

# LITTER STRATEGY FOR GLOUCESTER CITY



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## **1.0 Introduction**

In April 2017 the Government published its litter strategy as part of a wider environmental pledge to “make ours the first generation to leave the natural environment of England in a better state than we found it”. Nationally it is estimated that street cleansing costs local government almost £1 billion a year. For Gloucester City this figure is in the region of £1.4 million per annum.

It is not only the cost which is an issue, litter is unsightly, reduces quality of life, discourages investment and visitors to our city as well as being detrimental to the wider environment as plastic especially, becomes part of the ecosystem, damaging species and ultimately the human population. This strategy aims to tie in with the wider Government strategy and Gloucester City Council’s vision for 2025 which is that the Council, our partners and our residents work together to make Gloucester a City that works for everyone. The strategy provides a broad framework for managing litter in our City in the coming years and is underpinned in the Council plan priorities which states that we will work to create a vibrant and prosperous city, maintain a safe and attractive city, build strong and resilient communities and provide great services that are value for money.

## **2.0 Role and Implication for the Authority**

The Government are currently consulting on new legislation regarding the packaging of goods. It appears this new legislation will have a producer pays principle and this may bring additional funding in the medium term to local authorities. Additionally, a DRS (deposit return scheme) planned for 2022/2023 may reduce some of the on the go litter which we are currently dealing with. However, there is no immediate additional funding for litter clearance and the onus is heavily on the local authority to deal with it. The Environmental Protection Act 1990 Section 89 (1) states that local authorities have a duty to keep land and highways clear of litter etc, so clearly Gloucester City has a significant role to play and will do into the future.

A large resource is already dedicated to providing and emptying bins, clearing fly-tips and picking up litter. There is a lot more that can be done and this strategy considers what can be done within the context of the national litter strategy and within the boundaries of existing budgets.

## **3.0 Education and Awareness**

In conjunction with the national campaign we will:

- Use our position as the local authority to spread the message about the financial and environmental cost of litter. Social media and the Council website will be useful tools to help with this and fits with the Council's digital strategy.
- Support community clean ups, the Great British Spring Clean is always a great success in the city involving many partners and community groups. It is typical for Gloucester City to have more than 200 individuals volunteer during the weekend of the Spring Clean.
- Work with the BID, City Improvement team and local businesses to get them involved with community clean ups improving the environment in their locality.
- We commit to continuing the work we do with our 100 plus volunteer litter pickers.
- Continue to engage with the universities and colleges attending Freshers and welcome events every year.
- Continue to provide equipment and resource to community litter picking groups, including scouts, schools and youth groups
- Install recycling bins for plastic and cans at all outdoor spaces especially those with sport pitches where littering of drink containers is a persistent problem. Engagement with the teams who book the pitches and changes to the agreement for hire of the pitches has had some success in recent months and we continue to monitor this.
- All litter bins will be stickered advising they are dual use.
- Aim to install "on the go" recycling bins in the gate streets of the city centre, after a recent audit of litter from gate street bins showed that more than 60% of litter collected was plastic bottles and cans, these can easily be sorted through our sort line at Eastern Avenue.
- Encourage collection crew members to continue logging bin information into their smart sheet technology, to increase intelligence around our infrastructure.

## 4.0 Enforcement

Enforcement will be a last resort but nevertheless it is a necessary tool, especially when trying to change the behavior patterns of habitual litterers. We have engaged a commercial operation 3GS who will investigate environmental crime and issue fixed penalty notices for littering and fly-tipping.

Our private sector housing team will continue to investigate overcrowded rental properties, many of these particularly in the inner city area have poor waste management leading to degeneration of the streetscene and litter problems. The City Centre area has a PSPO in place and a team of Community Protection Officers who engage with the public and issue fixed penalty notices where necessary.

Engagement with businesses will continue to ensure they are fully compliant with their duty of care and that adequate trade waste collections are in place. It is widely acknowledged that litter and waste accumulations attract additional dumping of waste and can exacerbate a problem.

## 5.0 Infrastructure

Infrastructure can be as simple as using a larger bin or a complex smart technology. Investment into further technology in this area will improve efficiency and save money in the longer term. We have made considerable changes to our street cleaning service in recent years, coordinating our cleaning rounds to take place after refuse collection. An audit of litter and dog bin provision has been done and all bins will be GIS mapped by March 2021. This work has allowed us to amalgamate litter and dog bins into dual use bins, remove some under utilised or hard to reach bins and replace old damaged bins. Further investment is needed to complete this work and over the coming years we should aim to:

- As budgets allow fit sensors to bins in hard to reach areas such as on the canal side and in the country parks, these sensors will allow us to only deploy a crew when the bins are full, saving time and money.
- Continue to ensure any new bins are added to the GIS mapping system which will be in place by March 2021. Encourage our collection crews to record fill levels on their smartsheet technology. This will continue to give us a valuable insight into which bins need emptying more frequently, which could be removed or moved to higher footfall areas, which bins are damaged and which bins are currently located in the wrong place. This ensures the service is as efficient as possible.
- Move forward with dual use bins for litter and dog waste, reducing the number of bins we provide but making sure that those we have are fit for purpose and prevent windblown litter.

- Keep abreast of the latest street cleaning equipment, reducing the need for manual labour in favour of machinery such as the gum zapper, street scrubber and weed ripper recently purchased. This equipment has made a visible difference to the city centre, created a more efficient way of working and could be deployed to other hot spot areas with more resource.
- Work with social enterprise and friends groups, developing management plans for open spaces, so all parties are working towards the same end goal.
- We should aim to replace old concrete and post mounted litter bins as soon as budgets allow. These bins without lids cause wind blown litter and are no longer fit for purpose.

## **6.0 Future Plans and Conclusion**

It is clear that in the medium term there will be changes to legislation coming from Government. Although this may reduce the amount of “on the go” litter in the short term, it would be naive to think it will be the panacea to our litter problems in the city, on its own. We have made huge inroads in the way we manage street cleaning in the city including the way we manage and audit our contractor to ensure KPI compliance.

Moving forward it is important we continue to investigate any new technologies and equipment available; this will ensure our service stays viable and cost effective.

There is a commitment to continue to explore with the WDA (waste disposal authority), the recycling of street sweepings and litter collected from litter bins. This initiative would divert up to 1500 tonnes a year away from disposal, make considerable cost savings for the disposal authority and reduce our carbon footprint considerably.