

# LITTER MONITORING

## Why monitoring of litter is vital?

Keep Britain Tidy believes that development of a national data-set on litter is vital if we are to develop well designed and targeted solutions aimed at eradicating littering.

## What does Keep Britain Tidy want to achieve?

Keep Britain Tidy wants a statistically robust, national monitoring programme for litter developed and implemented, with data collected annually at sites across the country.

We want to be able to clearly understand the extent of the littering problem in England, and track changes in this annually.

We want to see a range of methods employed including presence/absence of litter, counts of litter and volumes of litter to provide a rich data-set, capable of providing real insights into the issue, determination of appropriate measures and sensitive enough to detect the impact of any interventions.

## What can Keep Britain Tidy do?

Keep Britain Tidy will develop an agreed framework for a national litter survey, building off the successful Local Environmental Quality methodology employed since 2001.

Keep Britain Tidy will source funding for delivery of the national litter survey and deliver the annual survey work, analyse the data and report on findings.

Keep Britain Tidy will also develop a volunteer led approach to data collection at inland sites, using campaigns such as the Great British Spring Clean.

Keep Britain Tidy will also work with partners in the Clean Europe Network to develop a framework for monitoring of litter in rivers and employ this monitoring on local rivers through our own projects, whilst seeking opportunities

to expand the monitoring to other key river catchments across the country.

## How can other organisations help?

### Government

We want government to make comprehensive litter survey, data collection and analysis an underpinning part of the national litter strategy.

We want government to support us in sourcing funding for a comprehensive litter survey.

We want government to convene an annual meeting of the Litter Strategy advisory group specifically aimed at reviewing results from the annual litter survey as a means of determining appropriate measures and interventions.

### Business

We want key business partners, particularly those whose products are routinely littered, to support the funding of an annual national litter survey.

### Local Authorities

Where Local Authorities have continued to collect data on littering in their operational area, we ask that the data is provided to government in order to provide additional data and information, over and above any agreed national data-set

### Community and Voluntary organisations

Where NGO's collect data on littering, we ask that the data is provided to government in order to provide additional data and information, over and above any agreed national data-set.

## Background to the need for litter monitoring

Keep Britain Tidy believes that development of

a national data-set on litter is a key element of an overall strategy for effectively eradicating littering as an issue.

In particular, the acquisition of robust data is a necessary pre-cursor to developing informed interventions, in the form of policy, legislation or local measures.

Good quality data-sets also provide information on changing societal and littering habits and help to determine success of particular interventions and measures.

Littering causes significant economic, social and environmental issues, with local authorities spending almost £800 million annually on street cleansing. Marine litter is also a major worldwide issue recognised by the EU and the UN, Marine plastics in particular cause death and injury to a range of marine species.

With 80% of litter in marine environments derived from land based sources, we believe it is critical to understand the manner in which litter is deposited on land and then transported via river catchments to the marine environment, if we are to develop targeted, cost effective and impactful interventions.

We therefore believe that a national data-set focused on understand the extent of litter present nationally, and the locations it is found is crucial to prioritise and target resources to develop effective and necessary interventions.

## **Why is litter not already monitored?**

Since 2001, Keep Britain Tidy has undertaken the Local Environmental Quality survey of England on behalf of Defra. Over up to 11,000 sites across England were surveyed annually providing an overview of changing trends in littering across a range of land-use types. However, funding for this survey was withdrawn by Defra in 2015 and this survey has ceased.

In addition, prior to 2010 local authorities

undertook their own litter monitoring to assess compliance with national indicator 195 (NI195), providing a wealth of additional local data. In 2010 the requirement to report against this standard was withdrawn. Subsequent cuts to local authority budgets have led to many councils ceasing monitoring of litter within their operational areas.

There is currently no national programme for monitoring of litter in rivers and canals.

The Marine Conservation Society's annual Beach Watch survey every September uses volunteers to record beach litter in line with OSPAR guidelines, but there is no correlation with land based surveying.

We believe that the success of a national litter strategy and any associated interventions can only be determined if an agreed and comprehensive annual monitoring programme is in place.