

Councillor Black  
Scrutiny Programme Committee (Chair)

(By Email)

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*Our Ref:* MT/JG

*Your Ref:*

*Date:* 21 October 2021

Dear Cllr. Black,

**Re: Scrutiny Letter to Cabinet Member dated 14 Oct 2021 (SPC 14 Sep) - Litter & Community Cleansing**

Thank you for your letter following the Scrutiny Programme Committee on 14 September 2021 in respect of 'Litter and Community Cleansing'. I am pleased to note that the Committee recognises the important role that the Cleansing Service plays in keeping our streets clean and clear of litter and refuse so far as is practicable. I also welcome your comments and thanks directed to the Teams for continuing to maintain a high level of service throughout the ongoing pandemic under challenging and often difficult circumstances.

In answer to the additional questions raised, I would make the following comments:

**1. Local Environment and Management System (LEAMS)**

LEAMS surveys provide a 'snapshot' of litter and other local environmental quality issues across Wales and allows Keep Wales Tidy to track trends over time. In 2018-19, Keep Wales Tidy independently surveyed a total of 3,216 streets across Wales. During the survey the quality of the local environment was measured by recording the:

- Street cleanliness grade based on how much litter and dog fouling is present (the current methodology can be found as attached).
- Types and sources of litter present;
- Amount of graffiti, vandalism, fly-posting, dog fouling, weeds, detritus and chewing gum staining visible;

The surveys provide independent data for:

- Data Unit Wales for Public Accountability Measure for Clean Streets (PAM/010: percentage of streets that are clean);
- The Welsh Government for use by the Ministers and other policy makers in the National Assembly for Wales;

- The 22 Welsh Local Authorities on the local environmental quality issues within each of their areas;
- Other organisations with an interest in local environmental quality.

The information is taken from the surveys undertaken in each local authority in Wales. The surveys cover a 6% sample of streets, selected at random from a full list of adopted highways provided by the relevant local authority. LEAMS surveys do not extend to parks, green spaces, beaches or busy roads and motorways.

Keep Wales Tidy calculates the following independent national figures:

- A Cleanliness Indicator (see attached calculation methodology);
- The average percentage of streets graded B and above (which contributes towards the Public Accountability Measure PAM/10: percentage of streets that are clean).

These scores have also been calculated for each Local Authority using the information from our surveys. Each Local Authority will undertake their own surveys using the same methodology and the combined data provides the result for the PAM/10. The LEAMS can be seen as a measure of the four E's: Effective cleansing, the use of Enforcement powers and actions to Educate and Engage with communities to prevent issues which negatively impact on the quality of the local environment.

## 2. Councillors' Community Budgets

Local Authorities have a duty to keep their land clean and free from litter and refuse **so far as is practicable**. The amount of resource allocated to the Cleansing Service generally correlates to the level of service that can be provided. The Cleansing Service routinely prioritises and targets its available resource to key/prestige areas (e.g. City Centre) and those of greatest need.

An additional/enhanced Cleansing resource above and beyond our statutory minimum requirement can be provided by use of funding provided by Community Budgets. However, for the reasons of staff availability and general administration, it is only practicably possible to employ a Full Time Equivalent (FTE) for 37 hours per week as a minimum. Such a position can be funded by a single ward with multiple Cllrs clubbing together or alternatively by Cllrs funding and sharing the FTE between wards (e.g. two days in one ward, three days in another).

The current cost of employing an equivalent Grade 4 Cleansing Operative is approximately £40k per annum which includes on-costs, vehicle hire, fuel etc. and administration costs etc.

Cllrs should carefully consider if they require an enhanced service at this time, particularly in cases where their area may already receive adequate resource. Additionally, there is also some limited scope to carry out project-type work on a scheduled ad-hoc basis.

## 3. Public messaging by the Council to deter people from littering

The Cleansing Service concurs with the Committee in 'banging the drum' to reinforce the underlying message that it is not acceptable to drop litter. Ultimately it is the

responsibility of the individual to dispose of their own litter. Cleansing is fully supportive of national anti-littering campaigns by Keep Wales Tidy et al (e.g. annual Spring Clean Cymru and Marine Beach Clean litter picks etc.) and these are normally highlighted prior to the event. Local initiatives such as the 'Don't be a Tosser' and 'Dispose of your BBQ Responsibly' have been supported with associated signage and media articles. There is always more that can be done and Cleansing will continue to explore any opportunities that arise with the Comms Department to which we have good links. For example, we intend to reinforce the message that it is acceptable for dog owners' to dispose of their dog waste (this does not include dog waste generated at home) in litter bins as well as dog bins. Appropriate signage to this effect can already be seen on many of our litter bins. The Committee's suggestion of placing informative signage on vehicles is something that could potentially be explored further.

#### **4. Alerting people to the impact of litter on wildlife**

This is related to item 3 above. Many people are aware through national and local media of the various effects that litter can have on wildlife from consumption of larger items by livestock etc. to the breakdown and accumulation of microplastics in our oceans that are then ingested by marine animals. Waste, recycling and sustainability are in general covered by the school curriculum in Wales to ensure that children and young adults are made aware of the impact that waste/litter and their actions as individuals can have on the environment as a whole. This should bode well for the future but Cleansing will continue to explore any opportunities that arise within the Council and/or in conjunction with our many partners as appropriate.

I trust this answers the issues raised

Regards



**Y Cynghorydd / Councillor Mark Thomas**  
**Aelod Y Cabinet Dros Gwella'r Amgylchedd a Rheoli Isadeiledd/**  
**Cabinet Member for Environment Enhancement & Infrastructure Management**

## Local Environmental Audit and Management System (LEAMS) Methodology

The methodology for the LEAMS surveys reflects the Code of Practice for Litter and Refuse and Associated Guidance (COPLAR) 2007, which relates to Part IV of the Environmental Protection Act (EPA) 1990.

Each survey covers a 6% sample of streets, selected at random from a full list of adopted highways provided by each local authority. LEAMS assesses the quality of the local environment through a visual survey of a 50m length of one side of a street (known as a transect) which includes the pavement and some gutter, by recording the below information.

### Overall Cleanliness Grade

This is based on how much litter and dog fouling is present.

<b>A Grade</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No litter or refuse</li></ul>	<b>B+ Grade</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No more than 3 small items of litter</li></ul>	<b>B Grade</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Predominantly free of litter and refuse apart from some small items</li></ul>	<b>C Grade</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Widespread distribution of litter and/or refuse with minor accumulations</li></ul>	<b>D Grade</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Heavily affected by litter and/or refuse with significant accumulations</li></ul>
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a) The Cleanliness Indicator (CI)

The CI is calculated from the street cleanliness grades (A-D) and ranges from 0 to 100. Each grade carries a weighting.

$$\text{CI} = \frac{\text{Actual Score}}{\text{Maximum Score}} \times 100$$

Example of calculating the CI using a sample of 30 streets:

	Number of Streets Awarded that Grade	Weighting	Score
Grade A	2	3	6
Grade B+	3	2.5	7.5
Grade B	22	2	44
Grade C	2	1	2
Grade D	1	0	0
Totals	30		59.5

Maximum Score: 30 (total number of streets) x 3 (grade A weighting) = 90

$$\text{CI} = \frac{59.5}{90} \times 100 = 66.1$$

If all streets are awarded a B grade (an acceptable level of cleanliness) the CI is 66.7.

b) The % of B grade streets and above

Keep Wales Tidy's independent data for each local authority on the % of B grade streets and above is combined with the figures from surveys undertaken by local authorities to calculate the Streetscene Performance Indicator.