

This is Our Home – A Manifesto For a Cleaner England

Referenced Version

March 2010



About Keep Britain Tidy

Keep Britain Tidy is an environmental charity working to achieve cleaner, greener places for everyone. We campaign in England against litter and neglect, providing advice and leading others by inspiring practical action and better policy. With our origins in the 1950s anti-litter campaigns, we now focus on the range of issues affecting where people live including fly-tipping, fly-posting, graffiti, antisocial behaviour and abandoned vehicles. We run programmes such as Eco-Schools, Blue Flag and Quality Coast Awards for beaches, and the Green Flag for parks to demonstrate practical action. We are part funded through Government and other income is secured through training, consultancy and sponsorship. For more information on how you can make a change visit www.keepbritaintidy.org.

Dr Kevin Golding-Williams

March 2010

Keep Britain Tidy would like to thank all of its stakeholders and staff for their input into this document over the last year through the Keep Britain Tidy Network, manifesto conversation events and All Party Parliamentary Group. Particular thanks go to those people who acted as external reviewers for this series of evidence papers.

Copyright © 2010 Keep Britain Tidy

The information contained in this report is owned by Keep Britain Tidy. You are welcome to draw on the information contained within this report with appropriate acknowledgement of Keep Britain Tidy.

For further information on the work of Keep Britain Tidy, please contact us at:

Keep Britain Tidy

Elizabeth House

The Pier

Wigan

WN3 4EX

Tel: 01942 612621

Fax: 01942 824778

www.keepbritaintidy.org/ourhome

Contents

A Cleaner England	4
Inspirational and Decisive Leadership	6
Partnership with a Shared Vision and Clear Goals	9
Building Personal Responsibility	12
Contact Information	15

A Cleaner England

We know that local people care deeply about the way their local environment looks, and it's easy to understand why. Local environmental quality¹ affects us all as soon as we step out of our front doors – from litter on the street and graffiti on children's play equipment, through to having safe access to parks and the freedom to walk and play.

Local environmental quality is vitally important and underpins society as a whole. Its reach is vast – from improving wellbeing and health, reducing crime and antisocial behaviour, through to creating accessible green spaces, tackling climate change and contributing to a vibrant economy. What links these key issues is a dependency on local neighbourhoods being clean, green, attractive and safe.

In the past 20 years, there has been substantial progress in the way that local places are managed. Yet far too many of our streets, towns and rural areas still continue to be blighted by litter, graffiti, fly-tipping and antisocial behaviour. This leads to a lower quality of life for residents and hinders economic performance. We believe it is more cost effective to use public funds to tackle the causes rather than the symptoms of these problems. In 2007/8, the total street cleaning bill for England was over £780m – enough to build almost three new hospitals or 30 new secondary schools².

Our view is that only by working in partnership can we win the battle to create high-quality, well-managed neighbourhoods – respected and enjoyed by all. By creating and sustaining surroundings which local people are proud of, they will have the chance to thrive and our children will be better placed to grow up healthy, engaged members of society. We are calling for a combined effort over the next decade from a wide range of national and local organisations to turn around the state of our nation's local environments in a concerted campaign for a cleaner England.

¹ We define local environmental quality as being the physical condition of the local environment to which the public has access or which they can see, whether publicly or privately owned – relating to general appearance as well as the management and maintenance standards which are evident.

² Local Government Financial Statistics No.19, DCLG (2009); Hansard 30th April, House of Commons (2009); Hansard 2nd June, House of Commons (2009)

How the evidence adds up

Over the past year, we have evaluated the impact of local environmental quality policy and practice in its broadest form in England. We've looked back over the years since our founding in 1954 and particularly the last 20 years, following the introduction of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and subsequent Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005. We've also examined relevant evidence from abroad.

Through our research, we've spoken with many individuals from a wide variety of organisations involved in delivering a cleaner, greener England. This gave us the chance to engage with knowledgeable and concerned individuals at conferences, workshops and in discussion sessions. What's more, our research team has undertaken a major review of the literature that covers local environmental issues. The results are published in four supporting evidence papers on our website at www.keepbritaintidy.org/ourhome.

These papers also contain more specific recommendations to support the challenges detailed in this document.

Our challenge to the nation – join us in making a difference

For us to truly bring about a change in the state of local environments over the next decade, it is essential that the effort is collaborative. We need to take a combined approach, both working with individuals and a wide range of organisations – locally and nationally. Our challenges to all of those involved in delivering a cleaner, safer England follow on the next pages under three key principles for delivering change:

- **Inspirational and decisive leadership**
- **Partnership with a shared vision and clear goals**
- **Building personal responsibility**

Inspirational and Decisive Leadership

We challenge the new government to produce a fresh approach to improving local environments as soon as possible, building on the ‘Living Places: Cleaner, Safer, Greener’ report³, produced almost a decade ago⁴.

We believe that government should reflect the concerns of local people about the places in which they live, work and play. They need to lead a cross-departmental approach to improving quality of life where it really matters – on people’s doorsteps. This issue is far too important to be fragmented and disconnected from wider concerns, and requires national focus to enable local action⁵.

We call on the new government to commit to a strategy for improving local environments. This should include the creation of a ‘cross-departmental forum’ with ministers responsible for local environmental quality, public health, communities and antisocial behaviour. We will work with the new government to hold a high profile summit during its first months in office. This would raise the profile of quality local environments and engage with the wide range of players who have a part to play in improving environmental quality. It would offer leadership for local action across England and help to ensure a whole government approach to tackling the causes of local environmental quality issues. We stand ready to offer our full support.

We call for local and national representatives to provide their communities with strong local environmental political leadership⁶.

Local environmental services are one of the biggest concerns named by local people. Despite this, they are seldom seen as a mechanism for delivering wider wellbeing and quality of life objectives.

³ ODPM (2002)

⁴ Legislative development – from living places to the CNEA 2005 – Evidence Paper One

⁵ Stronger national government leadership – Evidence Paper Four

⁶ Stronger national government leadership and stronger local government environmental leadership – Evidence Paper Four

We will support political representatives to enable them to deliver high quality local environments that will support community engagement⁷, promote health⁸, consider the climate⁹, reduce antisocial behaviour¹⁰, create positive educational outcomes¹¹ and provide better access to green spaces¹².

Achieving this will free resources to deliver improvements in the communities they represent. Improving quality will reduce the wasted costs of collecting litter, removing chewing gum and graffiti and repairing vandalism. We stand ready to support local authorities and other public bodies to improve local quality of life for residents through this cross-cutting approach to local places.

We challenge land managers to drive innovation, efficiencies and good practice so that all strive to match the best in their field.

There has been much improvement in the standards of land management in many parts of England in the last decade. But there is still a need for land managers – those with responsibility for managing, cleansing or who own land in the public realm – to develop training and skills as a key element of delivering better maintained local places¹³. Other land managers – including the transport and highways operators, inland waterways, housing providers, farmers, forestry, shopping centre and facilities managers – also have an essential part to play. Not only must services be managed ever more efficiently, but opportunities for achieving added value across services and in conjunction with communities must also be seized¹⁴.

To keep moving forward, we will continue to promote the exchange of good practice and professional development¹⁵, ensuring that all those working to achieve cleaner places understand and have the confidence to use the full power of existing local environmental quality legislation¹⁶.

⁷ Individual leadership – Evidence Paper Four

⁸ Health – Evidence Paper Two

⁹ Climate change – Evidence Paper Two

¹⁰ Antisocial behaviour – Evidence Paper Two

¹¹ Education and campaigns – Evidence Paper Three

¹² Green infrastructure, local environments and health – Evidence Paper Two

¹³ The role of training and skills development – Evidence Paper Four

¹⁴ Leadership in service delivery – Evidence Paper Four

¹⁵ Best practice network – Evidence Paper Four

¹⁶ Enforcement – Evidence Paper Four

Furthermore, we will challenge and support land managers to become more efficient and effective in applying their available resources during a period of financial austerity¹⁷. In order to help councils deliver effective services to local people, there is the need for legislation to be reviewed in limited, but significant areas, including aquatic litter and litter from vehicles¹⁸.

We urge manufacturers and retailers to play their full part in achieving a cleaner England.

By improving product design, manufacturers can help to bring about a reduction in the impact of litter on local environments, thus supporting the delivery of cleaner, greener places. It is almost 20 years since innovative design enabled the blight of ring pulls to be removed from England's streets. A similar innovative approach to product design is required for contemporary issues, such as smoking related litter, fast food packaging and discarded chewing gum. Success will require creative thinking, innovation, education and the facilities to enable everyone to do the right thing¹⁹.

For our streets to become cleaner there is not just the need for packaging waste to be reduced and recycling initiatives improved, the country also needs enhanced facilities for the storage, collection and disposal of waste and litter²⁰. Clear and consistent messages to consumers, householders and small businesses are essential²¹. We support further research into deposit schemes and other mechanisms for certain waste streams to incentivise positive environmental behaviour²². We will work with government and industry on these important issues.

Local businesses should follow responsible waste management practices to reduce their impact on local environments, as well as taking the lead in local improvement initiatives²³.

¹⁷ Costs – Evidence Paper Four

¹⁸ CNEA – five years on – Evidence Paper One

¹⁹ Where are we today? – Evidence Paper One

²⁰ The role of bins – Evidence Paper Three

²¹ Driving forward improvements in service delivery – Evidence Paper Four

²² Bottle deposit schemes – Evidence Paper Three

²³ Driving forward improvements in service delivery – Evidence Paper Four

We will continue to reward good environmental practice through initiatives such as Responsible Retailer Agreements and the Keep Britain Tidy Business Awards²⁴.

We are committed to working with manufacturers, retailers and businesses to enable them to take the lead and deliver voluntary improvement action to achieve all of these aims – and will press for enforcement should voluntary approaches prove ineffective.

Partnership with a Shared Vision and Clear Goals

We challenge everyone who has a role to play to join forces in achieving cleaner, greener places for all.

The delivery of cleaner, greener places calls for cross-sector working and a move away from historical silo practices through to more contemporary strategic partnerships²⁵. We want the service providers responsible for the delivery of cleaner, greener, safer places to move beyond their comfort zones. They must engage more effectively with other emerging cross-linking agendas, such as health, antisocial behaviour and climate change²⁶.

We know that residents don't feel safe enough to walk in their local area if there is graffiti on the walls and broken glass on the street. By working together, local councils and Primary Care Trusts, for example, can help ensure that their investments to tackle mental and physical health issues through exercise initiatives in local areas are not wasted²⁷.

²⁴ Driving forward improvements in service delivery – Evidence Paper Four

²⁵ Stronger national government environmental leadership and driving forward improvements in service delivery – Evidence Paper Four

²⁶ Evidence Paper Two

²⁷ Green infrastructure, local environments and health – Evidence Paper Two

Businesses and the private sector must consider the role they have in working with the public and the third sector. In particular, ensuring the places they operate in and from are not blighted by poor quality environments as a result of actions by their staff, suppliers or customers²⁸. We will continue to bring together and challenge those in the public and private sector to deliver improved places for all.

Many local land managers report difficulties arising from mixed messages offered by parts of the media. Whilst generally supportive of campaigns and other efforts to improve local environmental quality, on occasion enforcement efforts by local authorities and others are reported in a critical way. Whilst we encourage enforcement agencies to use their powers in a proportionate manner and in the context of wider educational strategies, we will work with the media to highlight the challenges involved in local action²⁹.

National and local voluntary and community organisations also have an important part to play. Often trusted by the public, with their own expertise and reach into the community, we will work with third sector organisations to encourage and support volunteering, practical improvement action, local engagement and raised awareness and ‘ownership’ of localities throughout the country³⁰. We will also work in partnership with third sector partners through our own programmes including the Big Tidy Up, Green Flag Awards for green spaces, RiverCare and Eco-Schools.

Above all everyone needs to work together to make it easy for individuals, households, communities and small businesses to do the right thing.

We urge the development of a gold standard award for the best managed places.

Our research shows that it should be standard practice to consider the sustainability, maintainability and durability of public spaces during the design and planning process – rather than it being an after thought. This will ensure that the development of new public spaces – large or small – helps rather than hinders in the delivery of high quality places.

²⁸ Driving forward improvements in service delivery – Evidence Paper Four & Where are we today? Evidence Paper One

²⁹ Enforcement – Evidence Paper Four

³⁰ The role of community empowerment – Evidence Paper Four

This is particularly true of paved areas, landscaping, the location of litter bins and places where litter can become trapped, but it also applies to designing vibrant yet safe public spaces for all users. By ensuring potential problems are prevented at the design stage as opposed to the more expensive option of tackling problems once public spaces are built, the public sector would make significant resource savings³¹.

Introducing a publicly recognised standard for the quality of the design, management, maintenance and safety of local places would require effective engagement with local residents and businesses, together with utility companies, public transport operatives and others who have a role in delivering high quality local environments. We will work with government and interested partners to further develop such a standard³².

We call for a new research framework to better understand and improve local environments.

Our review has identified a lack of original research to provide the evidence base required to tackle local environmental problems associated with local places. Whilst much important evidence is available – for example on the importance of local environments to improve health outcomes³³ and quality of life³⁴ – there are still many gaps.

These range from the operational, such as the role of bin placement³⁵, to the strategic, for example the long-term effectiveness of education and behaviour change programmes³⁶.

With the support of government and a partnership of research bodies, practitioners, business and academia, we will help to fill these research deficiencies. Without addressing this lack of evidence, the measures required to deliver welcoming and valued local places throughout England cannot reach their full potential.

³¹ Design – Evidence Paper Two

³² Changing the role of design for cleaner places – Evidence Paper Two

³³ Green Infrastructure, Local Environments and Health – Evidence Paper Two

³⁴ Bringing it all together – a measure of quality of life and quality of place – Evidence Paper Two

³⁵ Bins – Evidence Paper Three

³⁶ Education and campaigns – Evidence Paper Three

Building Personal Responsibility

We will encourage people to take more personal responsibility for the quality of their local environments.

The range of behaviours we demonstrate as a nation has a profound impact on the quality of the places in which we live, work and play. Whether we are householders, drivers, workers or consumers, or are simply going about our daily lives, we all have an impact³⁷. We know that four-fifths of the population either never, or rarely, litter³⁸. We must build on this majority and ensure that they are supported in taking personal responsibility by reinforcing good behaviours and making it easy to do the right thing³⁹.

We have been campaigning for cleaner environments for over 50 years with many partners and our campaigns – particularly those in the last decade – have helped to make some improvements⁴⁰. Unfortunately, this is all too often offset by wider social changes such as the rising popularity of ‘food on the go’ and the indoor smoking ban⁴¹. To achieve a cultural shift in this decade, there not only needs to be a change in behaviour, the norms and values underlying such behaviour need to improve too⁴².

This can only be achieved through a long-term commitment, coupled with tangible investment⁴³.

We are committed to working with a wide range of organisations and with central and local government to deliver a sustained campaign over the next 10 years.

³⁷ The role of values, norms and behaviours – Evidence Paper Three

³⁸ Unpublished research, Keep Britain Tidy (2010)

³⁹ The role of values, norms and behaviours – Evidence Paper Three

⁴⁰ Campaigns – Evidence Paper Three

⁴¹ Where are we today? – Evidence Paper One

⁴² The role of values, norms and behaviours – Evidence Paper Three

⁴³ Campaigns – Evidence Paper Three

We will promote collective responsibility through engagement, education and empowerment.

It is vital, we believe, for local people to feel engaged and empowered to make a difference in the places they live and work⁴⁴. Only through civic ownership can our vision for cleaner, greener places truly become a reality. For local people to bring about change, they need support⁴⁵. We will provide this by continuing to actively champion collective responsibility through our initiatives like the Big Tidy Up, Eco-Schools and RiverCare⁴⁶. We will also carry on our partnership work with local authorities, housing providers and third sector organisations⁴⁷.

Working with the next generation to instil active values and behaviours in caring for the local environment and the planet is a vital task. Almost two-thirds of the schools in England have signed up for the pupil-led Eco-Schools programme and 1,000 now fly a coveted green flag. We are committed to working with a wide range of interested organisations and with the schools to educate young people about the importance of the environment – and the role they can play in looking after it⁴⁸.

We can only succeed together.

We challenge everyone who shares our vision to work with us to help make England the cleaner, greener country we know it can be. Only with national leadership⁴⁹ coupled with active local support⁵⁰ and the facilitation of local action by our citizens⁵¹, businesses⁵² and public bodies⁵³ can we meet the challenges of the next 10 years.

On our part, we will establish a Keep Britain Tidy campaign for a new decade; and we will use our influence to help develop the wide-ranging partnerships we're calling for.

⁴⁴ The role of community empowerment – Evidence Paper Four

⁴⁵ The role of community empowerment – Evidence Paper Four

⁴⁶ The role of community empowerment – Evidence Paper Four

⁴⁷ Manifesto case study: Big Tidy Up, locally driven change – Evidence Paper Three

⁴⁸ Education – Evidence Paper Three

⁴⁹ Stronger national government leadership – Evidence Paper Four

⁵⁰ Stronger local government environmental leadership – Evidence Paper Four

⁵¹ The role of community empowerment – Evidence Paper Four

⁵² Driving forward improvements in service delivery – Evidence Paper Four

⁵³ Driving forward improvements in service delivery – Evidence Paper Four

We will also continue to campaign for the rights of local people to expect good quality local environments and to play their part in achieving them. We are committed to using the resources available to us to build the partnerships to encourage everyone to take personal and collective responsibility in helping to achieve this aim.

We will support others to deliver improved local environments, whilst continuing to lead and champion the local environmental quality agenda to achieve the vision for a cleaner, greener and more attractive England, respected and enjoyed by all by 2020.

Contact Information

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you have any questions or would like to discuss any element of this report.

Dr Kevin Golding-Williams

Senior Executive - Policy Research

Keep Britain Tidy

Elizabeth House

The Pier

Wigan

WN3 4EX

Tel: 01474 707033

Email: kevin.williams@keepbritaintidy.org

