

KEEP  
BRITAIN  
TIDY

LOVE  
where  
YOU  
Live

# The Big Litter Inquiry

The public's voice on litter





When it comes to  
LITTER:

Which **SIDE**  
of the  
**FENCE**  
are **YOU?**  
on ●



**The Big Litter Inquiry**  
The public's voice on litter

*is part of Keep Britain Tidy's campaign*

**When it comes to litter:  
Which Side of the Fence are you on**



# The Big Litter Inquiry

## The public's voice on litter

The Big Litter Inquiry took place in spring 2013 and was an opportunity for people to learn, debate and call for changes in how we tackle litter.

Street cleansing alone costs taxpayers almost £1 billion a year in England. The social and environmental costs take that figure even higher, as do the costs to business and tourism. Despite promising action on preventing litter in the coalition agreement, the government has stepped away. But Keep Britain Tidy hasn't given up and neither have our 100,000 supporters.

Our Big Litter Inquiry gave people across England a voice on what to do about litter and an opportunity to actively call for changes in how we tackle the problem.

More and more people, businesses and other organisations are making it clear which side of the fence they are on. They're choosing to fight litter.

**Which side of the fence  
are you on?**

## About Keep Britain Tidy

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### **Where we live matters**

Cleaner streets, parks and beaches provide the backbone for strong communities.

### **How we live matters**

By preserving scarce resources, wasting less and recycling more, we create a healthier society and a healthier planet, too.

### **Keep Britain Tidy campaigns to improve the environment**

We are an independent charity, which fights for people's right to live and work in places of which they can be proud.

A single truth underpins our success – caring for the environment is the first step to a better society.

60 years ago, we started with litter. Today we do much more. We work at the heart of business, government and the community to help people understand that what's good for the environment is also good for us.

### **But our future depends entirely on your support**

If you care about the wellbeing of your family and you care about the world your grandchildren will inherit, join us in taking greater responsibility. Respect for our planet begins with respect for our neighbourhoods.

**Love where you live.  
Keep Britain Tidy.**



## It starts with LITTER...

### Litter is one of the first signs of social decay

If we don't care about litter on our street, in our parks or on our high streets, we are unlikely to care about other environmental issues that negatively impact on our lives, our communities and society.

Litter has always been at the heart of Keep Britain Tidy. It is what we are best known for and relates to all of our work – for example, it effects the quality of our parks and beaches, it is the first issue a child may become aware of when considering the environmental impact of humans and it is a misplaced resource that could be recycled and reused.



## Executive Summary

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**Street cleansing alone costs taxpayers almost £1 billion a year in England. The social and environmental costs take that figure even higher, as do the costs to business and tourism. We can no longer afford to keep paying this bill. Luckily there is a simple solution – make it socially unacceptable to drop litter.**

At the same time Keep Britain Tidy, England's leading anti-litter charity, is in transition. The government has stepped away from funding us and we need to become more accountable to our supporters and the wider public. We want to listen, learn and develop ideas to stop litter together; this is why we launched our Big Litter Inquiry to give the public a voice on litter.

### The public's voice on litter

*The Big Litter Inquiry took place between March and June 2013 and was an opportunity for people to learn, debate and call for changes in how we tackle litter.*

Our inquiry took a representative sample of England's population from the north and the south and put them in a room for two days, along with some environmental campaigners and a dash of national and local government officials and business representatives. Day one created an opportunity for people to learn, debate and properly engage in some of the issues surrounding litter. On day two, the participants used this knowledge to develop solutions focused on how Keep Britain Tidy could work with others to tackle litter in England. Alongside the workshops we undertook a representative poll across England to pull in the wider views of the public on litter. The results were very revealing.

## Day 1: Engagement with litter

*“Litter breeds litter and the flipside is true – ... tidy breeds tidy.”*  
Female, Croydon

*“They [cigarette butts] tend to squash up in the rain and disappear.”*  
Male, Preston

*“The wildlife impact isn’t something everyone thinks of straight away... but health is.”*  
Male, Preston

*“If it’s in my garden yes [I’ll pick it up], I’m not going to roam the street for litter.”*  
Male, Preston

The first day of The Big Litter Inquiry built the participants’ knowledge and awareness of litter from a variety of different perspectives, as well as giving them time to consider more a subject that many are quickly seen to have opinions on, but have often never really spent any time discussing in depth.

### 1. Perspectives on litter

People care deeply about the places they live and they felt strongly that litter was associated with other negative aspects of where they live, things like graffiti, feeling unsafe or a lack of community pride.

### 2. Perceptions matter

The perception of litter may be very different to the volume present. For example smokers often tend not to even consider used cigarette butts as litter or notice gum on the pavement. Dog fouling, although typically found less frequently, was perceived to be highly prevalent and offensive.

### 3. Engagement with litter

Many participants at the beginning of the day gave little thought to litter and its impacts. As their knowledge developed, however, they become much more engaged. This was especially observed in response to discussions about the impact of litter on society and wildlife, the economic cost to taxpayers to clean up litter. Talking about the local impacts makes a huge difference to making litter resonate with people.

### 4. Whose responsibility is it?

Participants viewed that litter was primarily the responsibility of individuals that littered, although the council was thought to have a key role to play to make it easier to prevent litter.

Producers and manufacturers of products and packaging that ends up as litter were also considered to play a role, for example funding anti-litter campaigns.

## Executive Summary

*"I found it flabbergasting... the Government spent a lot of money cleaning up for the Olympics and now we're going totally the other way."*

Male, Croydon

*"Sometimes, I feel they [big brands] prefer the litter to be on the streets because, it is advertising for them, I know it sounds ridiculous ..."*

Male, Croydon

The role of central government and businesses in preventing litter was more opaque to participants but a funding and leadership role was identified. The public think that relevant businesses and the government should take more responsibility for litter (82% and 72% questioned respectively).

## Day 2: Co-creation of ideas to prevent litter

The second day of each workshop was dedicated to co-creation of new ideas for activities and campaigns that Keep Britain Tidy could take forward. Six ideas were developed.

### Idea 1: Getting children into good habits

Litter picks are a great initiative for children as they see the issue and immediate benefits from cleaning it.

This campaign built on a widely shared perception, that a cause of the increase in littering is poor parenting and a decline in 'respect' among younger people. The campaign should focus on secondary school-age children, with a view to thinking about how their behaviour could be affected in all of the different arenas of their lives: home; school; where they go to take part in activities, or hang out after school and at weekends.

**Eco-Schools**, a Keep Britain Tidy schools-based programme, which covers 70% of the schools in England, is a great starting point for this campaign. Our approach would entail:

- Ensure messages are communicated early enough and in a relevant and engaging way
- Messages have to be consistent between school and home
- Messages should be communicated throughout the different



stages of childhood, and

- Solutions should enable children to have fun, learn new skills and be creative in order to be effective

### Idea 2: Working with students in higher education

There are always tensions between local communities and transient student populations – understanding and trust always helps and there are lots of things relating to litter that can help.

In both Croydon and Preston there was discussion about the negative impact a student population can have on some neighbourhoods. Any solutions would need to involve and bring together the local community and the student population.

**Our Common Place** is an existing programme that builds communities by working on environmental issues. It could be adapted to focus on communities with a high proportion of students.

#### This campaign would aim to:

- Build a sense of ownership, community and pride among students in the areas in which they live;
- Work with landlords to drive up the standards of accommodation, and
- Get students working with local residents to become more engaged within their communities.

### Idea 3: Helping people to work as a community and take pride in their area

*Pride and care for a place that is clean and tidy almost always translates into future prevention of litter.*

This campaign addresses a feeling that is consistently raised, that part of the reason for the increase in littering is a general decline in a sense of community and the responsibilities that flow from a feeling of being part of a community.

Existing Keep Britain Tidy work in this area could be built on, including our **Love Where You Live** campaign, our **Big Tidy Up** and our **Care** programmes.

## Executive Summary

### Idea 4: Bringing communities together around litter

*The majority of English residents (85%) feel some level of concern about the appearance of their local area (Keep Britain Tidy Poll, 2013).*

The challenge this campaign seeks to address is the difficulty of motivating people to start changing their area, when it seems such a huge and sometimes hopeless task for individuals and small groups in isolation. This campaign seeks to build awareness of the impact of litter, in order to get local activities started, widen the involvement of the local community in those activities and support in guidance on sustaining them.

Our new **Litter - Which Side of the Fence are you on?** campaign aims to put litter prevention back on the map and calls for communities, businesses and government to be part of the litter solution.

### Idea 5: The Keep Britain Tidy local behavioural change plan

*When told about the annual cost of clearing litter from the streets, over two thirds of the English public feel the government should invest more in preventing litter in the first place (Keep Britain Tidy Poll, 2013).*

Even when groups of willing local people get together to improve their areas, participants still felt that the behaviour of some groups and individuals might let down these efforts, indicating a wider programme of behaviour change is needed.

Participants felt that for many, littering can often be subconscious and unthinking, especially for some people such as smokers, or on particular occasions, such as sporting events, concerts, or during a night out. Because people are unaware of the impacts of littering, they are unlikely to reconsider their behaviour unless it is disrupted through thought-provoking campaigns and communications.

Keep Britain Tidy has just begun a new programme focusing on working with a **network** of local land managers to identify and scale solutions to prevent litter. We will be embarking on a series of **social experiments** to test how we can change the behaviour of litterers over the next 18 months and working through our network of land managers to share and scale the ones that work best.

### Idea 6: Getting businesses to play their part.

*39% of the public would be more likely to purchase from a “good” business seen to be working to reduce litter, while 34% would avoid purchasing from a business they associate with branded litter (Keep Britain Tidy Poll, 2013).*

Businesses were not identified as bearing primary responsibility for people littering around the vicinity of their premises, or for people throwing wrappings and waste from the products they manufacture. Participants, however, could easily recall particular retailers who they perceived to behave responsibly or less responsibly, and the positive and negative impacts that this behaviour has on the local area. Results from the wider poll demonstrated that people feel businesses do have a role to play and that it can be negative to business when their recognisable brands are seen as litter.

Keep Britain Tidy is currently working with **national businesses** to do more to prevent litter and through local business improvement districts to improve town centres. We also, alongside our supporters, undertake a national branded litter survey called **England’s Great Litter Count** that names and shames brands found in the gutter.



## Executive Summary

### Litter is a sleeping giant

The majority of our participants arrived at the Big Litter Inquiry workshops believing that there was little or nothing that could be done to stop people dropping litter.

Despite pessimism of pre-existing views, on learning more about the issue, all participants were shocked at the impacts, full scale of the problem and the cost of litter. This 'penny-drop' moment motivated people to decide something had to be done to tackle litter, especially after hearing that litter costs taxpayers and councils almost £1bn to clean up.

For too long litter has been a sleeping giant. It's a huge problem that has been brushed aside to focus on wider waste, resource and sustainability issues. The Big Litter Inquiry demonstrated that when people start to explore and re-engage with an issue, things quickly change.

Litter is a drain on our economy, jobs, house prices, environment, health and communities across the country. Our challenge as Keep Britain Tidy is to raise awareness and passion that litter is bad for people, businesses and the government, so that positive action is taken across society.

### Which side of the fence are you on?

The Big Litter Inquiry is one part of Keep Britain Tidy's new campaign **Which Side of the Fence are you on?** It calls on government, businesses and communities to be part of the litter solution. The Big Litter Inquiry, through this report, represents the voice of the public on litter and the solutions developed by Keep Britain Tidy and the public together to prevent litter.

It is clear that as members of the public become more engaged on the issues and impact resulting from litter their views and attitudes change. If there is one overarching recommendation arising from this report it is that we are collectively failing to make litter a priority - for government on the policy table, businesses through their CSR plans and sustainability strategies and the public through the impact that dropped items can make.



Keep Britain Tidy is determined to change this. We believe litter is a starting point and if people do not even care about litter why would they care about the other environmental issues that impact on our society and economy.

Working with the public on the Big Litter Inquiry highlighted to us that we are on the right track. The range of tools and programmes that we are already running, in schools and communities and engaging local and national businesses are an effective starting point for reducing litter across England. We need to develop these programmes, run campaigns around them and work more effectively with people to help address litter more efficiently and effectively.

This is why we need everyone to join us on the right side of the fence and fight litter together.



## The Big Litter Inquiry

### The Big Litter Inquiry took place in spring 2013

*It was an opportunity for people to learn, debate and call for changes in how we tackle litter in England.*

Keep Britain Tidy held the Big Litter Inquiry to explore what people really thought about litter, and what they thought communities, businesses and government could do to reduce it.

It is part of Keep Britain Tidy's new campaign Which Side of the Fence are you on?, which calls for governments, businesses and communities to be part of the litter solution. The Big Litter Inquiry and this report represents the voice of the public on litter.

### Which side of the fence?

*When it comes to litter you either drop it or you don't. Litter is decisive - which side of the fence are you on?*

Our new campaign calls for businesses, government, land managers and people to be part of the solution and join us on the right side of the fence when it comes to litter.

#### Without people there wouldn't be litter

*62% of people in England drop litter, although only 28% admit to it<sup>i</sup>*

The cost of cleaning up all that litter costs taxpayers almost £1bn every year. It is detrimental to our health, the environment, the economy and is associated with crime and anti-social behaviour.

38% of the population do not drop litter and more than 100,000 people already support Keep Britain Tidy. They are working to improve places across England and many more individuals and groups are actively involved in cleaning up the places where they live and work, improving community spirit, wellbeing and pride.

#### Without businesses there would be nothing to drop

*Many manufacturers and retailers produce items and packaging that ends up as litter.*

The increase in fast food and consumption, especially 'on the go', has had a significant impact on the amount and types of litter thrown on the ground and out of car windows. This littering behaviour has an impact on the businesses that make and sell these products, as well as on the environment.

A recent Keep Britain Tidy survey revealed that 34% of people in England<sup>ii</sup> would be less likely to buy from a company whose packaging they saw littered and 82% of respondents thought businesses should do more to prevent litter.

Despite this, the vast majority of businesses do little to prevent litter, for example by educating their customers or funding anti-litter campaigns. Furthermore, retailers in littered areas are likely to lose out on custom from people and tourists shopping or visiting elsewhere.

On the other hand, some companies are recognising that their business is part of the community and understand that when their products are seen as litter on our streets, it can have a negative impact on their brand.

These companies are leading the way and some already work with Keep Britain Tidy, organising local litter picks, educating their customers and backing campaigns that encourage people to do the right thing.

### **Without government we cannot win the war on litter**

*Local authorities have a legal obligation to provide litter bins and keep their streets, parks and public spaces clean.*

But they are struggling to meet competing demands with ever-decreasing budgets. This national non-stop clean-up effort is not sustainable.

At the same time, central government in Whitehall has stepped away from this agenda, leaving it to cash-strapped local authorities and other land managers to deal with. In fact, from a recent survey of local land managers across England nearly nine in 10 (87%) do not think that the Coalition Government has achieved their commitment to reduce litter while 72% of the public agreed that the government should do more<sup>iii</sup>.

Outside England other governments, including the Welsh Assembly and the Dutch and Canadian governments, recognise that litter is a significant public issue and are taking innovative steps, including deposit schemes and packaging levies, to help solve the problem. We need the government here to follow their example.

## 1. Introduction

### A national clean-up effort

*Litter and cleanliness can have a significant impact on how people feel about the places where they live, work and play.*

Litter is seen as a ubiquitous part of everyday life - the result of the actions of a minority of people who 'don't care' and a generation of younger people who aren't taught to respect their neighbourhood.

Over many years, it has gradually become more acceptable for people to drop litter. It is only thanks to the efforts of local authority teams and other land managers, cleaning our streets seven days a week, that we are not swimming in cigarette ends, fast-food packaging and crisp packets.

### The price we pay to keep our nation tidy

*Each year, local authorities across England spend almost £1bn clearing litter from our streets, parks, highways and public spaces<sup>iv</sup>. This is the price we all pay as taxpayers to keep our nation clean.*

There will always be a cost to empty litter from bins, but if people did the right thing, a large part of this £1bn could be spent on other services. These are services that are also under threat, that are being cut and that are vital to individuals and to society.

Let's take a couple of examples. In Dorset, it took the local authority team five nights to clean a five-mile section of the A338, during which they collected nearly two tonnes of rubbish. The bill for the council tax-payers of Dorset for this one clean-up? £10,000<sup>v</sup>. In England, there are more than 29,000 miles of main roads, therefore to clean each and every road would cost £290m.

Chewing gum is a serious problem for land managers. It never biodegrades and once it is trodden into the pavement, it requires specialised equipment to remove. The bill for cleaning up the chewing gum from an average town centre is £20,000 – and often needs to be done up three times a year<sup>vi</sup>. That's £60,000 of avoidable expenditure. Multiply that for the 936 towns in England and £56m of taxpayers money is wasted.



## England in austerity - challenges and opportunities

*With large cuts already to local authority budgets and a further 10% cut just announced for 2015-16<sup>vii</sup>, total spending across four key areas – adult social care, children's services, planning, and culture and leisure – is falling in more than half of the authorities surveyed in a recent Guardian newspaper poll<sup>vii</sup>.*

There is evidence that cutting back funding in cleaning up litter could be a false economy, due to the impact on:

- Local economic vibrancy
- Feelings of safety and wellbeing
- Neighbourhood satisfaction

However, it's not just local authorities that are going through difficult times. Keep Britain Tidy's own governmental grant funding virtually finishes in early 2014. While this poses great challenges, it also gives us more independence as a charity. Keep Britain Tidy is undergoing a transition. In the past we have been accountable to government, now we are firmly accountable to our supporters - people who live across the country.

What is clear is that this situation is unlikely to change and a climate of austerity is likely to be with us for the foreseeable future. This means local authorities are and will have to radically change the way they deliver services

Part of these changes will inevitably mean working with people rather than delivering services for them. No local authority is going to say no to local people helping to deliver services, but with support comes a need for an active voice in the design and delivery of these services through listening, engaging and supporting people to have a voice.

## Giving people a voice

*For these reasons Keep Britain Tidy held the Big Litter Inquiry to explore litter, how it relates to people and what they thought communities, businesses and government could do to reduce it.*

The Big Litter inquiry enabled people across England to tell us what they thought about litter, its costs to the economy, the environment and society and what they thought Keep Britain Tidy, the government and businesses should be doing to prevent it.

In this context, Keep Britain Tidy commissioned BritainThinks, an independent research agency, to design and deliver The Big Litter Inquiry. The inquiry consisted of two in-depth workshops, in Preston and Croydon alongside, a national poll of more than 1,700 people across England.

## 1. Introduction

### **The Big Litter Inquiry was designed to provide:**

1. Strategic-level thinking – how can Keep Britain Tidy develop our existing litter strategy with new ideas?
2. Practical solutions to trial in response to a range of different issues
3. Input into communications and media lines, learning from the language used by participants
4. A voice to people, helping to shape Keep Britain Tidy's strategy to prevent litter: Which Side of the Fence are you on?
5. An opportunity for stakeholders and experts in the litter sector, including members of the Keep Britain Tidy Network, to hear from the public directly



## 2. Methodology

### The Big Litter Inquiry was conducted in two locations, Preston and Croydon, in March/April 2013

*Each event involved 18 participants, who were drawn from the local area and represented a cross-section of the community.*

In addition, a representative survey across England was undertaken to gain the views of a wider group of people. Questions were informed by the findings of the workshops.

Each event lasted two days. The first day focused on participants' background understanding of, and attitudes towards, litter. An important aspect of this day was increasing participants' knowledge of the subject through engagement with a range of expert witnesses. The first day culminated in a priority-setting session, to identify areas to be focused on in the co-creative sessions of day two.

The second day was devoted to co-creating campaigns and solutions, which had grown out of the previous day's priority setting. Participants worked alongside members of the Keep Britain Tidy team, as well as local authority representatives from the Keep Britain Tidy Network<sup>1</sup> to develop ideas that Keep Britain Tidy could consider developing.

#### Locations:

Preston and Croydon were chosen for a North and South representation, as well as enabling accessibility for the demographic groups of jurors outlined below.

#### Who was involved:

Each group comprised of nine males and nine females, drawn from a broad spread of ages and demographic groups. We mixed residents from a range of urban/suburban/rural areas. The participants were screened to have some commitment to their local area and met our "social influencer" specification, to ensure they were chatty and engaged.

#### Day One: Deliberative

1. Background views on local areas and litter
2. Quiz to test and expand knowledge of litter issues
- 3 Mapping exercise on the impacts of litter
4. Presentation and discussion on the impacts of litter and responsibilities and responses
5. Expert witness session giving perspectives on litter from Defra, local government, business and the third sector
6. Keep Britain Tidy presentation on campaigning, communicating its aims, methods and achievements
7. What should Keep Britain Tidy focus on? Developing initial ideas

#### Day Two: Co-creative

1. Warm-up and team-building
2. Introducing the focus areas
3. Presentation on case studies of successful campaigns achieving change to trigger campaign ideas for Keep Britain Tidy
4. Developing objectives for the focus areas
5. Initial campaign ideas
6. Developing ideas in groups and presenting them back in plenary

1. The Keep Britain Tidy Network is a network of organisations with a common goal - to make places better. It includes local authorities, other land managers, businesses and housing associations.

### 3. Understanding what people think about litter?

#### What happened on day one?

##### Part 1: Local views

*The first day of each workshop began with an open discussion about how participants felt about the places that they live and, more generally, what makes an area a good or bad place to live and work.*

Participants took photographs of their local neighbourhood, depicting characteristics that make it a good place to live and those that make it less so, to help stimulate discussion.

In discussing the positive and negative aspects of their neighbourhoods, participants' comments fell into four broad areas:

1. Safety, levels of crime and anti-social behaviour;
2. Appearance and feel of the area;
3. Community feeling and vibrancy, and
4. Amenities and facilities, including transport infrastructure

Participants were quick to see the links between the issues mentioned above and that they are often mutually reinforcing, for example more anti-social behaviour can lead to reductions in community vibrancy.

#### What makes your area:

##### - A less good place to live



Empty buildings



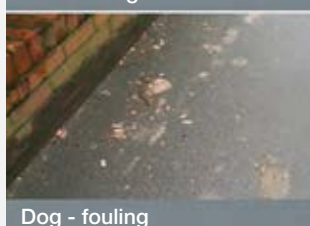
Antisocial behaviour



Overflowing bins



Tattiness



Dog - fouling

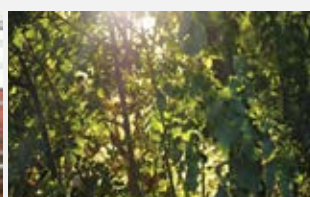


Potholes

##### - A good place to live



People coming and going



Peacefulness



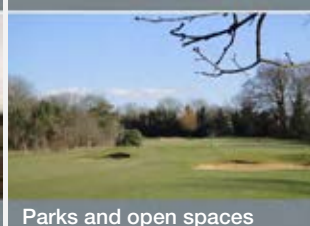
Amenities



Sunsets



Nice buildings



Parks and open spaces

Fig 1. Photographs brought in by participants across the two workshops of bad and good aspects of where they live.



*"You can't perceive any care or attention there, so are you really safe to be there?"*

Male, Croydon

*"The park used to be beautiful, now I wouldn't even go in there after 7pm."*

Female, Preston

*"It's [local old building] been empty for 12 years and the vandals have been in and completely stripped it ... it makes the road look tatty."*

Female, Preston

*"It's a sad thing, people don't know their neighbours like they used to."*

Female, Croydon

### Safety, levels of crime and anti-social behaviour

Many participants discussed this issue, showing photos of evidence of vandalism and anti-social behaviour, such as smashed windows or evidence of alcohol use on streets. The converse was areas that are peaceful and friendly, demonstrating the strong links between community feel and perceptions of safety and security.

### Appearance and feel of the area

Of the positive images of their local areas, one of the most consistent themes was the focus on parks and open green spaces. These were sometimes discussed in the frame of being a facility – i.e. residents using them to walk dogs or spaces for children to play; but much more frequently participants focused on how they make the area look and feel.

Unattractive areas were discussed with reference to vandalism, derelict buildings and poor-quality amenities. Litter came up frequently and participants tended to focus on litter that builds up in areas which are otherwise attractive – specifically around parks, ponds and rivers, rather than just general levels of litter on streets.

The majority of participants were quick to blame residents who "have no pride in the area" for these issues, and parents of young people in particular for not teaching children to respect their local communities. However it was invariably the council who are held responsible to do more to keep communities looking more attractive.

### Community feeling and vibrancy

When discussed positively, this was most often worded as "lots of people coming and going", a place that "people take pride in" or "an area where we all know each other". Where this community feeling is missing, participants discussed conflict between different groups of people, with particular focus on young people and also on more transient groups, in particular students. Many ascribed these problems to too many residents not caring about their area or having any respect for it – saying littering was a product of these attitudes.

Participants saw a lack of community feeling in their own areas as part of a much wider, longer-term social trend, and saw very little that any organisation, including the council, could do to reverse this.

### 3. Understanding what people think about litter?

*"You don't want to see a bag of dog poo hung on the railings when you walk to the shops."*

Male, Croydon

#### Amenities and facilities, including transport infrastructure

Many participants brought photos of local shops – and these fell into both the positive and negative categories. Shopping areas that look run down, have been taken over by a small range of categories (e.g. chicken shops, mobile phone shops or hairdressers), or are reminders of the economic climate (e.g. betting shops, pawnbrokers, payday lenders) were all cited as negative types of amenities.

Amenities that residents cite as positive are attractive shopping areas with a range of independent retailers, or big supermarkets, which are just as highly appreciated. Aside from shopping, public services such as GPs' surgeries were mentioned, as well as transport links, leisure centres and arts/ cultural activities.

Good amenities and facilities are seen to be down to a "good council" and "money in the area". This was the only time national government was seen to have a role in local communities – with budget cuts leading to the closure/ worsening standards of local public services.

#### Part 2: Initial thoughts on litter

*From the earliest discussions about local environmental quality, it quickly became clear that litter is an incredibly important topic to the majority of residents.*

*"Litter is an indicator of the type of people who live in that area."*

Male, Croydon

It is an emotive issue, with the way their areas look affecting the way residents feel about where they live and also how they feel about themselves.

1. Those who lived in "nice" areas (often described as quieter more affluent, leafier, cleaner) described them with real pride to other participants
2. Those less happy with where they lived were much quieter, and less comfortable discussing where they live and what it's like.

It also quickly emerged that litter is a very local issue. The way participants think about litter is deeply rooted in their experience of their own areas. While they spoke about other issues, such as the economy or the decline in strength of communities,

*“Litter breeds litter and the flipside is true – ... tidy breeds tidy.”*

Female, Croydon

as national issues, throughout the two days of discussions, participants really only spoke about litter on a local basis.

The link between litter and other local issues was very intuitive to the majority of participants. They could see how litter might contribute towards anti-social behaviour or lower levels of community feeling or economic vibrancy; as well as seeing how it could be a product of those issues, becoming part of a vicious circle.

In particular, participants discussed how it makes you feel about the area you live in: whether it's seen by others as “good or bad”; whether you're proud to say where you're from; whether you'd be happy to bring up children there.

*“You're less likely to be the first person to litter, more likely to be the hundredth.”*

Male, Croydon

Similarly, the idea that “litter breeds litter” (as one participant described it) was also widely accepted and many referred back to this point throughout the two days.

Finally, many participants found it hard to distinguish litter from household refuse and recycling. These issues are closely linked in people's minds, especially during conversations about the environmental impacts of litter, but also in discussions of fly-tipping and bulky waste and changes in recent years to the ways councils collect refuse and recycling.

### Part 3: Thinking about litter in more depth

*This initial open conversation about litter was followed by a more structured activity, thinking about responses to a wide variety of litter types in order to understand these background views in more detail.*

#### What happened?

**We asked participants to list these different types and plot them on a chart indicating how offensive and how frequently seen they are. Where participants didn't mention all litter types spontaneously, moderators prompted with a longer list.**

### 3. Understanding what people think about litter?

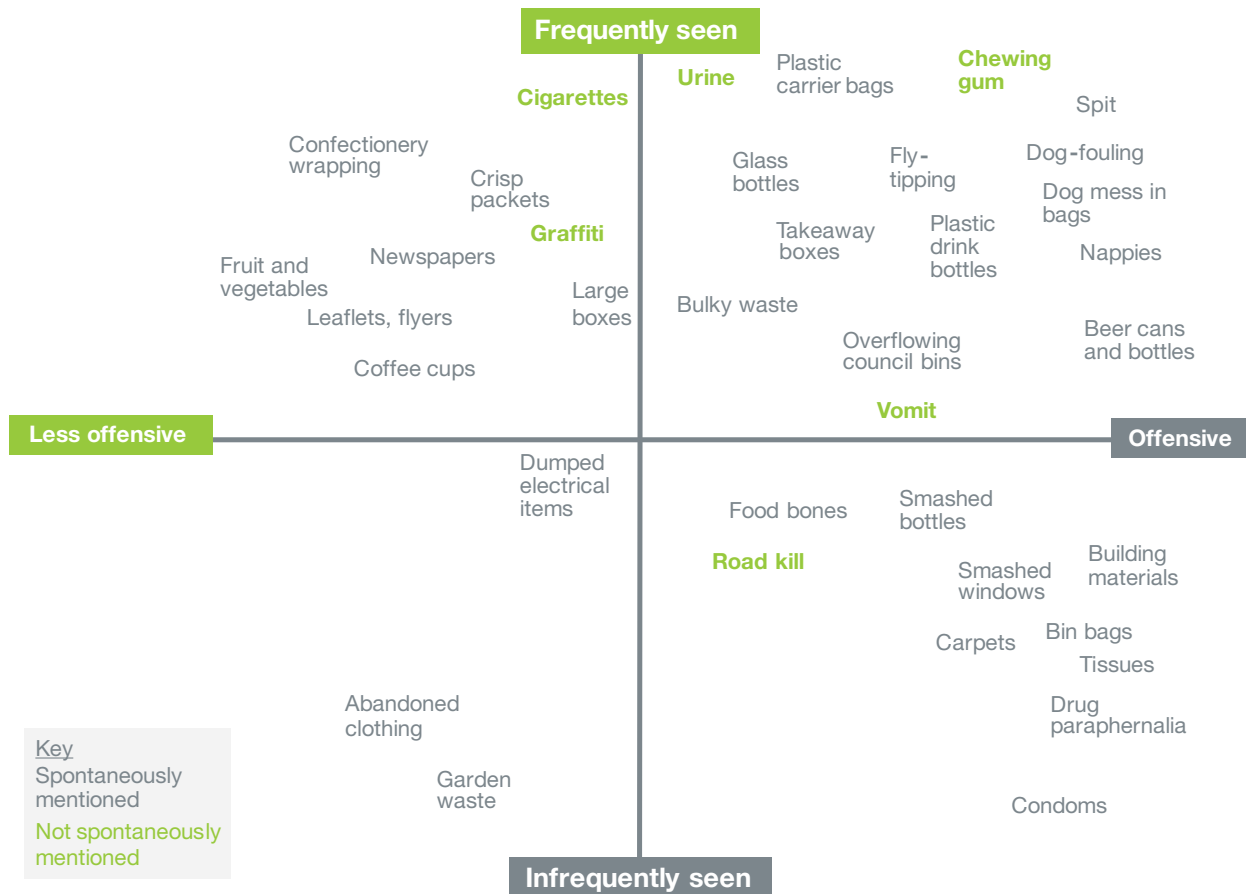


Fig 2: Summary graph of types of litter, plotted by offensiveness against how often they are seen.

*"Fast-food boxes dropped because they were too drunk."*  
Male, Croydon

*"Kids can end up blind or really ill from dog poo."*  
Female, Croydon

Participants' reasons for naming each litter type as "offensive" fell into a small number of broad categories:

- Litter that is indicative of broader local problems or anti-social behaviour: e.g. alcohol bottles (seen as more offensive than soft drinks), smashed windows, drug paraphernalia, graffiti
- Litter that poses health and safety dangers: e.g. smashed glass, dog fouling, drug paraphernalia, food which attracts vermin
- Litter that is particularly visible or unsightly: e.g. fly-tipping, dog fouling, vomit and urine
- Litter that could be difficult for members of the public to clear themselves: e.g. dog fouling, fly-tipping, garden and building waste, smashed glass, etc.



*“You tend not to notice it  
[chewing gum]”*

Male, Preston

*“They [cigarette butts] tend  
to squash up in the rain and  
disappear.”*

Male, Preston

It became clear that some of the litter types that are found to be most prevalent in the most recent Local Environmental Quality Survey of England (LEQSE) are those which participants were slowest to mention – indicating that cigarette butts and chewing gum, for example, are either so small that people do not notice them or so prevalent that they become less “visible” to the public in their daily lives, or that they’re actually less likely to be classified as litter spontaneously.

## Part 4: Responses to facts and statistics about litter in the UK

*Our initial starting point was to ensure that everyone in the room had a common set of basic facts and figures about the issue of litter.*

### What happened?

**To improve participants’ understanding of litter and the surrounding issues, we ran a pub quiz – giving groups of participants multiple-choice questions on a range of topics.**

In general, participants had good knowledge of the scale of the problem of litter – how prevalent it is and the types of issues it causes:

- They were unsurprised, for example, that smokers do not consider cigarette butts as litter – with many smokers among them actually confessing to this.
- Similarly, the majority accurately guessed from a set of options that fast-food litter is increasing more quickly than other types.
- They were also broadly in agreement with the finding that many do not consider newspapers left on trains to be litter – many defining this as recycling/re-using rather than littering.

However, other information from this quiz was completely unanticipated by participants and had a big impact on their thinking, going on to shape later conversations:

- The most significant of these was finding out the cost of clearing litter to the taxpayer – when faced with a range of options, the majority guessed at total figures much lower than the correct answer of almost £1bn. This was the most

### 3. Understanding what people think about litter?

*"I've learnt things you can't expect everyone to know ... [Young people] won't know the things we learnt [in the pub quiz]... and it's their future."*  
Male, Croydon

frequently cited figure across the rest of the workshops, clearly influencing attitudes towards litter.

- Participants were also surprised to learn the average length of time taken for various litter items to biodegrade, with the majority underestimating the times for fruit and vegetable peel, plastic bottles and glass bottles.

### Part 5: The environmental, social and economic impacts of litter

*Once a baseline level of knowledge had been established, the focus shifted to thinking in depth about the various impacts that litter can have.*

#### What happened?

**We asked participants to list these problems and plot them on a scale of low impact to high impact, to understand their spontaneous thinking on this issue.**

**Then, to build their knowledge, participants heard a presentation given by Keep Britain Tidy, which outlined the environmental, economic and social impacts.**

Participants mapped their spontaneous thoughts on the impacts that litter can have on a scale from higher to lower impact. The effects of litter thought to have the strongest impacts were those that relate to low-level crime and personal safety, and the economic health of an area.

#### Environmental Impacts

Participants' spontaneous views of the environmental impacts of litter were confined to the local impacts, in particular the effect on the look and feel of green spaces. Participants found it much harder to link litter, which is a very local, concrete concern, with ecological issues. Many saw this as very abstract and inherently global.

After hearing the presentation, the strongest point that they took away was the impact on wildlife, which they could see having an effect in their areas. Many were also affected by evidence cited by Keep Britain Tidy on the impact of litter on marine life. Particularly the evocative statistics about the number of fish

*"If the ecosystem goes bad, everything goes bad."*  
Male, Preston

*"The wildlife impact isn't something everyone thinks of straight away... but health is."*  
Male, Preston

*“For me, a polar bear is a bit far away in my imagination, but Croydon is where I live and it’s a dump.”*  
Male, Croydon

found with plastic inside them in the English Channel and the impact of plastic bags on turtles.



Fig 3: Summary of effects of litter positioned by level of impact.

#### Implications for communications:

- Anti-littering messages that relate to environmental impacts are not the most intuitive to participants – if they are made, impacts on wildlife are the strongest
- Environmental impacts should be local and clearly articulated
- Talking about biodegradability doesn't deliver an anti-littering message – it moves thinking into recycling space

### 3. Understanding what people think about litter?

*“People don’t treat the park with respect and it ruins it for everyone else.”*  
Female, Croydon

*“People think ‘If they aren’t bothered, why should I bother? If you can’t beat them join them’.”*  
Preston

#### Social Impacts

The idea that litter is both a symptom and a cause of wider social issues in an area was intuitive for many participants and the Keep Britain Tidy presentation reinforced many of the issues the participants had already discussed spontaneously.

One of the most common ways in which participants discussed these social impacts was litter making an area seem undesirable, run-down and unsafe.

They also felt that if an area looks less attractive, people, especially young people, will be more likely to behave anti-socially.

However, the idea that litter contributes to a wider group of issues such as obesity or mental health issues was harder for the participants to accept and they didn’t go on to adopt this idea as part of their own narratives about litter.

#### Implications for communications:

- The language of “wellbeing” and “mental health” was not picked up by participants, who preferred to talk about “what an area feels like” and “somewhere you’d be happy to bring up kids”.

#### Economic Impacts

Participants spontaneously raised the idea that litter could have a range of economic impacts on an area. In particular, the idea that scruffy or badly maintained areas would be less desirable and, therefore, have a negative impact on house prices and local businesses.

On hearing that almost £1bn is spent annually on collecting litter, this concern was felt even more strongly, though some participants struggled to get a sense of what this amount of money equates to, especially as it is a national figure and they consider litter at a local level.

#### Implications for communications:

- The economic argument against littering could be made more strongly if councils could give residents the amount they spend on litter picking locally – i.e. what percentage of Council Tax, or what it equates to in other council services
- Similarly, any research on the impact on house prices, to put an accurate figure to the feeling that the public has, could support a very compelling message.

## Part 6: Responsibility for reducing litter and managing its impacts

*Following discussion of the impacts of litter, participants spent the afternoon of the first day of each workshop considering their views of who holds responsibility for reducing litter and managing its impacts.*

*“Some people have no respect for the area and bring down the area for everyone.”*  
Male, Croydon

*“It’s not the kids’ fault, they don’t know any different unless they’re told.”*  
Female, Preston

*“I’ve stopped saying a word [to litterers] now, I might get punched in the mouth.”*  
Male, Preston

*“The council leaves it [litter] until it builds up and then they come and clean.”*  
Male, Preston

*“If there’s no ashtray where I am, I’ll throw it out onto the road.”*  
Female, Croydon

### Spontaneous views on responsibility for litter

The afternoon session of the first day of each workshop began with an open discussion around responsibility for litter. Spontaneously, participants tended to conflate the idea of ‘blame’ and ‘responsibility’ with conversations focussing on the individual who drops litter or fails to dispose of rubbish effectively as the primary cause of litter and, therefore, the responsible party.

Encouraged to think in terms of responsibility for both prevention of littering behaviour in the first place and clearing up litter where it does occur, participants still tended to focus their thinking on two key factors - the littering individual (or their parents and teachers, in the case of littering children), and the council.

### Prevention

The spontaneous view is that prevention is primarily a matter for individuals, although the council can make things easier and take steps to make litterers think twice:

- The person who drops litter is thought to know better, so the action is felt to be fairly inexcusable. The core assumption is that there’s a small minority who “just don’t care”
- Parents and schools have a role to the extent that young people and children need to be taught to respect their local environment, to use bins and to refrain from dropping litter
- Some felt that, in an ideal world, neighbours and other community members would be able to intervene to stop others from littering, but concerns for personal safety meant that most felt this is unlikely in practice

The council was felt to have two key roles in prevention:

- Ensuring that it’s easy to dispose of rubbish properly – primarily through the provision of sufficient litter bins in the places where people are likely to need them and emptying them often enough to avoid overflow
- Some participants felt that, at times, the council can make it more difficult – for example where less frequent rubbish collection leads to overflowing bins and problems related to household rubbish on the streets

Participants recognised that littering may not always be a deliberate act and acknowledged that it is often about



### 3. Understanding what people think about litter?

*"I never really thought about who actually took responsibility for these things, I just thought, 'well it's in with your Council Tax'."*  
Female, Preston

*"If it's in my garden yes [I'll pick it up], I'm not going to roam the street for litter."*  
Male, Preston

*"Sometimes, I feel they [big brands] prefer the litter to be on the streets because it is advertising for them. I know it sounds ridiculous..."*  
Male, Croydon

thoughtlessness. As such, there is a role here for authorities to help make individuals think twice.

Spontaneously, the most common prescription was for councils to use fining as a way of dissuading people from dropping litter. Participants imagined that the council could conduct a hard-hitting campaign of fining, making clear that littering isn't tolerated and therefore dissuading others.

These open discussions rarely touched on other responsible parties. Even when prompted, participants found it difficult to see how businesses or others could prevent littering and they certainly didn't feel that they had a responsibility for prevention.

#### Cleaning up litter

Responsibility for cleaning up litter is even more focused. Participants' spontaneous views on responsibility for clean-up tended to be limited solely to the council. Street cleaning, picking up litter and resolving problems around fly-tipping were all felt to be council roles.

While there was acknowledgement that volunteer litter-pickers do exist, there was no belief that individuals or community members have a formal responsibility to clean up other people's litter. In particular, if there is any suggestion of risk around hygiene, responsibility must lie with the council to deal with the issue professionally.

In these open discussions, the role that businesses might play in cleaning up litter was rarely raised spontaneously. When prompted to think about business, the responsibility was felt to be very limited, with shops and takeaway food outlets having responsibility for their products and packaging in the immediate vicinity around their store, but nowhere beyond.

The producers of packaged goods (as opposed to the retailers of them) were not felt to bear any responsibility for the prevention or clean-up of their packaging or products as litter. Although participants did feel that should they take a role in, for example, funding street cleaning, this would be an admirable and positive thing to do and could have real impact.

A large number of participants were aware that McDonald's send out employees to clean up around their restaurants and viewed this as a very positive thing to do that goes beyond their formal responsibility.

## Further deliberation on responsibilities and responses to litter

### What happened?

In order to widen participants' knowledge of the various organisations and people that have, or could have, some responsibility for the prevention and clean up of litter, participants heard a series of presentations from a range of expert witnesses, on what is currently being done by different sectors and organisations, in response to the issue of litter. In each location – Preston and Croydon – participants heard from a range of sectors:

- **Central government** - figures from Defra presented their role in making law, setting penalties, advising local authorities on how to tackle litter, communicating with the public and building up relations with industry
- **Local government** - council representatives talked about how they spend their budgets to tackle litter through education, prevention and enforcement and provided examples of specific projects
- **Business** - these presentations looked at businesses' connection to litter, including packaging, advertising and branding, and looked at the actions some businesses are taking to reduce litter
- **Voluntary sector** - figures from the third sector explored case studies of successful projects and considered the factors that can influence littering behaviours

### Central government

In general, the role that central government could play in reducing litter was opaque to participants. Participants tended to see the issue of litter as a particularly local one and primarily the domain of local government. This fundamental view was essentially unchanged by an expert presentation on the role that central government plays.

The idea that central government could affect the responsibilities that local government has and the powers they can use to meet those responsibilities was not easily understood.

In part, this was driven by a lack of understanding of the practical meanings of terms like 'legislation' and 'statutory powers'. This made it difficult for participants to engage with the role that central government plays.

### 3. Understanding what people think about litter?

*"I found it flabbergasting... the Government spent a lot of money cleaning up for the Olympics and now we're going totally the other way."*  
Male, Croydon

Also the idea that local councils take action because they are required to by central government (rather than by the demands of local people who want their streets cleaned) is simply not intuitive.

There were two areas where participants accepted that central government does have a role to play:

- Ensuring local government has the funds it needs to tackle litter properly and meet the expectations of residents
- Funding information campaigns and advertising to remind people about litter and its impacts

The main impact on participants' thinking, from the Defra presentation and subsequent Q&A, was to raise the potential impacts that deficit reduction and the associated cuts could have on this particular issue. While the impacts of cuts is acknowledged in a number of areas, litter had not, until that point, been one of them.

Participants tended to feel that, in the context of continuing austerity, it was inevitable that services related to litter would be cut in line with other services.

However, participant acknowledgement of the impacts of budget cuts was an important piece of background knowledge that enabled a much more nuanced discussion about what should and should not be expected of local government as the main provider of litter-related services.

#### Local government

In both Preston and Croydon exposure to a senior local council officer, who explained precisely what the council does, how much it spends and how it spends it, had a huge impact on participants' thinking about responsibility for litter.

Simply understanding basic facts, such as how many street cleaning machines a council owns, how many enforcement officers could be employed and the costs associated with different activities, allowed participants to think more realistically about what could be expected from the council.

*“As part of our chewing gum strategy, we have people out looking to fine, but no one has ever actually caught someone dropping chewing gum. We know it happens, because you see it on the ground, but we’ve not caught anyone.”*  
Local Authority Network Member

Showing how many man hours are required to add an extra sweep to a street or area each week helped to drive home the difficulties of expecting a higher volume of litter services from councils.

Discussion of the strategic choices that councils make, around which areas to focus effort on and the tradeoffs involved, served to highlight the resource issues that councils are facing, particularly where budgets are being reduced across the board.

In particular, understanding the difficulties associated with using fining as a deterrent allowed participants to question their assumptions about the role that punishment can play in prevention.

A clear explanation of the low cost-effectiveness of fining and the practical difficulties of catching people ‘in the act’ of littering had a big effect.

## Business

With the exception of the immediate vicinity around a shop, pub or takeaway, the presentations from businesses did little to convince participants that businesses have a formal responsibility to prevent or clean up litter.

However, the presentations did serve to highlight that (regardless of whether they are formally responsible) few businesses are contributing seriously to resolving the problem.

While they didn’t feel that it is incumbent on businesses to take a lead in prevention or clean up of litter, the presentations and the subsequent Q&A raised participants’ awareness of the range of ways that businesses could be involved:

- Larger retailers – such as supermarkets - and takeaway food chains were felt to be the businesses that have most responsibility for managing litter
- Participants felt that businesses should be closely monitored to ensure that the areas around their premises are kept clean and litter-free. This could involve both the placement of additional bins at the businesses’ expense, and the use of staff time to collect litter from nearby

### 3. Understanding what people think about litter?

*"I don't look at the back, I just rip the packet [of cigarettes] open."*

Female, Croydon

*"I told the kids if I saw them littering, then I wouldn't serve them [in my sweet shop], and it worked."*

Female, Preston

*"Big companies should have a social responsibility to prevent and clear up litter, because they can."*

Male, Croydon

*"It's their community too, they live in the same world as us ... plus they have the money, we don't."*

Female, Croydon

- Similarly, pubs and bars should be responsible for cigarette litter around their premises
- Smaller local shops and retailers were felt to have a similar level of responsibility for the area immediately outside their premises. Although there was less of a sense that these smaller organisations are the cause of persistent litter issues
- There was some suggestion that local shops, particularly those near schools, where children might purchase confectionery, could take preventative measures including asking customers to make sure they use a bin when they have finished
- Producers of packaged goods – such as Coca-Cola, Walkers Crisps, Cadbury and tobacco companies – were felt to be least culpable for the way that consumers treat their packaging after they have used the products
- Even after discussion the dominant view was that their formal responsibility doesn't extend beyond ensuring that their products do not have excessive amounts of packaging and, where possible, using materials that biodegrade more rapidly
- Despite not holding a formal responsibility, participants felt that companies of this size and financial strength are in a position to have a real impact should they choose to
- The most effective way to do this would be to fund extra street cleaning and litter-picking schemes across the country
- Participants felt that packaging messaging, particularly that featuring the 'Tidyman' logo in some shape or form, didn't represent a particularly powerful way of changing consumers' behaviour around littering

Because the individual is felt to be at fault when litter is dropped, participants do not tend to feel that producers of packaged goods are responsible for litter. However, they do feel that those companies, as members of society with significant resource and power to act, ought to play a role.



### Community and voluntary sector

While participants were clear that communities don't hold a formal responsibility for litter issues, the idea that areas where there are stronger community bonds are less likely to have issues with litter was intuitive. Participants expressed this idea in terms of people taking pride in their area.

Following presentations showing how some community groups and voluntary organisations had worked to tackle litter in specific areas and communities, participants were often inspired to consider ways that communities could play a role in the issue more broadly.

*"Schools or groups of parents just don't have the power like a massive company to initiate something like this."*  
Female, Croydon

While participants always stopped short of advocating a formal responsibility for communities to act around litter issues, the idea that when local groups start to take ownership of the local environment, can change the way others behave in the area, was felt to be an important insight.

#### Implications for communications:

- When talking about producers of packaged goods, the framing should be positive ("businesses can play a crucial role in these stretched times"), rather than negative ("they're to blame for litter")
- Clear articulation of council budgets and resources can help residents to think more clearly and broadly about the range of bodies who might play a role in tackling litter.

## Part 7: Focus areas for Keep Britain Tidy

*The final session of the first day of each workshop involved group discussions to identify a long list of areas that Keep Britain Tidy's campaigning activities could usefully focus on in the coming years.*

Having generated a long list of potential areas, the Keep Britain Tidy team and the BritainThinks team conducted a grouping exercise to identify broad priority areas that would provide the focus for the co-creative action planning sessions in day two.

Participants raised a wide range of potential areas that Keep Britain Tidy could focus on for its future campaigns. These included both very specific ideas, such as the development of 'friends of' schemes to help communities engage with problem litter areas, or 'educating about the impacts on wildlife', to much broader issues that Keep Britain Tidy might try to effect. For example, 'taking pride in the local area' or 'engaging with teenagers'.

### 3. Understanding what people think about litter?

In each workshop in Preston and Croydon, BritainThinks worked alongside the Keep Britain Tidy team to group the focus areas that participants had generated and identify three overarching topics. Ideas were developed around these topics in the co-creative sessions during the second day of the workshop.

#### **In Preston, the three areas were:**

- Getting children into good habits
- Behaviour change: Building understanding of the impacts of litter
- Bringing communities together around litter

#### **In Croydon, the three areas were:**

- Getting businesses to play their part
- Reaching young people
- Bringing communities together around litter

#### **Context**

In order to ensure that participants focused on areas where Keep Britain Tidy is able to have a real impact, this session began with a presentation by Keep Britain Tidy about the work that they do and how they see that evolving going forward:

- A brief history of Keep Britain Tidy and the various roles it has played since it was founded in the 1950s
- An overview of the funding of the organisation, in particular highlighting the fact that the organisation will no longer receive its Defra grant from 2014 onwards
- The implications of reduced government funding in terms of its impacts on Keep Britain Tidy's activities
- Funding for large-scale communications campaigns – particularly outdoor and television advertising – is not likely to be forthcoming in the near future
- The lack of government money frees up the organisation to be both more critical of current policy, and also to be more entrepreneurial in the way it goes about campaigning
- Some examples of how Keep Britain Tidy has changed the way it works in the light of these financial constraints
- Leveraging PR and free media through the creation of newsworthy events
- Providing services such as resources and training
- Running a diverse range of schemes, from Eco-Schools to Green Flag Award for parks

## 4. Co-creation of campaigns for Keep Britain Tidy

### Outcomes from day 2

*The second day of each workshop was dedicated to the co-creation of new ideas for activities and campaigns that Keep Britain Tidy could take forward.*

#### What happened?

**The participants were again organised into three tables of six (in different groupings from those on day 1). Each table was joined by at least one representative from Keep Britain Tidy and a representative from the Keep Britain Tidy Local Authority Network.**

Following a team-building exercise to get each table working together effectively, participants were introduced to their focus area for the day.

Having discussed their focus area, participants were given a presentation by BritainThinks on different ways in which change can happen, beyond litter, both locally and nationally. The presentation, which was designed to stimulate new ideas, covered a wide range of examples of innovative and successful campaigns and initiatives. These were grouped under four headings:

- **Showing decision-makers that there's a demand for change**
- **Helping people/communities to take control**
- **Co-ordinating consumer power**
- **Influencing behaviour**

Participants then worked collaboratively with Keep Britain Tidy and invited guests from local government to work up a plan for how Keep Britain Tidy could create change within their focus area.

Ideas developed under each focus area often revolved around a co-ordination role for Keep Britain Tidy, creating national campaigns and tools that enable local action. The target audiences are those who are willing to initiate action, such as local individuals and groups, and those who have either financial or administrative levers, such as businesses and local councils.

The ideas were broadly positive, creating incentives, awards and Kitemarks for behaviour that meets or exceeds an agreed standard, but there was some feeling that naming and shaming may also have a role to play, especially in terms of businesses, or individual streets.

A running theme was people taking control of local campaigns and using the low-cost, interactive opportunities offered by technology to network, organise and showcase activity.

## 4. Co-creation of campaigns for Keep Britain Tidy

### Idea 1: Getting children into good habits (Preston)



*"If I littered when I were a kid, I'd get a clip round the ear and I knew it. I took my rubbish home."*

Female, Preston

*"The park has become a local area for the older kids to drink alcohol and set fire to things."*

Female, Preston

*"When I was a kid I put my stuff in the bin and all my mates would take the mickey out of me."*

Male, Preston

*"Incorporate it [litter issues] into the curriculum, short stories, which could be in the back of their mind."*

Male, Preston

#### What's the problem?

This campaign built on a widely shared perception, that a cause of the increase in littering is poor parenting and a decline in 'respect' among younger people.

#### Who should be involved?

The campaign focused on secondary school-age children, with a view to thinking about how their behaviour could be affected in all of the different arenas of their lives: home; school; where they go to take part in activities or hang out after school and at weekends.

The immediate focus was on how Keep Britain Tidy could work with schools and participants were shocked that information about the impacts of littering is not part of the curriculum.

However, it was also felt that it is pointless giving young people messages at school unless those messages are reinforced at home, by parents and other family members. As a consequence, participants took a wider, more holistic view of groups that could have a role to play. The role of peer pressure was also identified as a barrier to children behaving responsibly.

*“If kids come up with their own logos and slogans [about litter] other kids can relate to them ... it’s in their own words.”*  
Male, Preston

### What is the approach?

- It is possible to make a difference with children and young people kids if messages are communicated early enough and in an engaging way
- Messages have to be consistent between home and school
- Messages should be communicated throughout the different stages of childhood
- Solutions should enable youngsters to have fun, learn new skills and be creative in order to be effective

Objective	Ideas for Keep Britain Tidy
Getting children to form good habits at home and in their neighbourhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with parents:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A ‘Bounty Pack’-style kit when children start school</li> <li>- Contains advice such as to link pocket money to reducing litter and recycling more</li> <li>- And resources such as activity books and branded bags to collect rubbish and get rewards</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Competitions to name the best and worst streets</li> <li>• Get litter on the curriculum in schools with organised litter hunts</li> </ul>
Tacking litter in town centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Posters for local shops, both local retailers and big chains</li> <li>• Advice for councils on staging disruptive high street stunts to show the impact of littering</li> </ul>
Older children taking control and reversing peer pressure, tie-in to other interests and skills they have. Reverse peer pressure by promoting activities on social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create an interactive website targeting older children, connected with social media               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Encourage social media campaigns to lobby brands to use less packaging</li> <li>- Incentives and prizes for children to clean up grotty areas and recycle</li> <li>- ‘Pledge-bank style’ agreements to clear up local spaces</li> <li>- Celebrity role models to promote the site</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Fig 4: Summary of key ideas from Preston on getting children to form good habits

## 4. Co-creation of campaigns for Keep Britain Tidy

### Idea 2: Working with students in higher education

*In both Croydon and Preston there was discussion about the negative impact students can have on some neighbourhoods.*



*"I've got exams coming up. I wouldn't do something for free ... got to balance work, rugby, college work."*

Male, Croydon

*"They're [18-24 year olds] not a lost cause ... they're not being communicated to in a way they can hear."*

Female, Croydon

### What's the problem?

Participants complained about the behaviour of students, who live for as little as a year in rented accommodation and only during term time. The accommodation is often in a state of disrepair and given how short their stay in a neighbourhood, it was felt that students often had little investment in their community. This led to them sometimes acting irresponsibly, littering and causing mess and nuisance.

This view is reinforced by evidence that indicates 18-24 year olds are one of the worst groups responsible for litter. Many universities and colleges recognise this problem and have active programmes designed to better integrate students alongside the local community.

### Who should be involved?

Student unions were identified as a key partner for any campaign, with the range of different societies, clubs and groups that organise within those unions. Landlords were also identified as a group with influence, although this is perhaps a 'reach audience', as they may have little incentive to engage.



*“There’s got to be some kind of reward [to stop young people littering]... whether a cash reward or using a facility.”*

Female, Croydon

### What’s the approach?

Tap into existing activities and groups active in student unions

- Create opportunities for students to work together with other local people, so they become more involved in their local community
- Try to create economic incentives for landlords to behave responsibly through endorsement and advertising in student unions

Objective	Ideas for Keep Britain Tidy
Build a sense of ownership, community and pride among students in the areas in which they live in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help to organise activities in student unions               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Leaflets and communications designed by students</li> <li>- Resources for Freshers’ Week</li> <li>- Sponsored fancy dress tidy-ups for charity</li> <li>- Volunteering opportunities for clubs and societies to clean up local areas with an award for the best group</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Welcome packs for students with tips and advice</li> </ul>
Work with landlords to drive up the standards of accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incentivise landlords to improve standards of homes. In return, student unions would promote landlords who care for the quality of their properties</li> </ul>
Get students working with local residents to become more engaged in their communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suggest to students that they meet neighbours to offer odd jobs, e.g. clearing gardens and communal areas or even window cleaning</li> <li>• In Freshers’ Week, students volunteer to weed gardens, wash cars, tidy streets with residents combined with a lunch for all involved</li> </ul>

Fig 5: Summary of key ideas from Croydon on working with students in higher education

## 4. Co-creation of campaigns for Keep Britain Tidy

### Idea 3: Helping people to work as a community and take pride in their area



*“You could say to the young people using a park: ‘If you don’t litter, we can use the money to buy a basketball hoop etc.’”*  
Male, Preston

*People could use Twitter or Facebook to make others realise that litter is an issue.”*  
Male, Preston

#### What’s the problem?

This campaign speaks to a consistently raised feeling that part of the reason for the increase in littering is a general decline in a sense of community and the responsibilities that flow from a feeling of being part of a community.

This campaign deals with how local people can develop that sense of responsibility by taking ownership for their local area and leading on clearing up public spaces.

#### Who should be involved?

Local groups working together are seen as the best agents of change. They know their local areas and have a better understanding of where action is needed to ‘pull an area back up’.

#### What’s the approach?

- Keep Britain Tidy is a facilitator for local activity, providing advice and resources to guide local activity
- Local groups take on small projects and build support and momentum over time
- This could escalate into taking ‘ownership’ of public spaces with the agreement of the local council

- Sustainability is essential – going beyond easily forgotten one-off projects to change views in the community in the longer term.

Objective	Ideas for Keep Britain Tidy
Get communities to take ownership of parts of their local area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start small and build support and momentum</li> <li>• Make activities fun, sociable and family-friendly</li> <li>• Don't ask too much of people – short bursts of activity</li> </ul>
Facilitate and support specific projects for local areas, designed and led by local people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resources to help local groups get started               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Case studies and good practise from other areas</li> <li>- Advice on recruiting and managing volunteers</li> <li>- Advice on using social media and the web to recruit local individuals and groups</li> <li>- Ideas for local fundraising such as micro donations and donations of useful resources 'in-kind'</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Work with local partners to build a wider sense of responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advice on seeking sponsorship through local businesses i.e. partnering with a football club to clear up on match days, promotion in local shops and community hubs</li> <li>• Promotion in the local media to publicise the activity and change local perceptions of the area</li> <li>• Local partnerships taking control of looking after parks and open spaces</li> </ul>

Fig 6: Summary of key ideas from Preston on helping people to work as a community and take pride in their area

## 4. Co-creation of campaigns for Keep Britain Tidy

### Idea 4: Bringing communities together around litter



*“The public should be made much more aware of what the problems are, so they’ll be less inclined to litter.”*

Male, Croydon

*“If pride starts from home, it will filter out.”*

Female, Croydon

*“Collaboration is key to maximizing resources.”*

Male, Croydon

#### What’s the problem?

The challenge this campaign seeks to address is the difficulty of motivating people to start changing their area, when it seems such a huge and sometimes hopeless task for individuals and small groups in isolation. This campaign seeks to build awareness of the impact of litter in order to get local activities started, widen involvement in those activities and how to sustain them.

#### Who should be involved?

Again, the focus is on local individuals and groups to work as ‘initiators’. They would then set an example and widen involvement.

Local councils and the local media should be approached to help influence change.

#### What’s the approach?

- Keep Britain Tidy can provide a network for ‘initiators’ or passionate local people that act on the ground to galvanise the support and action of the wider community. The network will empower them and make them feel part of a wider group of people who feel the way they do and want to take action

*“Link in corporations who are sympathetic to Keep Britain Tidy.”*

Male, Croydon

- Those initiators then use their local knowledge to start projects and raise awareness at a local level
- A Keep Britain Tidy smartphone app can provide a platform to spread the word and build wider pressure
- Local campaigners will build sustainable change by telling their story effectively through local channels – showing that change is possible where people work together

Objective	Ideas for Keep Britain Tidy
1: Direct people who want to change things to Keep Britain Tidy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Run a campaign highlighting impacts of litter</li> <li>• Work with other charities to build a coalition</li> <li>• Create a web-based Keep Britain Tidy ‘initiators’ network</li> </ul>
2: Help initiators build skills and knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Downloadable action packs: Help with project planning</li> <li>• Case studies – people who have done similar things</li> <li>• Formal certificates to recognise or accredit new skills</li> <li>• Initiators run classes on litter issues for people who have been caught littering by the council who can then get their fine refunded/waived</li> </ul>
3: Get more people on board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the initiator network to offer downloadable ideas and guidance for drawing attention to issues locally</li> <li>• Create a Keep Britain Tidy smartphone app. Use it to look for initiatives nearby and pledge to join in or start your own</li> <li>• Get a corporate partner to help fund this work</li> </ul>
4: Make it last	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benefits for people who join as a group</li> <li>• Recognition of change – media coverage, before and after photos, local awards</li> <li>• Personal recognition - log hours volunteered, targets and prizes</li> <li>• Case studies for Keep Britain Tidy Network</li> </ul>

Fig 7: Summary of key ideas from Croydon on bringing communities together around litter



## 4. Co-creation of campaigns for Keep Britain Tidy

### Idea 5: The Keep Britain Tidy local behaviour change plan



#### What's the problem?

Even when groups of local willing people get together to improve their areas, participants still felt that the behaviour of some groups and individuals might let down these efforts, so a wider programme of behaviour change is needed. Participants felt that for many, littering can often be subconscious and unthinking, especially for certain groups, e.g. smokers and on particular occasions, e.g. sporting events, concerts or on a night out.

Because people are unaware of the impacts of littering, they are unlikely to reconsider their behaviour unless it is disrupted through thought-provoking campaigns and communications.

*"Ideas from other areas can show us how to progress."*  
Male, Preston

*"You wouldn't litter there [litter hotspots with children's artwork] because it's cute."*  
Female, Preston

*"Involve the local football team, because they're role models."*  
Male, Preston

#### Who should be involved?

The idea is to combine the forces of local councils, as the providers of support and logistics, with the passion and engagement of local groups and motivated individuals.

#### What's the approach?

- Keep Britain Tidy pulls together the best ideas out there, including case studies from councils in their Network, and promote the online or printed materials and resources
- An awareness campaign with local groups will create demand so politicians feel there is a political driver for action



*"I think the competition [for funding] would work well ... everyone's competitive."*  
Female, Preston

- The toolkit includes elements such as pop-up signs for litter hot spots and even more radical ideas such as ceasing collections in order to highlight problem areas

Task	Deliverables
1: Create a tool-kit for local councils to create behaviour change	<p>The pack should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A guide to running a 'Most improved neighbourhood competition'</li> <li>• Suggest the three most improved wards get grants for local projects</li> <li>• Target difficult streets – tell them how much they cost</li> <li>• Rewards for improvement – e.g. permits and resources for street parties</li> <li>• A guide to collecting and using local hero stories in local shops, public areas or local press</li> <li>• Advice to display children's art in local litter hotspots to deter litterers</li> <li>• Instant signs – for local people to put up in littered areas</li> <li>• "Does this look like a bin?", or "Cleaning in progress" signs</li> <li>• Keep Britain Tidy to trial in Preston and then offer pack to all local councils</li> </ul>
2: Create local demand for use of the behaviour-change pack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with local organisations that can communicate to local people (religious organisations, schools, health centres, football clubs, the police)</li> <li>• Describe costs and impact of litter locally - tell people what the money ordinarily used for cleaning litter could alternatively be used for locally, encouraging them to get their council to take action</li> <li>• Ask local people to put pressure on their councillor to adopt the Keep Britain Tidy pack</li> <li>• Create local champions to lead locally</li> <li>• Create a "council Kitemark" for councils that work with the pack, with annual awards</li> </ul>

Fig 8: Summary of key ideas from Preston on bringing communities together around litter

## 4. Co-creation of campaigns for Keep Britain Tidy

### Idea 6: Getting businesses to play their part (Croydon)



#### What's the problem?

Businesses were not identified as bearing primary responsibility for people littering around the vicinity of their premises, or throwing wrappings and waste from the products they manufacture. Participants, however, could easily recall particular retailers who behave responsibly and less responsibly, and the positive and negative impacts that their behaviour has on the local area.

The challenge for the group in Croydon, who worked on this campaign, was how to identify the level of responsibility businesses have and what the incentives and disincentives are that can encourage them to take necessary actions.

#### Who's involved?

In terms of national activity, Keep Britain Tidy has the authority to set a standard, for both retailers and manufacturers, encouraging supporters to get involved through interactive online resources.

Locally, businesses should be encouraged to step up and take responsibility, using their resources to send a clear message that they are committed to the local area. Councils can also act as a facilitator and enabler.

*"Name and shame business to clear up their acts."*  
Female, Croydon

*"A member of staff in shops could get out there [and clean litter outside their shop] they want their shop to be presentable."*  
Female, Croydon

*"The profit they can make is obscene [big brands] ... they could always reinvest it [into campaigns against litter]."*  
Male, Croydon

### What's the approach?

The approach is about setting an agreed standard of behaviour for businesses against which their decisions can be publicly judged, creating commercial drivers for businesses to step up and take responsibility.

Scales	Deliverables
National	<p>The carrot</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create national standards for retailers, including pubs/ takeaways and manufacturers</li> <li>• Kitemark for all who meet the standard</li> <li>• Free advertising for councils that meet the standard</li> <li>• Awards for the best businesses</li> </ul> <p>The stick</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National campaign to name and shame those who don't meet the standard or are the worst offenders</li> <li>• Use a Keep Britain Tidy smartphone app to report offenders</li> <li>• Manufacturers held accountable through litter surveys</li> </ul>
Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Businesses taking ownership of their local area</li> <li>• Keep Britain Tidy provide resources and advice for local councils and groups</li> <li>• Council leaves rubbish uncollected for a week in the worst areas to show the problem</li> <li>• Businesses asked to work together to clean up their vicinity together</li> <li>• Businesses asked to sponsor local public art or planting flowers to deter litterers</li> <li>• Opportunities to sponsor local public spaces to pay for enhanced clearing up</li> <li>• Bigger businesses asked to offer volunteers to clean up local areas in return for free local advertising and promotion for example a highway</li> <li>• Adopt a Keep Britain Tidy accreditation mark</li> <li>• Create local champions to lead locally</li> <li>• Create a "council Kitemark" for councils that work with the pack with annual awards</li> </ul>

Fig 9: Summary of key ideas from Croydon on getting businesses to play their part

## 5. What do the wider public think?

### Results from the national survey

Following on from, and informed by, the workshops conducted through the Big Litter Inquiry, Keep Britain Tidy conducted an online poll of 1,772 English residents between May 31 and June 2. The sample was weighted to be representative of the population.

#### Headline results

- Hearing about the cost of cleaning litter up is a powerful way to persuade people that the government should invest more in preventing litter
- Slightly higher numbers think that relevant businesses should take more responsibility for litter than think the government should do more (82% and 72% respectively)
- When looking at messaging around business responsibility, positive framing is stronger:
  - Higher numbers say they would purchase more from a “good” business than the number who said they’d avoid a “bad” business (39% versus 34%)
  - The 25% who are most concerned about how their local areas look are significantly more receptive to these messages

#### Results breakdown

The vast majority of English residents (85%) feel some level of concern about the appearance of their local area.

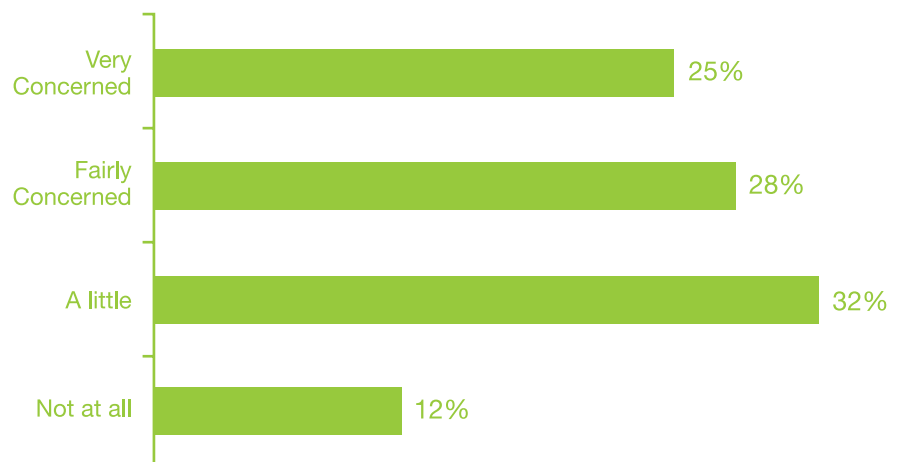
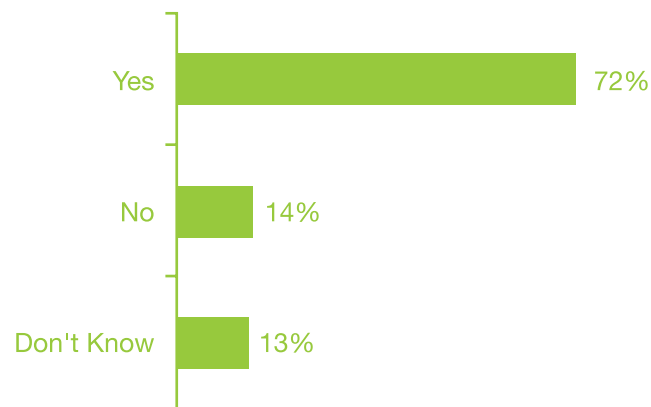


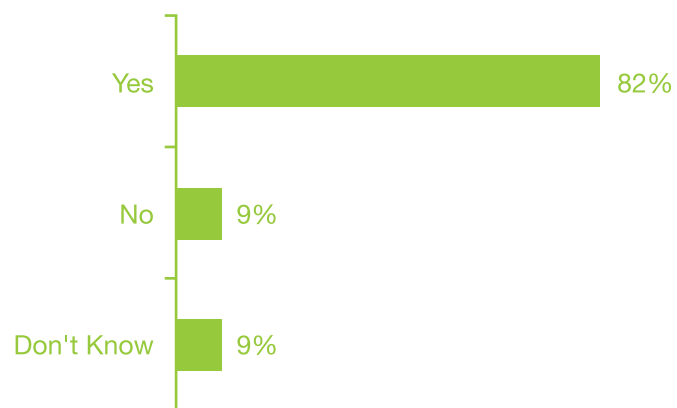
Fig 10: To what extent are you concerned about the appearance of your local area?

When told about the annual cost of clearing litter from the streets, more than two thirds of people feel the government should invest more in preventing litter in the first place



*Fig: 11: When informed about the cost to clean up litter should the government invest more in prevention litter?*

Four out of five think businesses whose products often end up as litter should take more responsibility for this.



*Fig 12: Do you think businesses that produce items that often end up littering our streets should take more responsibility for this?*

## 5. What do the wider public think?

Around one in three say that seeing an item littered would make them less likely to buy it and this is higher among men than women and older people in comparison to young people.

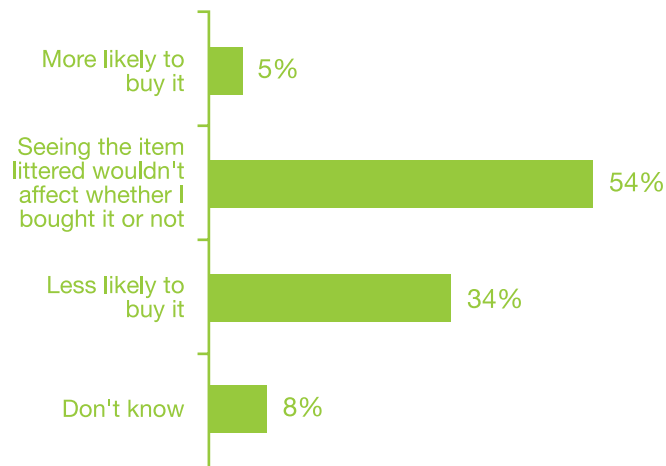


Fig 13: To what extent does seeing a particular product littered on our streets make you feel differently about purchasing choices?

Furthermore, those in higher socio-economic brackets and those who are more concerned about the appearance of their area are more likely to change their purchasing behaviour.

39% say that seeing a company take more responsibility for litter would make them more likely to buy a product – this is higher for men than for women.

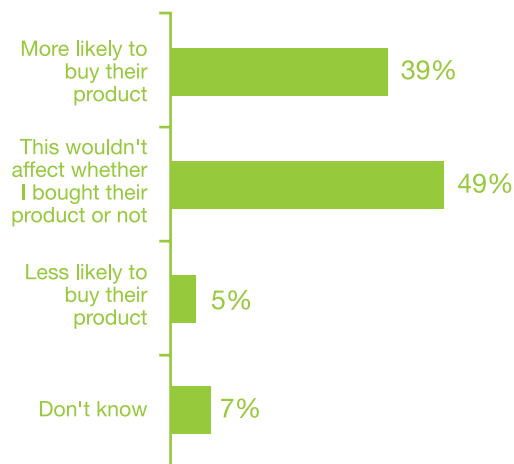
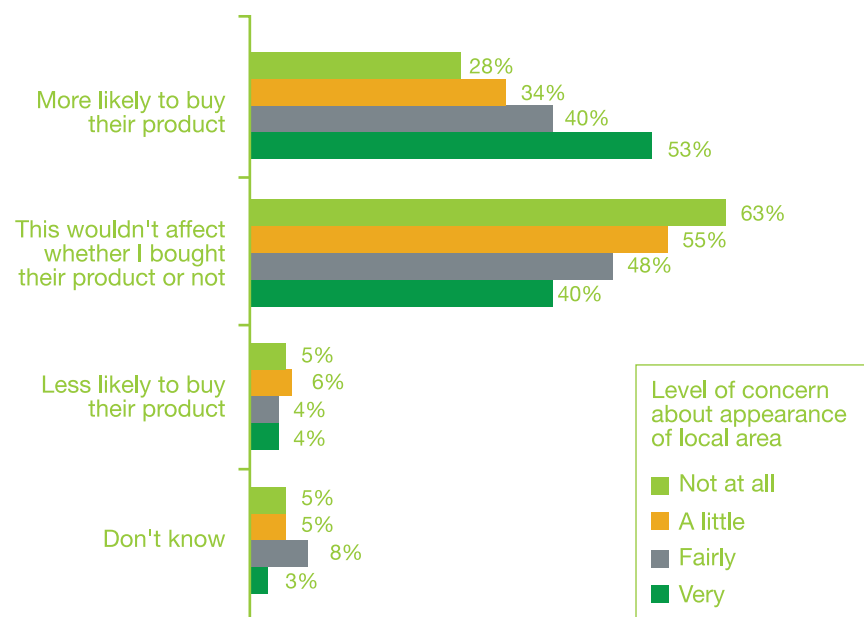


Fig 14: If businesses that produce products that often end up as litter took more responsibility for the litter problem do you think you would be...



When this response is segmented into the respondents' differing levels of concern about the appearance of the area they live in, this is seen to indicate that the level of concern has a big impact on respondents' likelihood of changing their purchasing behaviour.



*Fig 15: If businesses that produce products that often end up as litter took more responsibility for the litter problem do you think you would be... (Segmented by respondents previous Indication of their concern about litter in their local environment)*

Those that were 'very' or 'fairly concerned' about the appearance of their local area are seen to take businesses' positive responsibilities towards litter much more into account in their purchasing decisions than those with little or no concern for their local area's appearance.

## 6. Final recommendations

### Communicating the impacts of litter...

While people think litter is a big problem, this doesn't automatically translate into supporting action on it:

- Due to the sense that it is inevitable and that the solutions are not obvious to the public

Therefore, the first element of communications needs to be to communicate the impact that litter has on people's lives

- This is best done through economic messages, such as the cost of clearing it up, especially when framed in terms of what this money could otherwise be spent on – but also the impact on house prices
- And also through social messages – the cyclical links with wider anti-social behaviour are intuitive and also very motivating, as well as the links to public health. But the language used needs to be appropriate
- If you want to make environmental arguments, these need to employ relevant language and imagery
  - Abstract, global framings of climate change are not motivating, especially as litter is seen as a local issue
  - The strongest arguments are about the dangers posed to local wildlife

The second element involves showing some clear, simple steps that could address the problem

- Keep Britain Tidy needs to offer easy action plans for people to rally around

## Talking business...

The role that business can play isn't immediately apparent, but support can be built for this

Although the public doesn't blame businesses for producing litter, they are open to the idea that businesses should take some responsibility for helping to clear it up:

- Businesses are not seen as directly responsible for litter, so negative language around this does not resonate
- However, positive suggestions that businesses can help tackle the problem are well received
- Similarly, poll results indicate that customers respond better to the idea of supporting "good" businesses rather than punishing "bad ones"

## Final remarks

The vast majority of our participants arrived at the Big Litter Inquiry workshops believing that there was little or nothing that could be done to stop litter happening.

Despite pessimism of pre-existing views, on learning more about the issue, all participants were shocked at the impacts, full scale and cost of litter. This 'penny-drop' moment motivated people to decide something had to be done to tackle litter, especially after hearing that litter costs taxpayers and councils almost £1bn to clean up.

For too long litter has been a sleeping giant. It's a huge problem that has been brushed aside to focus on wider waste, resource and sustainability issues. The Big Litter Inquiry demonstrated that when people start to explore and re-engage with an issue, things quickly change.

Litter is a drain on our economy, jobs, house prices, environment, health and communities across the country. Keep Britain Tidy's challenge is to raise awareness and passion that litter is bad for people, businesses and the government so that positive action is taken across society.

## 6. Final recommendations

**Join us and be part of the solution to litter in England.**

Our new campaign: ***Litter - Which side of the fence are you on?*** aims to do just this, rise to the challenge of tackling litter - it is a call to action for government, businesses and communities to get on the right side of the fence and work towards solving the country's great litter issue.

Street cleansing alone costs taxpayers almost £1bn a year in England. The social and environmental costs take that figure even higher, as do the costs to business and tourism. Despite promising action on preventing litter in the coalition agreement, the Government has stepped away. But Keep Britain Tidy hasn't given up and neither have our 100,000 supporters.

More and more people, businesses and other organisations are making it clear which side of the fence they are on. They're choosing to fight litter.

Visit [www.KeepBritainTidy.org](http://www.KeepBritainTidy.org) to learn more and see what we're doing to be on the right side of the fence in your neighbourhood.

Keep Britain Tidy is an independent charity and needs your support to continue to campaign on litter.

Donate to us at [www.KeepBritainTidy.org](http://www.KeepBritainTidy.org)

### REFERENCES

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## Acknowledgements

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**Keep Britain Tidy would like to thank all the participants and organisers involved in our Big Litter Inquiries held in Preston and Croydon.**

Firstly the BritainThinks team for their professional support and guidance in the design and execution of the Citizen's Jury's.

Particular thanks go to the presenters "expert witnesses", representing the different perspectives from Central and Local Government, Businesses and Community Groups, for volunteering their time and invaluable expertise:

Daniel Instone, *Defra*

Simon Qasim, *Defra*

Mark Taylor, *Preston Council*

Simon Baxter, *Tower Hamlets Council*

Jane Bickerstaffe, *INCPEN*

Douglas White, *Carnegie Trust UK*

George Monck, *CleanUp UK*

As well as a number of representatives from Local Authorities in the Keep Britain Tidy Network

Chris Curry, *Wakefield District Council*

Phil Beddoes, *Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council*

Jason Prentis, *Lambeth Council*

John Mooteealoo, *Islington Council*

who supported us and the participants with their knowledge in developing creative ideas for tackling the litter problem in England.

Lastly the members of the public who took part, who inspired, challenged and motivated us to further develop and continue the much needed work of Keep Britain Tidy.



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