

Mid Devon District Council Draft Litter Strategy

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Litter blights the local environment, reduces overall quality of life, influences people's choice of where to live, discourages investment and visitors to our area and can be damaging to wildlife and habitats. We want Mid Devon to be a place that people want to live and visit to enjoy our towns, villages and beautiful countryside.
- 1.2 We all need to look ahead to protect our future. Our nation's future prosperity will greatly depend on how well we manage our environment and therefore it is important that we all play our part in reducing litter and stop people from dropping litter in the first place. This is about everyone taking ownership of their behaviour.
- 1.3 Mid Devon's Litter Strategy focuses on community change and sits within our waste and recycling strategic targets of reducing and reusing waste, increasing recycling, which in turn are key to reducing our carbon footprint. It is aimed at delivering best practice to both residents and visitors and delivery of community and environment objectives.
- 1.4 Our vision is to raise the awareness of the public and providing the education, infrastructure and enforcement for behaviour change to reduce litter in our community.

2.0 Aims and objectives

- 2.1 In order to help deliver our pledge to tackle climate change and cut carbon emissions it will be useful to look at the litter strategy under the following aims:
 1. **Education and awareness** – By supporting positive behaviour and ownership
 2. **Better cleaning and litter infrastructure** – By making it easier to dispose of litter
 3. **Improve enforcement** - By exercising council powers to deal with anyone who drops litter. Types of enforcement action can be found in Appendix A
- 2.2 The six key objectives to support the aims are:
 1. Create a culture where it is unacceptable to drop litter through an effective communication and engagement plan
 2. Facilitate strong and consistent anti-litter education with children and young people
 3. Collaborate with community action groups and local businesses to develop actions to prevent and clear litter
 4. To develop a bin infrastructure and bin emptying review
 5. Understand the issues to create cleaner places
 6. To provide efficient and effective enforcement services

2.3 The aims, key objectives to deliver along with the actions and measures to monitor improvements are listed in Table 1 – MDCC Litter Strategy Action Plan below:

Table 1 – MDDC Litter Strategy Action Plan

Aim	Objective	Actions	Measures
1. Education and awareness - Supporting positive behaviour and ownership	1. Create a culture where it is unacceptable to drop litter through an effective communication and engagement plan	Promote National campaigns including the Great British Spring Clean	Number
		Pool resources to introduce efficiencies in Clean Devon campaigns, including Devon is beautiful, keep it that way	Number
		Innovative campaigns advertised/viewed on the high street and areas such as cinema screens to get the public to take ownership of their surroundings so they see littering as their responsibility	Locations and media
		Set up a stall in Tiverton Market to promote awareness around litter and good practice around disposal supported by Officers and Councillors	Number of visits and enquiries
		Use nudge type interventions by using positive messages and images during campaigns	
	2. Support strong and consistent anti-litter education with children and young people	Work with school leaders to develop a programme to reduce litter in and around the schools such as litter patrols and litter picking	Feedback and inspections
		Go into schools and deliver presentations to educate pupils in the impact of litter	Feedback
		Develop Primary School competitions around the theme of anti littering and sponsor a prize to award best ideas for promoting awareness	Interest
		Work with youth groups to understand the issues in the local community	
	3. Collaborate with community action groups (including CAG and Sustainable Tiverton/Crediton) and local businesses to develop actions to prevent and clear litter	Raise the profile of litter picking completed through social media and website	Number and weight of collections and compare
		Collaborating with community groups to formulate actions to reduce and clear litter	
		Partnership working on actions to prevent litter with fast food outlets	Number of partnerships
Clear signposting to MDDC litter picking content on website		Number of visits	
2. Better cleaning and litter infrastructure - Making it easier to dispose litter	4. To develop a bin infrastructure and emptying review	Examine the location of bins, along with the emptying frequency to determine the correct number and type	Bin emptying statistics, service costs and inspections
		Install recycle on the go bins to increase recycled waste collected	Weigh collections and compare
		MDDC Litter Strategy adopted to be best placed for future funding opportunities	
		Review, trial and cost new technologies and innovations including; bin with sensors and solar compaction bins	Trial
		Work with other local authorities to review and implement best practice with regards bin provision	Compare and evaluate plans
	5. Understanding the issues to create cleaner places	Review data available along with feedback from the public and staff to better understand littering hotspots to direct resources	Number and location for complaints and inspections
		Partnership working with Highways England and Devon County Council to reduce litter on highways and roads	Number and location for complaints and inspections
		Review operational procedures to reduce wind-blown and dropped items	Number and location for complaints and inspections
3. Improving enforcement - Exercise council powers	6. To provide efficient and effective enforcement services	Publishing enforcement results and show follow through to implementation and subsequent payment of fines	
		Review enforcement arrangements for dealing with littering	
		Issue FPNs for littering and dog fouling	Number issued
		Identify serial offenders through working with stakeholders	
		Use the police to support with the implementation of enforcement measures	

3.0 Measuring and Monitoring

3.1 We need to look at ways to monitor and evaluate progress through collection of data on littering hotspots, along with inspection routines and street cleansing reports/complaints. Part of this strategy is to construct a system of monitoring and recording that can inform future planning and direct current activity and operations.

3.2 Therefore we will review:

- The number of litter complaints received
- The number of FPNs issued
- Litter tonnages collected
- Litter picks including; number, location and tonnages
- The number of bins, type, location and emptying frequency
- Results of inspections/gradings completed (Appendix B)
- Perceptions and understanding through feedback and surveys
- The cost of providing a Street Cleansing service, which is approximately £420,000

We will use this information to compare and ensure best practice amongst our neighbouring authorities and available national statistics.

4.0 Priorities and Sustainability

4.1 The MDDC Corporate Plan is a document which sets out what we want to achieve in the district to support and enrich our communities and businesses and the environment we are in. Our Corporate Plan for 2020-2024 retains the four key priority areas that were identified in 2016 and for the next four years our elected members and officers will work together to ensure these areas continue to be the focus of our work, these priorities are:

- Homes
- Environment
- Community
- Economy

4.2 Within the Corporate Plan you will see the key areas of work the Council aspires to deliver over the next three years, but also how each of these priorities can be delivered in a way that supports our focus on sustainability, be it through creating sustainable and prosperous communities, a sustainable planet or by encouraging sustainable participation.



4.3 The Litter Strategy aims to support the council pledge to tackle climate change and cut carbon emissions and facilitate the achievement of the four priorities, which includes:

- Homes - Use new development as opportunities to help communities to become increasingly sustainable and self-sustaining at neighbourhood level (district heating, energy use, recycling/re-use systems etc.)
- Environment - Increase recycling rates and reduce the amounts of residual waste generated
- Environment - Support community activities that improve the environment such as litter-picks, guerrilla gardening, or community adoption of assets
- Community - Promote community involvement in Council activity
- Economy - Develop and deliver regeneration plans for all three main towns in partnership with town and parish councils, private and third sector and communities

5.0 Current Provisions

5.1 Street Cleansing currently provides services across the district, including:

- Bin provision and emptying - There are around 850 bins in the District split into three zones that are audited and emptied at frequencies dependant on location and use. Within Mid Devon dog waste can be bagged and deposited in dog bins or in litter bins (not in a childrens play area) as there is an existing 'Any Bin Will Do' Policy. An audit of litter and dog bin provision has been completed with photographs of all bins and locations entered onto a GIS mapping system. This audit also includes a condition survey and fill levels.
- Street cleaning in the three town centres of; Tiverton, Cullompton and Crediton
- Litter picking of parks, open spaces and road side verges – This also includes clearing of litter blown or dropped from council waste and recycling vehicles
- Street sweeping of the district using two mechanical sweepers
- Clearing of fly tipping
- Bulky Waste collections

We also provide organised litter picking groups with; litter picking sticks, advice and risk assessments and picking up the litter collected by these groups.

5.2 The Street Scene Education and Enforcement Service is a frontline service which works throughout the District ensuring cleanliness and attractiveness of our public realm through both education and enforcement. The role of the four District Officers is to protect, promote and improve the health and environment of the district and all its people through education, guidance and enforcement. Related activities include patrols where District Officers can detect and deal with littering incidents and dog fouling related issues for which they may issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs). Cleansing Inspections are carried out at the same time.

6.0 Future provisions – delivering the strategy

6.1 It is important that we do not look at education, infrastructure and enforcement in isolation. There will always be an overlap and one may compliment and support another. We will blend education with enforcement and promote how these two areas can work closely together. For some people enforcement is preceded by education, whilst with others education is preceded by enforcement. The key thing is to ensure these measures are linked and complement each other.

6.2 Education and awareness measures will embed a culture which views littering as socially unacceptable and we recognise that prevention is more effective than cleaning up after the event - the clean-up costs are a huge drain on our resources. Enforcement is a necessary tool to address the behaviour of habitual litterers by sending a clear message to the public. We will use existing prosecution powers where appropriate including the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices.

6.4 Mid Devon District Council wants to create a culture where it is totally unacceptable to drop litter. This means generating strong and lasting social pressure against littering, making it socially unacceptable to drop litter. A compelling communications plan is a common feature of almost all successful approaches to tackling litter. Mid Devon District Council believes that there is now a need for a more joined up approach led by Government to develop a national anti-litter campaign to help deliver sustained behavioural change for this generation.



6.5 Mid Devon District Council will look at innovative ways to engage the community, groups and businesses to share their experiences of what works to reduce littering to assist in the future direction and thinking for tackling littering in our District. We need to understand the cause of littering and focus on what works. Stakeholder groups will be crucial to convey the message to change behaviours and assist in reducing litter in our District. Nudge-type interventions are often small changes that are relatively cheap to implement, compared to traditional behaviour-change tools like large-scale campaigns or enforcement. For example, there is no difference in cost between using positive social norm messages (e.g. “be part of a clean community”) rather than negative instructions (e.g. “don’t drop litter”), yet nudge theory suggests that positive messages should be more effective.

- 6.6 Mid Devon District Council will work with schools in teaching about litter, working with Partnership Directors and Ambassadors. Education and work with young people will be a consistent theme to our approaches in reducing littering and bring about long lasting behavioural changes so that good habits learned in school are followed through into homes and the community. We will work with the Devon Waste Education Programme to look at how we engage school children with anti-littering campaigns.
- 6.7 Mid Devon District Council needs to understand why littering is more common in certain age groups than others. Mid Devon District Council needs to look at the motivations and barriers that influence littering behaviour and proper disposal behaviour. Mid Devon District Council needs to understand how individual's feelings about and relationship to their community can also affect their behaviour. Mid Devon District Council will need to work with youth groups and the National Citizen Service to understand and develop interventions that engages youth to take personal responsibility and ownership and pride in their local area. This could be conveyed through; social media, peers and even the cinema.
- 6.8 Mid Devon District Council will use our position as the local authority to spread the message about the financial and environmental cost of litter through the use of social media and the Council website. Advise residents on the correct disposal of household waste and appropriate methods for disposing of household items using; reuse services, bulky waste collections or waste disposal contractors with the correct waste carrier licence. We will periodically review systems used for the public to report instances of littering.
- 6.9 Mid Devon District Council will assess the effectiveness of developing technologies and new innovations along with local authority interventions with regards the three areas of; education, infrastructure and enforcement.

Appendix A – Types of enforcement action

Type of enforcement action	Purpose
No further action	All actions of observed littering and reports of littering will be investigated by the District Officers. It may be decided that enforcement action is not proportionate to the level of harm caused by a breach. This may be for cases where the member of public is unaware that they have littered, but will be told their responsibilities regarding littering and that a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued for any future offences.
Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN)	Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) are a means of punishing offenders for unlawful behaviour and offer a quick, flexible means of dealing with certain offences. It avoids overloading the judicial system with unnecessary cases. The Council can issue a fixed penalty notice as permitted by section 88 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. A fixed penalty notice sets a penalty of £150 to be paid but it is not a fine or a criminal conviction. The recipient can opt for the matter to be dealt with in court instead of paying. No proceedings will be taken for the offence before the expiration of 14 days following the date of the notice. The offender will not be liable to conviction for the offence is payment of the fixed penalty is received during the period of 14 days.
Prosecution	Section 87 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, as amended, makes it a criminal offence to “throw down, drop or otherwise deposit any item, and leave it”. The offence applies to all land (or water) that is publicly accessible (with or without payment) and open to the air. An area is open to the air if it is open on one side, even if the area is covered. It is not an offence to drop litter if it is authorised by law or if it is done with the consent of the owner or occupier of the area where the litter is dropped (except in the case of ponds, lakes or watercourses, where the owner or occupier giving permission for litter to be dropped must have control of the whole area of water for no offence to be committed.) The maximum fine for littering is £2,500 .
Fly Tipping	Fly tipping is the illegal dumping of any waste onto land that has no licence to accept waste. It can vary in scale significantly from a bin bag of rubbish to a large quantity of waste dumped from a truck. Enforcement legislation is embodied within the Environmental Protection Act 1990 sections 33 and 34. The Unauthorised Deposit of Waste (Fixed Penalties) Regulations 2016 came into force on 9 May 2016 which amends the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to allow the issuing of fixed penalties of £400 for waste deposit offences. The adopted Fly-Tipping Policy can be found under item 162 (Environment Education Policy) of the MDDC Cabinet meeting of 23 April 2020
Littering From Vehicles	Mid Devon District Council is committed to reducing litter on

	<p>roadsides and verges and will take enforcement action against those who litter from their vehicles. It is recognised that it can be particularly difficult for District Officers in the Environmental Enforcement Team to identify which person in the vehicle committed the offence. Recently introduced powers allow Mid Devon District Council to hold the keeper of a vehicle responsible for littering offences committed from the vehicle.</p> <p>The amount of a fixed penalty is the amount specified under Section 88(6A) of the EPA 1990 for the fixed penalty for the offence of leaving litter which has been thrown from a vehicle. Mid Devon District Council has set this sum at £150. If this fixed penalty is not paid in full within the fixed penalty payment 14 days, the amount of the fixed penalty increases by 100% with effect from the day after the last day of the fixed penalty payment period.</p> <p>These FPNs will be issued when District Officers in the service Environmental Enforcement Team observe offences whilst on patrol, on a pure chance basis whilst engaged on other duties, or following an approach by members of the public willing to stand as witness in any subsequent Court action.</p>
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There are no current national metrics in place although locally District Officer hours are used to grade roads/streets etc. in our district. Sites are assessed using a grading system based on the same principles previously used in Defra's Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse (NI 195). These are graded A-D:

- grade A meaning no litter is present
- grade B meaning - the area is predominantly free with some minor instances of litter
- grade C meaning widespread distribution of litter and refuse, with minor accumulations
- grade D meaning heavily affected with litter, with significant accumulations

Grades A and B are classed as meeting an acceptable standard.

In 2017 to 2018 the average number of sites that were graded as acceptable or higher was 86% - 96% from data supplied by Keep Britain Tidy and APSE.

MDDC data from 2020-2021

	Number		Percentage	
	Litter	Detritus	Litter	Detritus
Number of Wards Surveyed	27	27		
Total Number of Transects Surveyed	820	829		
Transects Graded A	445	202	54.27	24.37
Transects Graded B	355	566	43.29	68.28
Transects Graded C	19	54	2.32	6.51
Transects Graded D	1	7	0.12	0.84
Percentage graded A or B:				
			97.56%	92.64%