key stakeholders and sectors.

The wide scope of the strategy and associated action plan will impact on a range of individuals and organisations that engage in activities that contribute to littering of flytipping. At this stage, it is not possible to determine to what extent different demographic groups will be impacted.

Further proportionate assessment of ways individuals may be impacted by the interventions set out in the high-level action plan will be undertaken during their design and implementation, to ensure all types of socio-economic disadvantage are considered. This will be taken forward through the Strategy's governance and delivery framework to enable a wide range of input from key stakeholders and sectors.

## Sign off

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