

## **LITTER MANAGEMENT PLAN 2020-2022**

The Litter Management Plan 2020-2022 was approved by the Elected Members of South Dublin County Council at their meeting held on the 9<sup>th</sup> of March 2020. Three weeks later, the country went into lockdown due to the Covid 19 pandemic. Staff in Environment Water and Climate Change had to adapt quickly to ensure that services were maintained and extended where required while having regard to Health and Safety and restrictions in place at any time.

## **LITTER AND WASTE ENFORCEMENT**

Throughout the Covid 19 crisis and the implementation of Social Distancing restrictions, South Dublin County Council in conjunction with Waste Collectors and Civic Amenity Site Operators/Collectors, maintained waste collection services throughout the county. Despite maintaining the level of service, South Dublin County Council witnessed a sizeable increase of illegal dumping and burning of waste, particularly domestic household waste. The volume of dumped material collected during the months of March and April 2020 increased by 33% compared to the same period in 2019. Conversely, the Council noted a reduction in the amount of litter being collected from litter bins which was 13% less for the same period in 2019.

To address the illegal dumping activities, Litter Wardens and Public Realm Crews increased patrols and removed illegally dumped items at the earliest opportunities, whilst taking the necessary health and safety precautions to prevent the spread of Covid-19. Waste Enforcement Officers carried out ongoing surveillance of litter pollution black spots.

In addition, South Dublin County Council saw an increased demand on bottle banks throughout the county. For example, the total collected during March and April 2020 was 42% more than the same period in 2019. The frequency of collections was increased to address this demand.

Through South Dublin County Council social media, the council sought to highlight the increase in dumping and requested the public to play their part.

During the lifetime of the Litter Management Plan, South Dublin County Council underwent an Audit by the Data Protection Commission into the Council's use of CCTV including use for law enforcement purposes related to the Litter Pollution Acts and the Waste Enforcement Acts. To date, the Council has not received a final report and recommendations from DPC.

The Council's use of CCTV for enforcement purposes was severely restricted because of the Audit draft findings in conjunction with restricted access to footage from existing cameras due to remote working

requirements. Monitoring of existing CCTV recommenced during 2022. No new systems will be considered for installation pending the outcome of the DPC Audit and the commencement of legislation giving effect to amendments to the Litter Pollution Acts and the Waste Enforcement Acts.

## **CCTV**

The Circular Economy and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2022 (the Act) was signed into law on the 21<sup>st</sup> of July 2022

The Act provides for amendments to:

- The Waste Management Act 1996 (the Act of 1996) [Part 3 of the Act] and
- The Litter Pollution Act 1997 (the Act of 1997) [Part 4 of the Act]

The proposed amendments to the Act of 1996 and the Act of 1997 include provisions for the approval of CCTV schemes by local authorities, subject to conditions, for the purposes of deterring environmental pollution and facilitating the deterrence, prevention, detection, and prosecution of offences under the Act of 1996 or the Act of 1997.

The Act includes a requirement that The Local Government Management Agency shall prepare and submit to the Minister for approval draft codes of practice for the purposes of setting standards for the operation of CCTV schemes by Local Authorities. It is also provided in the Act that the codes of practice must be in place prior to Parts 3 and 4 of the Act being commenced and any CCTV schemes being proposed for approval.

## **DOG FOULING**

In 2020 surveys were carried out in 4 Parks around the county to accurately ascertain the level of dog fouling in those parks. The report indicated that dog fouling levels were relatively low in the context of the numbers visiting the parks surveyed. Measures to deter dog fouling such as increased signage and audio devices, were installed at that time at specific problematic areas. The surveys were repeated at the same four locations in 2021 and an improvement was noted. The surveys were carried out in the context of the impact of dog fouling on all park users including wheelchair users and those using mobility aids.

Under [Section 22 of the Litter Pollution Act 1997](#), where faeces has been deposited by a dog in any place to which the section applies, the person in charge of the dog shall immediately remove the faeces and shall ensure that it is properly disposed of in a suitable sanitary manner.

The difficulty with enforcement of Section 22 is the requirement for witness testimony, to report that the offence happened and that an

identified person is the person in charge of the dog. The Council continues to encourage residents' groups and/or individuals to assist the Warden Service in this regard.

The council continues to raise awareness on the issue of Dog fouling and has mounted several campaigns on radio, newspapers and on social media in that regard. To encourage responsible dog ownership and ensure a cleaner environment for everybody, a new *Dog Fouling Awareness Campaign - Help Scally be a good boy!* was launched on Monday July 4th, the campaign features the adorable "Scally" the dog in a series of videos which highlight the consequences of not picking up the poop. Whether under the cover of darkness, in a field or on the beach remember "Your dog's poop could end up anywhere! Always Pick it up!"

Dog litter, if properly bagged can be disposed of in a standard litter bin. The Council provides standard type litter bins in its main parks and at the dog runs which have been provided in those parks. In total there are approximately 130 litter bins provided at parks locations in the County, this number has increased in recent years and will continue to increase as the need arises. There are a further 650 litter bins provided on streets and in villages and urban centres. Currently, dog litter stickers are being piloted on existing litter bins demonstrating that these receptacles are suitable for such litter.

Dog Litter Signage continues to be available and requests for signage are considered on a case-by-case basis and signs are erected on demonstrated need. The location of the request is examined for suitability and if deemed suitable signs can be erected. If there is/are registered group(s) in existence in an area, signage may be provided directly to the group through the Social Credit Scheme with the caveat that such signage erected must have due regard for public health and safety, and must not impede visibility or restrict traffic, cycling and pedestrian flow.

The Green Dog Walkers Programme is a non-confrontational, friendly way to change people's attitudes about dog fouling. It is a community-based scheme which volunteers in the community can adopt and promote in their own area. Members of the public can apply through Social Credits at [www.socialcredits.ie](http://www.socialcredits.ie)

Volunteers who become Green Dog Walkers are provided with an armband and bone shaped bag dispenser and commit to the following -

- wear the armband or put the Green Dog Walker collar on their dog when out walking
- clean up after their dog
- carry extra dog waste bags
- be happy to be approached to lend a dog waste bag to those without

- be a friendly reminder to other dog walkers to clean up after their dogs

## **PUBLIC REALM**

The Council's Public Realm Section provides a variety of cleansing services across the County as follows –

1. The servicing of on-street litter bins daily, the service consists of full-time operatives servicing litter bins on dedicated routes each day and this includes servicing of bins on Sundays and bank holidays.
2. Daily cleaning of town and village centres in Tallaght, Clondalkin, Lucan, Palmerstown, Rathcoole, Rathfarnham, Templeogue, and Walkinstown. This service is also provided on Sundays and bank holidays.
3. Daily cleaning of parks and servicing of park litter bins
4. The operation of mobile cleansing crews dealing with the cleaning and litter picking of parks and estate open spaces, including the response to illegal dumping and collections from Tidy Towns and community clean up events.
5. The road sweeping service provided under contract to the Council by Oxigen Environmental Ltd.
6. Graffiti removal which is provided by Public Realm painting staff and by specialist contractor where chemical removal of graffiti is required.
7. These services are priority services within Public Realm, and in this regard, they are the first tasks to be assigned to staff each day. What this means in effect is that where a regular operative is not available on a given day a replacement is assigned to their task as a priority before any other tasks are assigned.
8. The total provision for all the above services in the 2022 revenue budget is €8.2m.

Information relevant to the provision of these services is included in the reports on the Litter Management Plan which are presented to the area committees on a twice-yearly basis. Any issues raised by elected members through this process are taken into consideration and responded to in an appropriate manner.

Cleansing services are kept under constant review and as issues come to light through area committee business, membersnet and customer care items or through ongoing monitoring and supervision they are responded to in a timely manner. Where certain changes or improvements to a service are required then these have always been acted on and this will continue to be the case. For example, the need to provide daily cleaning and servicing of litter bins in park locations which arose during the

pandemic has now become a permanent feature of the cleaning services provided by this Council.

Issues such as the provision of additional street litter bins arise from time to time as area committee agenda items and where possible these are responded to in a positive manner with additional bins provided as requested by elected members. Similarly, where locations of persistent littering or illegal dumping are raised by elected members then these are factored into the regular response by public realm operations, with illegal dumping incidents being responded to within a 24-hour time frame where possible. As the county grows and new urban centres, public parks and residential areas become established then the services provided will have to expand accordingly.

A review has been carried out of litter and cleansing issues which have been brought to the attention of public realm staff through CMAS, membersnet and customer care. The results of the review suggest that there have been no major issues in recent times that would require any substantial change to the configuration of cleansing services as they are currently.