

PE2121/D: Run a targeted roadside litter awareness campaign

Scottish Government written submission, 23 April 2025

Thank you for your correspondence of 27 March 2025 seeking some additional information in respect of public petition PE2121. Please find below the Scottish Government's response to the Committee's follow-up questions.

1. Which organisations responsible for publicly funded littering campaigns since 2007

A number of organisations have delivered publicly funded litter prevention campaigns since 2007. These include:

- **Keep Scotland Beautiful (KSB)** – our long-standing delivery partner on public behaviour change and education campaigns.
- **Zero Waste Scotland (ZWS)** – delivered national communications on waste, recycling, and the circular economy, including anti-litter messages.
- **Local Authorities** – a number of local authorities have ran localised anti-littering campaigns, some using resources developed by ZWS.
- **Transport Scotland** – delivered trunk road signage and supported messaging related to roadside litter. Transport Scotland also uses its social media channels to share litter prevention messages, for example by supporting KSB's Spring Clean.

2. How much funding has gone into roadside litter campaigns since 2007?

Between 2007 and 2014, KSB received public funding from WRAP and then ZWS to support its *Clean Up Scotland* programme. While not exclusively a campaign, this supported a wide range of litter and flytipping prevention activity including data collection, local and national campaign elements (such as the annual Spring Clean), and community engagement.

KSB and ZWS have delivered or supported a number of roadside litter campaigns since 2007, KSB campaigns often utilise a mix of public and private sector funding. For example, KSB secured approximately £400,000 in private sector funding between 2016 and 2019 to develop and deliver the *Give Your Litter A Lift* campaign.

KSB's Year 2 action, as part of the delivery of the National Litter and Flytipping Strategy, was a pilot intervention on roadside litter, in Perth and Kinross, which was funded by grant funding from Zero Waste Scotland, and support from partners such as Perth and Kinross Council, Starbuck's and McDonalds.

ZWS has also contributed to roadside litter prevention. In 2014, it delivered the *Flinging's Minging* campaign as part of the Transport Litter Week of Action, with

posters, banners and social media assets for use by partners. Unfortunately, ZWS no longer hold records for the cost of this campaign.

In 2021, ZWS launched the national campaign *Scotland is Stunning – Let's Keep It That Way*, supported by Scottish Government and Keep Scotland Beautiful. The campaign featured relevant imagery and delivered a strong anti-litter message across media channels and won a number of awards. While not exclusively focused on roadsides, the campaign was developed to be flexible, and assets could be tailored to be utilised by local authorities or other organisations to create local assets. The total spend for this campaign was £114,000.

In addition, ZWS and KSB have supported broader activity contributing to roadside litter prevention. Examples include the *Forth Valley Litter Intervention* (which achieved a 10% reduction in food and drink packaging litter), KSB's *#ChooseToReuse* and *Conscious Consumption* campaigns, and the development of toolkits such as ZWS's *Anti-Litter Campaign Toolkit* and *Litter Prevention Toolkit for Food and Drink on the Go Retailers*. These initiatives have included messaging, behaviour change tools and sector-specific engagement aimed at reducing litter, including from vehicles.

Since 2018, KSB has also received Scottish Government funding via Marine Fund Scotland to deliver its *Upstream Battle* campaign, which supports the Marine Litter Strategy and includes upstream litter awareness in communities located near transport routes and waterways. No specific amount is allocated to communications actions.

While detailed cost data is not available for some historical interventions, the examples above demonstrate a mix of public and private investment in roadside litter prevention across the last two decades.

3. Information on the assessment made to close the 'Dumb Dumpers' phonenumber service

The Dumb Dumpers phonenumber and online reporting tool closed on 31 March 2023, following a strategic review led by SEPA. The closure reflected a shift in public behaviour, with the vast majority of flytipping reports now submitted directly to local authorities, a more effective route for investigation and enforcement.

Key considerations in the decision included:

- Less than 5% of Scotland's total flytipping reports came via Dumb Dumpers.
- Most Dumb Dumpers reports were simply redirected to Local Authorities, often duplicating direct public reports.
- A 2022 public perceptions survey found 92% of respondents would report flytipping directly to their Local Authority, with only 3% preferring Dumb Dumpers.
- A 2019 survey of Local Authorities found most preferred direct public reporting due to concerns around double handling and delays.
- The service was no longer deemed fit for purpose and did not allow the public to receive feedback on outcomes.

These decisions were informed by research into public perceptions of flytipping undertaken by Diffley Associates for Zero Waste Scotland in 2022: [Flytipping Survey | Zero Waste Scotland](#)

Flytipping reporting is now more straightforward, as it is always made to the relevant Local Authority via postcode-based services. Flytipping investigations remain the joint responsibility of Local Authorities and SEPA, with roles being further clarified through the work being undertaken through the extension of the SEPA led trial of a new enforcement approach model as set out in National Litter and Flytipping Strategy Year 2 Action plan.

4. In light of the UK extended producer responsibility scheme for packaging, what action the Scottish Government is taking to engage with producers to help coordinate litter control and reduce disposal costs

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for packaging is being implemented this year on a four nations basis across the UK. It will move the full cost of dealing with packaging waste from households away from local taxpayers and councils to the producers, applying the 'polluter-pays principle'. Packaging EPR will also incentivise businesses to reduce excess packaging, to design and use packaging that is easily recyclable, and encourage use of reusable and refillable packaging.

The Scottish Government remains committed to the principle that packaging EPR should cover the full net costs of both binned and ground litter cleanup and disposal. We want to ensure packaging EPR disincentivises producers from using packaging that contributes to litter, and that they take responsibility for the costs of littering across Scotland. We are working as four nations to agree how best to achieve this and what is needed to phase in obligations in a robust, fair and transparent way.

The Scottish Government also remains committed to the delivery of a successful Deposit Return Scheme for single use drinks containers to increase recycling rates for single use drinks containers to at least 90%. The introduction of this scheme in October 2027 will help to reduce litter including from our roads and will make a contribution to a more circular economy.

The Scheme Administrator, PackUK, appointed to deliver the UK's packaging EPR scheme, must also deliver public information campaigns to provide consumers and businesses with information about how to recycle, re-use and dispose of packaging, and prevent packaging from becoming litter. In developing the public information campaigns, the scheme administrator should consider how they will complement campaigns delivered at a local and nation level. PackUK is expected to set out its plans for public information campaigns in its Strategy and the specific activities it proposes to conduct for the coming year in its Operational Plan.

5. What actions will be taken to improve communications about littering at a national level

While the National Litter and Flytipping Strategy Delivery Group recognises that there is interest in a national campaign on litter it is not currently something that can be achieved within the resources available to delivery partners. Current actions on communications are included in the Year 1 update and Year 2 action plan and will continue to be reported on in the next update and action plan for year 3. Going

forward, there will clearly be a need to ensure that the introduction of new legislation, like the introduction of the littering from vehicles civil penalty, will require communications to raise awareness of the new penalty regime.

Through the Communications Sub-Group the delivery partner organisations are working on expanding opportunities to engage with stakeholders and the public as much as possible within the resources available, this is mainly achieved through online channels, press releases highlighting activities undertaken to deliver the Strategy and by attending relevant events, this is an ongoing process that will be continued through the 6 years of delivering the Strategy.

Transport Scotland has indicated that they are planning to run a targeted litter campaign in 2025 working with the National Litter and Flytipping Strategy delivery partners, which will look to encourage behaviour change, enhance Infrastructure and services and consider enforcement.

6. Whether the sub-group will consider a national campaign targeted at companies

The NLFS Communications Sub-Group was established to ensure consistent messaging and improved coordination across partners. Its role includes, supporting delivery priorities, sharing communications activities and ensuring the maximum reach of the communications actions that delivery partners take.

The Group has not discussed the potential of a national campaign to businesses as there would not be resources to undertake this activity at this time. However, this will be added to the Group's workplan so they can consider what action could be taken, within existing resources.

7. Whether the forthcoming littering provisions in the Act will cover unintentional littering from commercial vehicles.

Section 18 of the Circular Economy (Scotland) Act 2024, once commenced, will enable the Scottish Ministers to make regulations providing for the issuance of civil penalties for littering from vehicles.

The civil penalty regime will apply where an authorised officer is satisfied, on the balance of probabilities, that a littering offence under Section 87 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 has occurred from a vehicle. This standard is lower than the criminal threshold of "beyond reasonable doubt".

The powers are sufficiently broad to include scenarios where litter is unintentionally released from improperly secured loads and not retrieved. In such circumstances, a civil penalty could be applied where the facts support a breach of Section 87.

Section 18 has not yet been commenced. The Scottish Government will consult on draft regulations, including the procedure, appeals mechanism, and exemptions, in due course. A date for commencement will be confirmed following consultation.

I hope this information is helpful.

Circular Economy Division