

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILCABINET18 September 2025Report by Director of EnvironmentLITTER STRATEGY**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval of a new Litter Strategy for East Renfrewshire. The report and strategy sets out our approach to how we will work with communities and business to improve cleanliness of our streets and open spaces.

RECOMMENDATION

2. It is recommended that the Cabinet approves the Litter Strategy, contained in Appendix 1 of this report, for East Renfrewshire.

BACKGROUND

3. East Renfrewshire has an excellent reputation for high quality parks and open spaces that are clean and well maintained however, littering and fly-tipping are issues that also impact some of our local areas. Keep Scotland Beautiful gave a score of 94% for street cleanliness to East Renfrewshire from 213 independently assessed locations. Local residents indicated the importance of the issue through the Citizen Panel surveys from December 2024 highlighted that 58% of respondents thought that street cleaning and litter control was either poor or very poor. So whilst we do relatively well compared to other places, there is a desire to do more and do better.

4. The Council's approach to managing litter and fly tipping includes:

- Residential uplifts for domestic waste
- 730 litter bins are available throughout East Renfrewshire
- Community group litter picking supported by the Council, approximately 20 per year
- Daily cleansing in our streets and open spaces
- Investigation of reports, and clean-up, of [littering](#) and [fly tipping](#), with the Council website having a reporting tool for both
- Enforcement through the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices
- Work with partner agencies, such as Police Scotland and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) in investigating waste crime
- Provision of a mixed tenure service to raise standards of estates that are a blend of owners and social rented properties.

5. Where necessary, enforcement action can be undertaken by Community Safety for littering and dog fouling, with Environmental Health officers able to enforce fly tipping and food management/ disposal.

6. In developing the Litter Strategy, officers from Environment Department, Community Safety and Corporate Communications have been involved, with enthusiastic input also provided from our young people through engagement with our schools and the Youth Rights Association. This has helped shape many of the actions included in the new strategy.

REPORT

7. This Litter Strategy has been framed against the three pillars of A Place To Grow and sets out our aims and ambitions for further improvement of our open spaces through direct action and engagement with our local communities. Central to the strategy is the theme of engagement, with the intent to focus on the involvement and participation of communities (including Community Councils), local businesses and our young people to help deliver meaningful and successful outcomes.

8. From engagement with our schools and the Youth Rights Association, our children and young people have shown a genuine enthusiasm in helping to develop ideas and outcomes as part of this strategy. Experience has shown that engaged young people take positive messages and behaviours home and influence their families and other adults around them, and our young people will remain involved through the life of this strategy to help shape behaviours in East Renfrewshire into the future.

9. While the strategy is aimed towards positive behaviour change, the Council has an important role through our enforcement powers. Our services already work closely with Police Scotland and SEPA in this regard and we will continue to engage with these key partners to target obstructive litter behaviour, taking appropriate enforcement action as necessary.

10. To bring the Litter Strategy to public awareness, a launch event will be held in Barrhead that will start the process of re-introducing organised council/community clean up events across East Renfrewshire. This will be supported by positive communications that will focus on highlighting the high quality of our open spaces, and everyone having a role in helping to keep our streets and open spaces clean.

11. As part of the litter strategy, we will provide new larger litter bins, placed in the right locations, with input from our front-line workforce, who understand best where bins are needed to provide the best impact. Having bigger bins in the right locations will speed up the process of waste collection and allowing more time for litter picking around our streets and open spaces. We will also provide more equipment to support our local business and community groups to litter pick outside their shops and in their local areas, further contributing to a cleaner East Renfrewshire.

12. To ensure that we maximise the benefits of having a litter strategy, we will also begin an active programme of engagement with our communities to encourage local participation, provide educational messaging and coordinate key activities, such as local clean up days, which will be rolled out across East Renfrewshire.

13. A review of performance of the litter strategy will be undertaken on an annual basis with all outcomes and achievements reported back to cabinet.

FINANCE AND EFFICIENCY

14. Up-front investment in enabling infrastructure and equipment, such as new, larger bins, will be funded from the in-year underspend in the Environment Department. Moving forward,

the aims and outcomes of the strategy will be delivered from within existing budgets. If and when appropriate, additional funding to support initiatives aligned to the strategy will also be progressed.

CONSULTATION AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING

15. This strategy has been informed through feedback sessions with the Citizens Panel, and with input from key members of staff from Environment, Education and Business Operations and Partnerships.

16. A special mention is needed for our children and young people who have provided infectious enthusiasm, and an incredible amount of support in the development of this strategy. In June 2025, officers held workshops with school pupils and the Youth Rights Association to understand their view of littering, what actions they felt should be included in the strategy and how they would want to be involved. In both workshops, the participation of our young people was a significant positive – many of the aims and objectives included are reflective of their views.

17. Moving forwards, successful delivery of the litter strategy will be best achieved with our communities and local businesses engaged, and close partnership working will be a central feature in delivering successful outcomes from this strategy.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSALS

18. There are no property or ICT implications, and delivery of the strategy will be met from within existing resources.

19. An Equalities, Fairness & Rights Impact Assessment screening showed no relevance to Equality, Strategic social economic impact or the Rights of the Child, therefore an assessment is not required.

20. A Climate Change Impact Assessment has been completed, and there are minor benefits from reduced use of vehicles from quicker waste collection routes. Environmentally there will be benefits from reduced litter levels and improvements in recycling.

CONCLUSIONS

21. East Renfrewshire has a very involved and interested community, which can be seen from our active Community Councils, Citizen Panel engagement and involvement of our young people in developing this strategy. Having a litter strategy in place for East Renfrewshire will provide an action framework for linking with our communities, young people and businesses to take the next steps in influencing a positive change in keeping our street and open spaces cleaner. Doing so, provides an excellent opportunity for building on A Place To Grow and to further improve upon the high quality of our streets and open spaces.

RECOMMENDATION

22. It is recommended that Cabinet approves the Litter Strategy, contained in Appendix 1 of this report, for East Renfrewshire.

Director of Environment

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September 2025



LITTER STRATEGY

2025-2030

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About Our Vision

A clean and well cared for East Renfrewshire is important to us all. East Renfrewshire Council wants to work with our partners and communities to support a cleaner environment for us all to flourish, thrive and live well. Our vision is to Keep East Renfrewshire Beautiful.

Our lived environment is crucial to how people feel about East Renfrewshire. Part of making our area a place that everyone can enjoy and feel proud of is to have it free from litter and fly tipping. Our litter strategy seeks to state our ambitions, and provide a framework for plans, policies and initiatives to make East Renfrewshire a cleaner place to live, work and visit.

Aligned to **A Place to Grow**, this strategy aims to build positive change in behaviours with litter and waste across East Renfrewshire.

A future where		
Our children and young people flourish	Our communities and places thrive	We all live well

About Litter in East Renfrewshire

East Renfrewshire is an area with an increasing population, serving the highest proportion of children and young people in Scotland, along with a growing ageing population. Over 60% of that population live within a five-minute walk of wooded areas, parks or rivers. We want East Renfrewshire to be a clean pleasant place to live and visit for everyone.

What Are The Issues We Face?

East Renfrewshire Council's litter cleanliness performance score for 2024/25 was 94.9%, ranking the Council as the 9th best performing local authority. This performance metric is measured by Keep Scotland Beautiful as part of their Local Environmental Audit & Management System that monitors litter cleanliness across Scotland.

Despite this, we are not complacent on the challenges faced or of the impact of littering and fly tipping in East Renfrewshire.

A 2023 Keep Scotland Beautiful National Litter Survey showed that:

- 70% believe litter is a problem in their local area, and 90% think it is an issue nationally
- 85% of people want to see more action taken to prevent and tackle litter. To achieve this 88% support educational and behavioural campaigns; and 86% would like to see increased funding to support community litter picking.

We know these issues are important to our local communities. East Renfrewshire Council's Citizens Panel, reported that only 42% of residents being happy with street cleaning and litter, and a desire to improve the quality of environment in some parts of East Renfrewshire. Our residents have also asked for more consultation on taking part in volunteering opportunities associated with improving the local environment.

Why Have We Developed a Litter Strategy?

This is East Renfrewshire Council's first Litter Strategy, evidencing our commitment to improving our open spaces across East Renfrewshire. Our strategy looks to align with [Scotland's National Litter Strategy](#); agreeing that littering, dog fouling and fly tipping are a blight on our communities and open spaces.

Our aims of reducing waste and making East Renfrewshire a cleaner place will positively contribute towards our [Get To Zero](#) ambitions by diverting those who might litter to better waste disposal behaviours.

The Litter Strategy sets out the aims and ambitions of the Council, with input provided from many of our young people through engagement with schools and the Youth Rights Association. We will also work with communities, businesses and partners as part of our ambitions to do more and take meaningful action to stay clean and keep East Renfrewshire green.

What Are The Council's Responsibilities?

The Environment Protection Act 1990, through the Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse (COPLAR) places two statutory duties on East Renfrewshire Council:

Environment Protection Act 1990 – Duties on East Renfrewshire Council	
1	Ensure that the Council's land (or land under our control) is kept clear of litter & refuse.
2	Ensure that public roads (for which the Council is responsible) are kept clean.

However, our duties do not extend to many areas which are regularly visited / viewed across East Renfrewshire; such as privately owned land in residential housing estates, town centre buildings or commercial / industrial estates. This is why we want to positively influence behaviour change, recognising that the Council cannot achieve this on its own.

How Does The Council Manage Litter Currently?

East Renfrewshire Council collects waste and recycling on a three-weekly cycle with fortnightly collections for garden and food waste. We also offer competitive trade waste collection for all businesses across East Renfrewshire.

There are 730 litter bins across East Renfrewshire; which are regularly maintained by Council staff. Locations of bins can be seen using the link below:

<https://gisportal.erc.insider/portal/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=dae46cd6863f4011b6f2941d83a40242>

Community Litter Picking

Council Officers already work closely with interested community groups and individuals to encourage litter picking, with bags and equipment provided upon request. Approximately 20 community picks take place each year.

Cleansing

On a daily basis the Council provides significant resource to maintain a clean environment, whether that be on the street, in green and open spaces, around public buildings or roadside verges. This work can be dangerous and sometimes requires planning and road closures to ensure the safety of our workers. The street cleaning programme is carried out both mechanically, utilising a small fleet of road sweepers, and manually, particularly in town centres and open spaces.

Littering & Fly Tipping

Members of the public can report concerns and incidences on the Council website for either [littering](#) or [fly tipping](#). In both instances, Council Officers will investigate and liaise with appropriate persons (this may include Police Scotland and / or SEPA).

Where enforcement action is required, fines may be issued:

Littering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - £80 Fixed Penalty Notice fine issued by Community Safety Officers - Unpaid fines will be escalated to the Procurator Fiscal and could rise to £2,500.
Fly Tipping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - £500 Fixed Penalty Notice fines can be issued by appropriate Council staff. - Fly tipping is a criminal offence, processed by Police Scotland. - Fines may go up to £10,000. - Criminal sentences of up to 6 months can be imposed.

Food Businesses

As the enforcing agency for Food Law requirements, the Council reminds all food commercial premises of their requirement to have appropriate waste management arrangements in place.

Mixed Tenure & Housing Association Properties

The Council has a Mixed Tenure Service who work to raise standards of estates with a mix of owners and social renters.

Our Ambition

Aligned to the Community Planning Partnership's A Place to Grow vision, this strategy sets the tone and ambition to ensure that East Renfrewshire is an attractive place, free of litter and fly tipping. This strategy will be achieved through:

We want a future East Renfrewshire where:	How we intend to do this:
Our children and young people flourish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with children and young people in schools, to educate them on littering and how they can support the education of adults at home. • Listen to the views of our young people and include them in the process where appropriate. • Explore opportunities to link our Litter Strategy with the Curriculum through Learning for Sustainability, working with schools and young people. • Ensure messaging is appropriate for its audience, regardless of age.
Our communities and places thrive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with businesses in East Renfrewshire to play their part in sorting and recycling their waste, keeping waste areas safe and well maintained, using approved disposal routes. • Engage with our tenants on waste areas being clean, safe and well maintained. • Educate and communicate on the impacts towards our net zero, climate and biodiversity ambitions.
We all live well	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage community litter picks - providing resources, support & guidance. • Explore opportunities for businesses, partners and our staff to volunteer and support keeping East Renfrewshire clean. • Engage with our communities (including Community Councils) and partners on creative solutions and approaches to dealing with litter. • Work with our partners to explore new solutions that will support enforcement where fly tipping and waste crime occurs.

Monitoring & Evaluation

Through the life of the strategy, we will reflect and consider the effectiveness of approaches taken and evaluate whether new solutions and actions are required.

To ensure that progress is achieved, an annual report will be provided on actions taken and outcomes delivered, giving our elected members and communities assurance that progress is being achieved. We will also use this to identify what further work is required.

Broader Context

As new legislation is developed, such as the Deposit Return Scheme, which may have associated benefits to reducing litter, officers will review and adapt the strategy to integrate additional actions into the strategy to maximise opportunities to deliver positive outcomes.

Our Children & Young People Will Flourish

Over a quarter of East Renfrewshire's population are under the age of 21. Our children and young people are crucial to the success of our desires to make East Renfrewshire a clean and safe place. Under our strategy we want to:

- Educate our children and young people on littering, including its impacts on where they live
- Empower our children and young people to take action and influence at home, in their schools and communities
- Hear our children and young people, giving them opportunities to shape our initiatives to deal with litter in their area.

We believe that working with our young people as part of this strategy will bring a long-term and meaningful change that will positively benefit the citizens they grow to be, while recognising that our young people will also lead positive changes in their own social circles.

What We Will Do

Over the life of this strategy, we will look to:

Action We Will Take
Engage with schools – talking with children and young people about littering, the importance of keeping communities clean & explaining the impact.
Engage with children and young people to shape our messaging on littering.
Facilitate and support school litter picks where there is desire for these – ensuring these can be safely delivered.
Ensure that our facilities for children and young people are kept clean.
Promote the Learning for Sustainability activities taking place in schools.

Across the life of this strategy, we will also:

- Promote links to Learning for Sustainability within the curriculum requirements and identify opportunities for our litter work and ambitions to tie into existing learning and naturally align to this.
- Examine opportunities for litter activities and awareness to support “Eco School” status to be provided for interested schools.
- Work with national bodies to tie into existing campaigns – e.g. Keep Scotland Beautiful's Spring Clean.
- Establish a “Litter Heroes” branding for all litter picks – giving us a vehicle to celebrate and promote the work of schools, community groups, businesses, partners and staff volunteers.
- Explore opportunities to use Council vehicles and other resources to share littering, recycling and sustainability messaging and designed materials developed by children and young people.
- Provide promotional materials and litter messaging (designed by children and young people) for educational establishments & facilities that children and young people use.
- Work with children and young people who have been Litter Heroes or who have been involved in sustainability projects, developing case studies and peers who can encourage other children and young people to get involved.

- Work with interested schools on provisions of composters and collections of garden waste.
- Explore opportunities to link “Litter Heroes” and positive litter with an incentive programme – e.g. school points.

What Will Success Look Like

Our children and young people will be engaged and understand the issues that littering can cause. Children and young people will be involved in our approaches to littering; shaping how we communicate across East Renfrewshire, building life-long habits and positive behaviours.

Our Communities and Places Thrive

The quality of our streets and open spaces play a significant role in residents feeling a sense of belonging. Ensuring our streets and parks are clean, will help foster pride in our local areas, will encourage positive behaviour, and makes East Renfrewshire more attractive area for business investment and visitors/ tourists. In delivering the strategy, we will work closely with our communities and businesses to ensure positive outcomes are delivered collectively.

What We Will Do

Over the life of this strategy, we will:

Action We Will Take
Engage with businesses, encouraging them to be involved in keeping the areas around their business free from litter and having properly maintained waste storage areas.
Increase checks for contracts (waste removal) and cleanliness when carrying out Food Law Inspections.
Work with our tenants on keeping waste areas clean, safe and well maintained.
Use our communications channels to raise awareness on positive impacts to our net zero, climate and biodiversity ambitions.
Undertake positive action to maintain clean streets and parks.
Link with Housing Associations, sharing messaging on waste and communal areas being free of litter, providing support where necessary.
Where we have reports of graffiti, dog fouling and fly tipping – investigate these; targeting areas of regular reporting for enforcement.
Educate the public on the matter of waste carrier licenses and need for any business taking waste from them to have this.
Promote lawful waste businesses / target those who are operating without a licence.
Educate the public and businesses on the location of appropriate waste disposal facilities.
Encourage property builders to engage with Neighbourhood Services at an early stage in designing new developments to consult on open space design and refuse collection.
Continue to offer bins and collection types that ensure East Renfrewshire maintains high levels of recycling, including special uplifts. We will take steps to minimise missed collections.
Enable residents to take items that cannot easily be recycled through kerbside collections to recycling points or centres.
Promote the Council's Commercial Waste service.
Promote positive messaging about the levels of littering and recycling within East Renfrewshire – recognising we are a high performing area, but that we can always improve.

We will also:

- Deliver organised clean up events across East Renfrewshire areas – our staff will work with community groups, businesses, schools and our staff volunteers and take a day of action across a village / town.
- Review the use of electric sweepers and smaller pavement sweepers for shop fronts.
- Review more manual based cleaning in neighbourhoods across East Renfrewshire – offering recognisable faces in communities that reassure we act on reports of littering.
- Review the complaints handling & mapping software for fly tipping, to allow mapping of reports and identifications of materials fly tipped with a view to further preventative activity.

- Introduce Digital Street cleaning routes to support front line teams, and allow production and retention of records of street cleaning – which can be submitted to the litter audits coordinated by Zero Waste Scotland.
- Review alternative ways of working to make bin storage areas in back courts easier to manage.
- Work with private landlords & factors to ensure communal bin areas are kept clean.
- Encourage tenants, landlords and factors to work with the Council to develop storage solutions that minimise bins being left on streets longer than is needed.

What Will Success Look Like

The areas that the Council are responsible for will be clean and well maintained. We will have a community that is aware of the impacts of their litter on our climate and biodiversity.

Case Study

We have already seen success from a focus on litter and know that working with local business can bring strong results, as shown from our 2023 case study.

In 2023, Council Services worked closely with businesses in Giffnock to address bin storage issues. Traditionally, bins were stored on Council Land – but as the number of food premises increased, there has been larger volumes of waste and as a result, rats.

Recognising the benefits of a partnership approach and building upon the good relationships held with food premises; the Council arranged treatments and took steps to both reduce rat runs and remove potential food sources for pests. An agreement was made that commercial bins should no longer be kept on Council land. Commercial premises brought on board contractors to support more frequent uplifts. The results of this collaborative work can be seen in the before and after photos.



We All Live Well

Our communities are at the heart of East Renfrewshire. We want to encourage and facilitate community volunteering and involvement when it comes to litter. This will only enhance cohesion and a sense of belonging.

What We Will Do

Over the life of this strategy, we will:

Action We Will Take
Provide more opportunities for community groups to carry out litter picks – supporting them with equipment and advice.
Work with existing and emerging community groups, businesses and partners on volunteering – again supporting them with equipment and advice.
Link with campaigns by national agencies, e.g. Keep Scotland Beautiful, to encourage positive behaviours and / or community action.
Engage with our appropriate partner agencies to target fly-tipping and criminal waste activity.
Encourage Council staff to use their permitted volunteer days to support out litter picks.
Regularly engage with other local authorities and review alternative approaches to consider new activities that can engage / involve.

We will also:

- Explore means to recognise community groups or volunteers who have carried out significant cleaning – consideration of awards schemes.
- Explore opportunities for corporate sponsorship, where businesses sponsor clean-up events and provide resources.
- Link community benefits to enhance work that could benefit this strategy where appropriate; engaging with our communities directly on how we do this in a meaningful way to them.
- Evaluate opportunities for “Adopt-a-Spot” – where local businesses and community groups can have responsibility for keeping specific areas clean, with appropriate supervision and advice from the Council.
- Throughout the life of the strategy, we will explore opportunities for external funding to enhance the work we do in targeting litter; identifying greater ambitions or having stronger impact where we are successful in this.

What Will Success Look Like

We will have a well-established and published approach to encouraging interested community groups, businesses, partners and our own staff to undertake litter picking activity. We will listen to our communities and regularly review best practice, so that we can offer greater ownership and a sense of place.

Our Enforcement

We recognise that despite our best intentions and positive actions, that there will still be those who litter, vandalise and fly tip. The Council will use its enforcement powers as appropriate, along with working with our key partners (e.g. SEPA, Police Scotland, etc.) to ensure that we target those who do disrupt our communities.

What We Will Do

Over the life of this strategy, we will look to:

Action We Will Take
Educate on the health & hygiene issues arising from dog fouling.
Issue fixed penalty notices as a last resort, where appropriate, for littering, fly tipping and dog fouling.
Work with communities on graffiti prevention & removal.
Work with SEPA, Police Scotland, etc. to ensure a shared understanding on responsibilities for fly tipping; coupled with a coordinated response approach.
Ensure appropriate council officers are aware of the enforcement procedures and powers available to them.
With appropriate partners, take action against non-licensed waste businesses operating in the area.
Provide appropriate council officers with regular Keep Scotland Beautiful training – ensuring confidence in issuing Fixed Penalty Notices.

We will also:

- Consider signage in littering / fly tipping / dog fouling hot spots, to act as a deterrent.
- Work with partner agencies to promote the enforcement action we take; sharing messaging as a potential deterrent, while demonstrating to our communities that action will be taken.