



SCSN Briefing Paper No 01 – Environment Safety

1 Topics

- Fly Tipping and Posting
- Street Cleanliness, Litter and Graffiti
- Abandoned Vehicles
- Noise
- Street Lighting

2 Executive Summary

The local environment has a significant impact on the public's perception of safety with members of the public, who are satisfied with how their area looks being significantly more likely to be satisfied with how safe they feel in their area. Fly-tipping is the 'illegal deposit of any waste onto land or a highway that has no licence to accept it.' Illegal dumps of waste can vary in scale and the type of waste involved. Tipping a mattress, electrical items or a bin bag full of rubbish in the street causes a local nuisance, and tipping household items and small-scale building or garden waste in open spaces reduces their amenity value to the community. At the other end of the scale there is a growing trend for large-scale fly-tipping which involves several truckloads of construction and demolition waste being tipped on a range of different types of land.

Fly-posting can occur anywhere but is usually found in urban locations. It is generally taken to be the display of advertising on buildings and street furniture without the consent of the owner. Fly-posting can be unsightly and make an area feel unsafe and uncared for. Although generally not offensive, Guerrilla style flyposting is usually subversive and sets out to challenge society. Anti-capitalist and anarchist groups are regular perpetrators.

The Scottish Household Survey identifies the most commonly perceived problems are litter lying around (24% saying this is very or fairly common in their area) and animal nuisance such as noise or dog fouling (23%). Perception of vandalism such as graffiti or damage to property (11%) continues to decrease year on year. Over a quarter (28%) of adults particularly dislike the unpleasant environment they live in. In 2008 the UK dog population was estimated to be 7.3 million, with dogs producing approximately 1,000 tonnes of excrement each day. In a recent survey of over 19,000 sites dog fouling was present in over 8% of sites. The highest level of dog fouling can be found in areas where people live.

Graffiti is any illegal marking to walls and other surfaces. It covers a wide variety of forms including 'masterpieces', 'tags', juvenile scribbles, scratchings and etchings. Although there are many types of graffiti, by far the most prevalent are juvenile scribbles which are responsible for most of the graffiti on streets. This type of graffiti can often be offensive in nature. Graffiti can have a number of negative effects on a community as it is costly to remove and can make streets and other public spaces look neglected and may attract further anti-social behaviour.

Abandoned vehicles are expensive to remove and have a negative impact on the environment. They can then result or lead to crime and can quickly become dangerous. There is a risk of explosion or injury; they can leak dangerous fluids,

which can catch fire or run into the water stream and they are often burnt which can endanger lives, property and the environment.

Noise pollution and nuisance can be from a variety of sources including: vehicles, fireworks, barking dogs, construction, transport, music etc. The number of complaints relating to noise has been increasing since 2001/02.

There have been many papers published by eminent criminologists who have studied the relationships between crime, the fear of crime and street lighting. All have agreed that the provision of good quality street lighting has a very positive effect on reducing crime and fear of crime by residents. Recent advances in lamp technology have allowed 'white light' sources to be used in place of the traditional yellow/orange lamp. Street lighting is a significant factor in public perceptions of safety and an essential factor in ensuring public space CCTV is effective.

3 Key Statistics

- 2.25 million pieces of litter are dropped in the UK every day.
- Scottish Local Authorities spend in excess of £2.5 million each year clearing up instances of illegally dumped waste.
- Mixed urban and rural local authorities accounted for 3/4 of the reported fly tipping incidents in 2009/2010 and Roads and council land had the majority of reported fly tipping incidents in 2009/2010.
- Annual cost to Local Authorities for street cleaning is around £100 million. Fifteen Local Authorities have spent over £3.5 million on litter enforcement activities for that same period.
- 69% of the Scottish public say dog fouling bothers them more than any other type of litter and 52% singled it out as the type that offended them most. While 95% of the British public are worried by the amount of dog fouling in public places.
- Noise pollution complaints are increasing: 2001/02 – 9165 complaints, 2005/06 – 28217 complaints, 2008/09 – 58313 complaints.
- In 2008/09 1613 Fixed Penalty Notices were issued in relation to vandalism, while the 2007/08 Scottish Household survey indicates that 12% had had personal experience of vandalism, graffiti or other deliberate damage to property.
- The national average indicates that just 1% of the 15,500 surveyed sites (2009) were tarnished by graffiti and this rose to 17% of sites in urban and high density housing areas, a massive jump from just 7% the previous year. (LEAMS).

4 Discussion Questions

- What are the challenges for environment safety in the next 5-10 years?
- Are there any examples of effective projects or initiatives that we should be promoting the roll out off?
- As regards preventative spending – what should our three priorities be, and who do we need to work in partnership/collaboratively with to achieve these?

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