

Clean Devon – 2023 Update

Report of the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Committee before taking effect.

1) Recommendation

That the Committee be asked to:

- (a) note the background, national policy summary, and current activities for the Clean Devon Partnership;
- (b) continue to support this voluntary initiative to tackle the ongoing scourge of litter and fly tipping within Devon's communities and environment.

2) Background

This report provides Members with an overview of the Devon Authorities Strategic Waste Committee (DASWC) supported Clean Devon Partnership, summary of recent activities, and an update on the role of the newly appointed Clean Devon Liaison Officer.

The Clean Devon Partnership has its roots in the 2016 transition from the former Devon Authorities Waste Reduction and Recycling Committee (DAWRRC) to the more strategically focussed DASWC. In 2017 this new committee was updated with litter and fly tipping activity in Teignbridge District Council area ([8/02/17](#)), where Members expressed an interest in the exploration of 'prevention / education and co-ordinated activities, including pooled budgets and / or grant funding, stronger messages, and the role of DASWC'.

Litter and fly tipping remained on the DASWC agenda in the intervening period, including a presentation by Keep Britain Tidy outlining their action plan for fly tipping, and an introduction to the new [Litter Strategy for England](#), (Litter Strategy).

Following discussions with potential partners, including Devon and Cornwall Police, the Environment Agency, and landowners, a formative umbrella organisation 'Clean Devon' was proposed for 2019/20.

The resulting 'Clean Devon Partnership' officially launched in March 2020 with an inaugural 'Duty of Care' campaign, new [website](#), and Strategy and Business Plan. Behind the scenes, the 27 adopting Partners established regular meetings and formed targeted 'Task Groups' (TG) to develop proposals reflecting the wide scope of responsibility and influence, from waste operations to enforcement to landowners and communications.

Three years later, Clean Devon’s ambition and scope continues to grow. In September 2023, with DASWC support, the Partnership appointed a Clean Devon Liaison Officer to address specific challenges to support improved data quality and targeted enforcement.

3) Clean Devon - 2023 Update

Clean Devon is administered by Devon County Council, and voluntary Partners have shown fantastic commitment to the Partnership through regular attendance at quarterly meetings, providing support in-kind, inter-partner liaison, and advice, which all bodes well for future success.

Every aspect of litter and fly tipping, potentially influenced by Partners, is covered by one of five Task Groups (TG) shown below. TGs comprise Partners with the skills and enthusiasm to support delivery of the agreed scope.

Task Group (TG) <i>Theme*</i>	TG scope
TG1 – Compliance Theme: Enforcement	TG scope: Proportionate and consistent enforcement of FPNs and legal processes to increase the number of prosecutions through intelligence sharing.
TG2 – Operations Theme: Infrastructure	TG scope: Local authority functions and proactive measures to reduce litter and fly tipping through policies and procedures, including reporting.
TG3 – Business Theme: Education, Infrastructure	TG scope: Review opportunities and challenges to engage, inform and assist the business sector.
TG4 – Landowners Theme: Education, Infrastructure	TG scope: Review opportunities and challenges for landowners and tenants, including National Parks.
TG5 – Communications Theme: Education	TG scope: Identify and deliver social impact and intervention opportunities, creation of norms and behavioural change including media.

Individual TGs report to the Partnership with updates, and areas for discussion / dissemination. All TGs have an active workload, but it is recognised that as a voluntary non-statutory organisation, delivery will always be restricted by the demands of their principal role within their respective organisations.

Since 2020, the Partnership has delivered three significant campaigns and joined forces with the Keep Britain Tidy – ‘Great British Spring Clean’ on two occasions to encourage and support residents to litter pick their local areas. In May 2023, in association with North Devon Council, Parkdean Resorts and Plastic Free North Devon, TG5 organised a beach clean and bank holiday roadshow on Croyde beach. During the event, 31kg of beach litter was collected by beach goers in support of the ‘take only pictures, leave only footprints’ campaign message. This event attracted wide media interest and was supported by local Councillors who also took part in activities during the day.

The Partnership recognises that individual organisations can’t do it all. Work is therefore underway to create the conditions for a ‘people’s movement’ to encourage members of the

public to get involved with the many residents and groups who already routinely litter pick their local areas, or report incidents of concern. Individual local authorities offer their own litter advice and guidance, so rationalisation and standardisation where possible would remove as many barriers to community involvement as possible. TG2 are also reviewing waste operations to address any areas for improvement from our own operational activities in association with the DASWC Devon Convergence Project.

The Clean Devon website has also recently been updated to provide a more engaging [news](#) page in addition to other small changes. This area of the website provides a central litter and fly tipping news repository which encourages traffic from Partners social media feeds to this Partnership signposting website.

Enforcement Officers are also working behind the scenes and routinely sharing information and collaborating on national and local issues, including working closely with the Environment Agency 'Waste Crime Team' and Devon and Cornwall Police 'Rural Crime Officers'. Representation by the Country Land and Business Association (CLA) and National Farmers Union (NFU) ensures that challenges faced by landowners are also being highlighted and addressed across enforcements teams for Devon, Torbay, and Plymouth.

Promotion of waste duty of care, litter and fly tipping, and waste policy messages and advice direct to businesses is also a regular benefit of the Partnership through business groups and the Heart of the SW Trading Standards Service.

National Policy Summary

Through the Litter Strategy and [Environment Act 2021 \(EA21\)](#), Government is also proposing new initiatives to tackle waste crime, including litter and fly tipping, through a [Digital Waste Tracking Service](#) and, review of the [Waste Carrier, Broker and Dealer Registration system in England](#). Despite ongoing delays and uncertainty to several DEFRA waste policy reforms, assurances have been given that these proposals will be delivered, and in the process, significantly reduce opportunities for waste to 'disappear', providing those using waste collection and disposal services do so legitimately.

In response to Government's [Anti-Social Behaviour Action Plan](#) and corresponding [increases to fixed penalties](#), Government have also recently launched national local authority [fly tipping enforcement league tables](#) which, amongst the data, highlight inconsistencies with incidents and enforcement actions across England. This will be addressed through the Partnership.

Future objectives

The original Clean Devon Strategy and Action Plan is currently being refreshed and Partners are in the process of identifying Actions for the next three years. This process reviews actions against prior objectives and changes in policy or focus for the group, for example, increasing concerns with littering of vapes.

Clean Devon also has a key role in the future to ensure that those managing waste do so legitimately through promotion of local and national waste crime messaging.

Clean Devon Liaison Officer.

In February 2023, DASWC Members approved the allocation of DASWC underspend for a part-time liaison Officer to support the Partnership. Exeter City Council managed the appointment and recruitment which is greatly appreciated.

In September 2023, the Clean Devon Liaison Officer was appointed for this 12-month contract. They have an extensive local authority background and have worked on several litter and fly tipping initiatives, most notably for Teignbridge District Council.

Partners are committed to supporting the Clean Devon Liaison Officer with the delivery of the objectives as set out and to enable these to be completed within the limited time available.

1) To ensure that waste crime incident reporting data achieves a high degree of Data Quality, in accordance with reporting guidance including WasteDataFlow.

Rationale: There is perceived inconsistency in the number of fly tipping incidents reported between different Partnership authorities. This task will ensure that all Clean Devon authorities fly tipping statistics are reflected accurately for planning and media, including DEFRA's annual local authority fly tipping enforcement league tables.

2) To engage with Partners to identify best practice for waste crime policy and enforcement activity and identify systems and processes which could support greater collaboration and intelligence sharing.

Rationale: Several effective waste crime partnerships operate throughout the UK and this action will assess the effectiveness of those arrangements to identify areas of best practice to consider replicating locally.

3) To explore opportunities for a Partnership wide waste crime surveillance resource within available budget, compliant with legal obligations.

Rationale: The Partnership has limited collective experience in the use of surveillance for litter and fly tipping. With reliable mapping data, Partnership hot spots may be identified, and deployment of suitable CCTV, in association with Partners, could provide a local deterrent with potential enforcement outcomes in line with Government's ambition to 'take a much tougher approach to this type of anti-social behaviour'.

The liaison role also includes other supporting actions, but the initial focus will be to address the 3 priority areas above to provide tangible and beneficial outcomes for DASWC and Partners.

Member support for the Clean Devon Partnership is welcome and with continued support ongoing improvements will continue to be made to our communities and environment.

4) Options / Alternatives

This report updates Members with ongoing actions delivered by the Clean Devon partnership. There are not considered to be any alternative options for Member consideration.

5) Consultations / Representations / Technical Data

There are no consultations / representations / technical data applicable to this report.

6) Strategic Plan

This report aligns to the shared ambitions of the Resources and Waste Management Strategy for Devon and Torbay and Devon County Council's Strategic Plan 2021 – 2025 in support of the Making Devon Greener strategic priority.

7) Financial Considerations

It is estimated that it costs £29 per household, per year, to keep our streets clean. Litter and fly tipping are almost entirely avoidable. Action to reduce the financial costs of managing litter and fly tipping has the potential to reduce this annual household and local authority liability.

8) Legal Considerations

This report identifies potential actions which may hold significant legal consequences through surveillance technology. The Partnership will mitigate this risk through Partner expertise to ensure that any surveillance activity is lawful and aligned with current legal guidance.

9) Environmental Impact Considerations (Including Climate Change, Sustainability and Socio-economic)

In 2022/23 10,751 fly tipping incidents were recorded throughout the Partnership area. This illegal activity impacts on local communities and environmental quality and has the potential to impact on water and land through contamination. Any effective action to reduce the negative environmental impacts of litter and fly tipping, and resource inefficiency will support the ambitions of the National Litter Strategy for England.

10) Equality Considerations

Litter and fly tipping can be an unintended consequence of poor practice. The Partnership is aware of the need to ensure that householder messaging needs to be appropriate for the

audience and local authorities already ensure their information and advice meets equality standards.

11) Risk Management Considerations

There are no significant risks associated with the information provided in this report. Where risks are identified in future actions they will be addressed fully.

12) Summary / Conclusions / Reasons for Recommendations

This report provides Members with an update for the Clean Devon Partnership and future objectives for the Clean Devon Liaison Officer.

Meg Booth

Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport

Electoral Divisions: All

Local Government Act 1972: List of background papers

Nil

Contact for enquiries:

Name: Iain Stevens

Telephone: 01392 383586

Address: Room 120, Devon County Hall, Exeter, EX2 4QD

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