

Litter Strategy for Watford 2021 to 2026



WATFORD
BOROUGH
COUNCIL



1. Introduction

1.1 The national picture

Litter is a prevalent issue both locally, nationally and worldwide. It has detrimental effects on public health and wellbeing, wildlife, the climate, perceptions of a place and the economy. It has been demonstrated that people are less likely to drop litter in a clean environment, which may also be prevented through the opportunity, capability and motivation to dispose of waste correctly. Achieving real change requires concerted action by national government, local government, communities, charities, campaign groups and businesses.

There are a number of policies and legislations which reference the importance of protecting the environment by tackling litter issues. These include:

- DEFRA's *25 Year Environment Plan*
- *Environmental Protection Act 1990*
- ODPM's *Living Places: Cleaner, Safer, Greener (2002)*
- DEFRA's *Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse (2013)*
- DEFRA and Environment Agency's *Resources and Waste Strategy for England (2018)*
- *Litter Act 1983*
- *The Highways Act 1980*
- *Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011 (as amended)*

The government's plans to introduce a Deposit Return Scheme in order to tackle packaging waste may also see a reduction in particular types of litter, such as plastic and glass bottles and cans, within our environment.

A *Litter Strategy for England* was published by DEFRA in 2017 with the ambition to "be the first generation to leave the natural environment of England in a better state than it found it". The national strategy aims to apply best practice in education, enforcement and infrastructure in order to deliver a substantial reduction in litter and littering behaviour. In particular, this is to be achieved through sending a clear and consistent anti-litter message, improving enforcement against offenders and cleaning up the country.

One of the commitments of the *Litter Strategy for England* was to produce new guidance on "binrastructure" (the design, number and location of public litter bins and other items of street furniture) for local areas to help reduce levels of litter at a local level. This guidance *The Right Bin in the Right Place (2020)* has now been published by WRAP and has been used to steer the development of Watford's own Litter Strategy.

1.2 Current position in Watford

Watford Borough Council routinely spends the following on litter-related cleansing and maintenance activities:

- Circa £1.36 million per year on litter picking and other routine cleansing activities across the public highway and council-owned spaces such as car parks, private roads, garage areas and service yards
- Circa £447,000 per year on emptying and cleaning litter bins on the public highway
- Circa £55,000 per year on removing and disposing of litter from green spaces

In 2020/21, Watford Borough Council disposed of 892 tonnes of street cleansing waste and 137 tonnes of waste (mostly litter) was collected from parks.

Current measures in place for dealing with litter issues in Watford include regular litter picking, mechanical sweeping, emptying of litter bins, removing/relocating/installing new litter bins as required, enforcement of littering within the town centre and education/awareness through working with schools, voluntary/community groups and supporting national campaigns.

The *Litter Strategy for Watford* takes into consideration local circumstances, to ensure local solutions that meet local needs, as well as those of national strategies and policies. It also compliments and supports some of the council's other strategies including the *Sustainability Strategy* and *Green Spaces Strategy*.

2. Watford's Street Cleansing, Parks and Open Spaces Services

Delivery of the council's Street Cleansing, Parks and Open Spaces maintenance services was outsourced to Veolia in 2013, and this contract is in place until 2028.

2.1 Service aims and objectives

The key aims for delivery of the Street Cleansing, Parks and Open Spaces services are:

- To maintain the current baseline cleansing standards across the borough overall and by individual land uses
- To ensure standards of cleanliness and the requirements of the contract are continuously monitored in order to proactively apply the *Zonal Performance and rectification timescales*, to ensure standards of cleanliness and public satisfaction are maintained
- To ensure the gateways into the borough impart a positive image of Watford in being maintained to the required performance standards
- To achieve the overarching strategic objectives of the council's Green Spaces Strategy
- To deliver a high quality service to the residents of Watford maintaining or improving on the current customer satisfaction rate of 78% for Street Cleansing service and 96% for the Parks and Open Spaces service

2.2 Serviced land

Land that receives the Street Cleansing, Parks and Open Spaces services includes:

- All highway maintainable at public expense including hard surfacing and soft verges. This includes residential streets, subways, high speed roads, tree pits and planted areas
- All council-owned parks and open spaces and facilities within, including playgrounds, sports pitches and courts, water courses and ponds
- The town centre pond
- All council-owned car parks, private roads, garage areas, service yards and other land open to the public
- All land forming part of a shop front entirely open the highway up to the building line only
- All adjoining housing association soft verges and all open commercial frontages and private roads up to and within one metre of the adopted highway or the council-owned land (litter cleansing only)
- Public highway outside of the borough as per any agreement with neighbouring councils e.g. Boundary Way in Three Rivers
- Other private land that may be designated by the council for special cleansing
- Recycling bank sites serviced by the council

Figure 1: Street Cleansing zone map

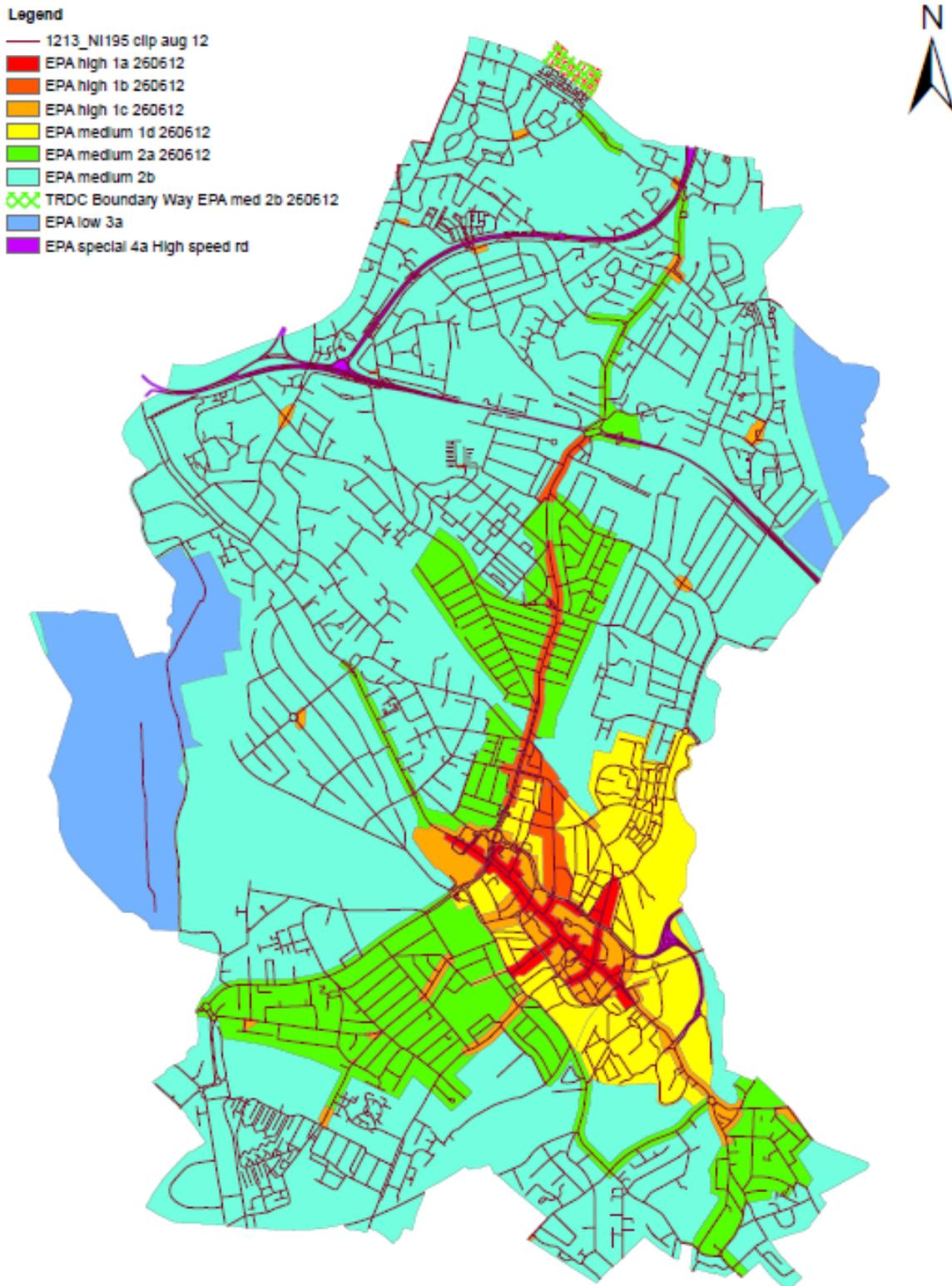
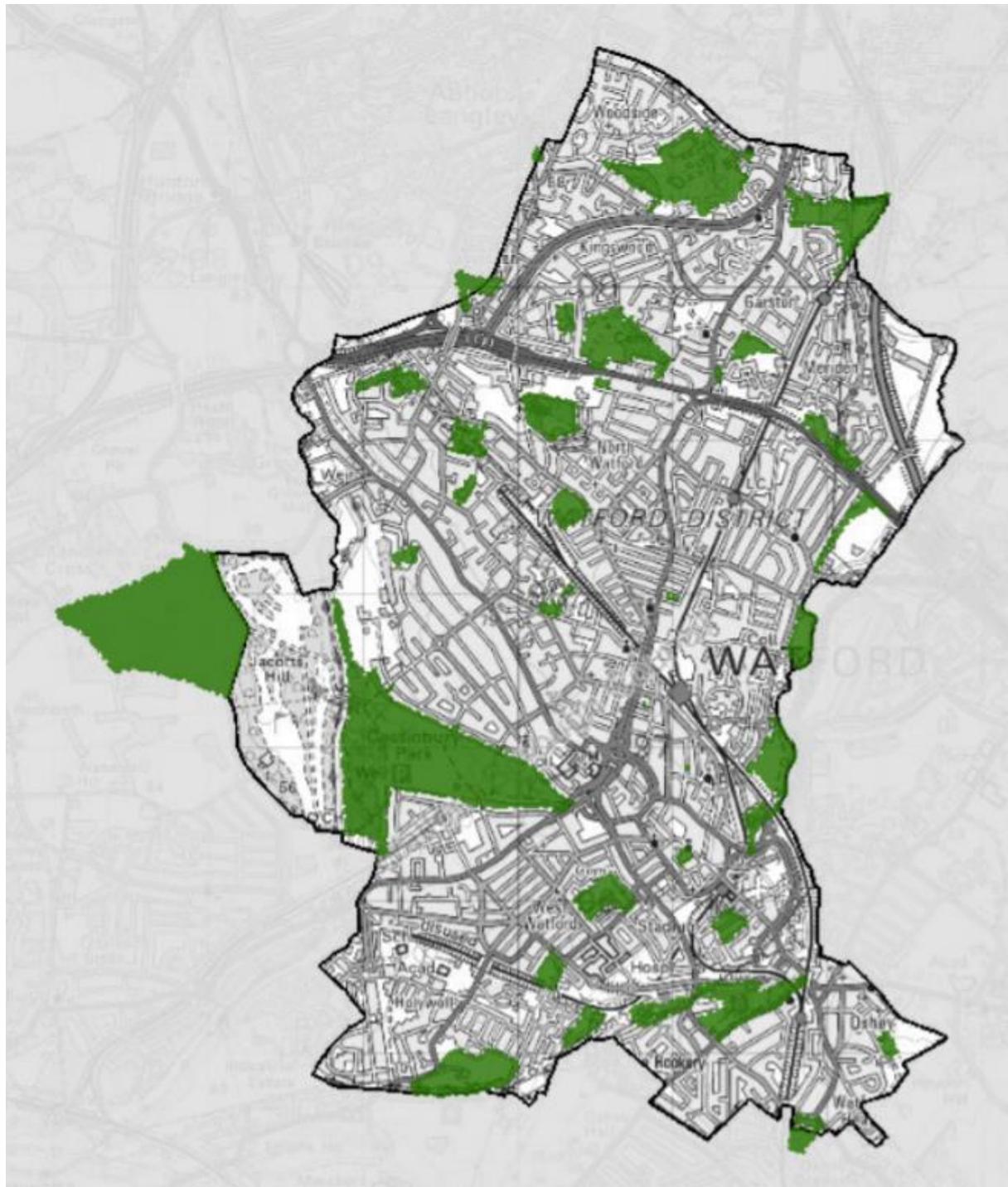


Figure 2: Parks and Open Spaces location map



2.3 Required cleansing standards and response times

The borough is split into 8 zones, based on land use and intensity of use – see *Figure 1: Street Cleansing zone map*. In the event that cleanliness (in particular litter, detritus, graffiti and fly posting) falls in standard this must be returned to Grade A within the response times detailed in *Figure 3: Zonal performance and rectification timescales*. The timescale to restore the area will commence from the time that notification is received.

Figure 3: Zonal performance and rectification timescales

LITTER & DETRITUS – ZONAL PERFORMANCE TABLES & RECTIFICATION TIMESCALES												
Contract Zone	subset	Target Performance - inspection %s						Rectification time to Grade A 08:00 to 18:30 hrs from Grade:-				
		A	B+	B	B-	C	C- & D	B+	B	B-	C	C- & D
1A (core 7 day service) High intensity – Town Centre main retail & commercial including other highways	litter	16	53	29	1.5	0.5	0	4 hrs	2 hrs	30 mins	15 mins	15 mins
	detritus	64	31.5	4.5	0	0	0	1 day	4 hrs	4 hr	15 mins	15 mins
1B & 1C (core 7 day service) High Intensity - other retail & commercial including main roads and other highways	litter	2.5	51	40	6	1	0	1 day	4 hrs	2 hrs	1hr	30 mins
	detritus	45	41.5	11.5	1.5	0.5	0	-	2days	1day	½ day	½ day
1D (core 7 day service) Medium intensity - high density/high obstructed residential associated main roads and other highways	litter	6.5	44	39.5	9	0.5	0.5	5 days	2 days	1day	2 hrs	30 mins
	detritus	14.5	32	34	16	3	0	-	5 days	1day	1days	1/2day
2A and 2B (core 5 day service) Medium intensity - Minor shop fronts high density/high obstructed residential, associated main roads and other highways	Core 5 day service only As Contract Zone 1D											
3A (core 5 day service) Medium & Low intensity – medium and low obstruction residential estates associated main roads, industrial areas and other highways	litter	12	55.5	26	5	1.5	0	21 days	5 days	1 day	4 hrs	2hrs
	detritus	20.5	42	28	7	2	0.5	-	10 days	1 day	4hrs	2hrs
4A (core 5 day service) Special Circumstances – elements of High speed road cleansing specified as requiring mobile or full lane closures		Results incorporated in 1D & 2A and 2B & 3A						-	-	7 days		
		Results incorporated in 1D & 2A and 2B & 3A						-	-	21 days		
TIMESCALES												
15 minutes, 30 minutes, 1 hr and 2hrs - Means rectified within those timescales from when notified unless the remaining service time available from instruction on the day is less in which case it shall be rectified by 08:00 the next calendar day except for contract zone 1A where all rectifications shall be made before works cease on the day.												
1/2 Day means rectified means by 6 p.m. if reported before 1 p.m. or 1 p.m. the next day if reported between 1 p.m. and 6 p.m. the previous day												
1 day means by 6 p.m. the following evening												
Note: where instructed rectifications may be required before 8 a.m. for special events												

Table 1: Cleansing standards and response times

Area	Standard / response time
Zones 1a and 1b	Grade A by 8am every day
Zone 1c	Grade A by 10am every day
All events within Zone 1	In accordance with the standard rectification times until 8pm, and completed to Grade A by 8am the following day
Roads affected by Watford Stadium events and other special events outside Zone 1 that either start and/or finish before 5:30pm	Part of the 7 day service, starting within 15 minutes of kick-off or start time and complete to Grade B+ litter within 1 hour, to be continued not later than 30 minutes after the end of the event.
Roads affected by Watford Stadium events and other special events outside Zone 1 starting after 5:30pm	Grade A litter by 8am the following day
Car park areas and Derby Road skate park	Grade A by 10am every day

Sharps and other drug paraphernalia	Removed as part of normal cleansing operations or within 90 minutes of notification
All litter and dog waste bins	Emptied before becoming 75% full
All litter bins in Zone 1a	Must be completely emptied by 8.30am and again between 5:30pm and 7.30pm each day except for the pm requirement on Christmas Day
All litter bins in contract zone 1b and 1c	Must be completely emptied by 10am each day excluding Christmas Day.
All ashtrays attached to litter bins	Emptied on each occasion and washed weekly in Zone 1a and as required in other zones
All water features	Check before 9am daily and remove all litter, food waste and any dead livestock from within 3 metres either side of any water margin or any item whatsoever blocking any fountain, inlet or outlet by 9am and all other items located further within the water feature by 10am
Town centre water feature	Maintained to a B+ standard and rectified in accordance with Zone 1a
Green spaces	All Green Flag sites must be Grade A and all other sites Grade B following any operations. Litter pick before grass cutting.
Gateways	In accordance with zone 1b requirements as a minimum, but increasing to that of Zone 1a if adjoining land.
Car Parks	In accordance with the zone requirement.
Bin washing	A minimum of weekly in Zone 1a and annually elsewhere
Litter and fly tips with 5m of litter bins	Must be removed when litter bin emptied
Spillages on or with 2m of litter bins	Must be removed when litter bin emptied or within 1 hour of notification or by the end of the working day if extra treatment required
Damaged bins	Made safe ASAP and the council notified same working day
Bin repairs	Minor repairs to hinges, locks and liners within 5 working days of being identified, temporary measure to secure the bin immediately. Within 14 working days from the date of the damage, fully repair the bin or replace it with a new bin.

Approved sacks must be used within litter and dog bins to effectively contain their contents during use and transfer in order to maintain hygienic standards and minimise odours.

All bins must be kept in a clean condition inside and outside and free from fly posting, graffiti and spillages. This is particularly important as dirty bins may deter people from using them, resulting in litter being dropped.

2.4 Hours of operation

- A 7 day week service in Zone 1a, 1b, 1c and 1d between the core times of 6am to 6:30pm (minimum)
- A 5 day week service in Zones 2a, 2b, 3 and 4 operating between the core times of 7am to 3:30pm (minimum)
- The 7 day service also provides additional street cleansing support and emergency cover across Zones 2, 3 and 4 during weekends and bank holidays

2.5 Frequency of cleansing

Most streets in Watford are visited each week by a 'barrow beat' team member who will litter pick, sweep the street and empty litter bins. They will also deal with issues, such as clearing of graffiti or dumped rubbish, where they can or arrange for a specialist team to return. Most streets are also visited weekly by a mechanical street sweeper, to remove litter and debris from areas that they can access.

The Town Centre is kept clean by daily visits from the 'barrow beat' team and mechanical sweepers. Other shopping parades are visited daily for bin emptying and litter picking, and weekly for other street cleansing activities.

All litter bins in the town are empty at least weekly, and in busier locations this can be up to three times per day.

2.6 Monitoring of cleansing standards

The Street Cleansing, Parks and Open Spaces contract was designed to be a self-monitoring one.

When a report of litter, overflowing or damaged litter bins (or other street cleansing or parks issue) is logged on Veolia's system Echo, the contractual timescale required to rectify this is measured and recorded. Any failures result in a penalty being issued to Veolia, chargeable through the monthly invoice. In addition to this, the council's online reporting function through the website (Firmstep system, which automatically goes through to Veolia's system Echo) – www.watford.gov.uk/report-it also records response times.

Street Cleansing and Parks front line operational staff observations and feedback also provides valuable insight. This should be recorded and fed back through contract management meetings.

2.7 Measuring of cleansing standards

Currently the levels of environmental cleanliness in Watford are measured using former NI 195 (previously BVPI 199) survey methodology. Although this is no longer a national indicator, the cleanliness of streets and parks across Watford have historically been measured using this method, and continue to be, for a consistent approach.

The NI 195 survey measures the percentage of relevant land and highways that is assessed as having deposits of litter, detritus, graffiti and fly posting that fall below an acceptable level, using the following formula:

$$\left(\frac{T + \left(\frac{Tb}{2} \right)}{Ts} \right) * 100$$

- T = number of sites graded C, C-, or D for each individual element (litter, detritus, graffiti and fly posting)
- Tb = number of sites graded at B- for each individual element (litter, detritus, graffiti and fly posting) (this grade counts as half);
- Ts = total number of sites surveyed for the relevant element (litter, detritus, graffiti and fly posting)

The aim is to reduce the percentage score each year - the lower the score the better the standard of cleanliness.

Each survey is based on a 50m transect (or 50m² in a green space). In Watford, 250 surveys are carried out each quarter, equating to 1000 surveys annually. Most of these are carried out by an independent inspector appointed by Veolia, but 25% are carried out jointly with the inspector, Veolia and the council. Each ward is surveyed bi-annually, in alternate quarters, with locations selected across a variety of land uses. Results are produced quarterly and reported as council Key Performance Indicators (KPI), which are highly valued within the organisation.

Table 2: NI 195 survey grade descriptions with examples

Grade	Description of Level of Cleanliness	Example of Level of Cleanliness
A	No litter	
B+	Intermediate grade	
B	Area predominately free from litter apart from some small items such as cigarette ends and ring pulls etc.	
B-	Intermediate grade	
C	Widespread distribution of litter and/or refuse within minor accumulations of small items as Grade B and larger items including beverage, fast food packets, animal faeces etc.	

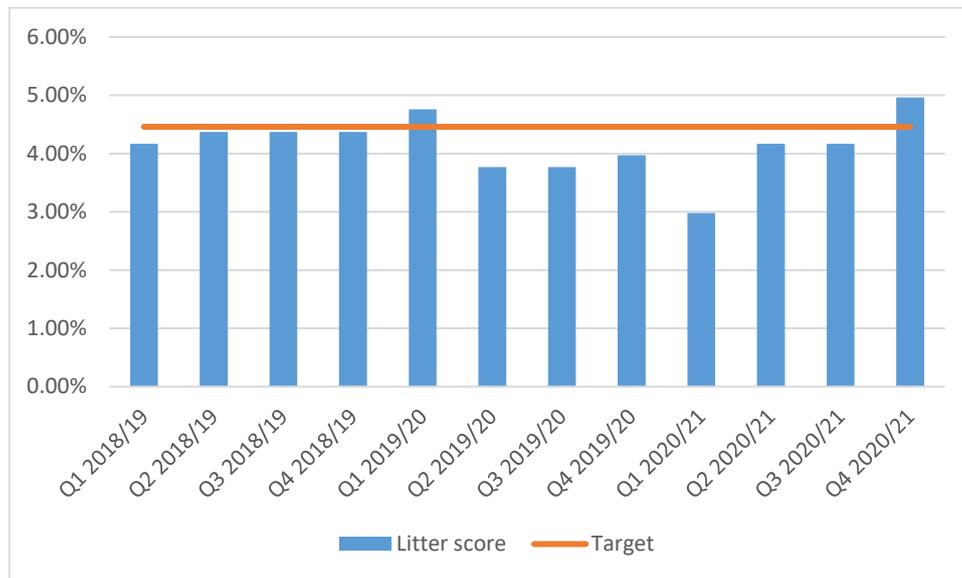
C-	Intermediate grade	
D	Area heavily littered by litter and/or refuse with small and large items with significant accumulations along boundaries.	

Figure 4: NI 195 survey results and grade percentages to be maintained

	Land use	subset	Overall LEQS %	Performance - actual site survey percentages by grade						
				A	B+	B	B-	C	C-	D
All CONTRACT & EPA ZONES	LEQS – overall target	litter	4.46	11.28	52.04	29.32	5.83	1.32	0.17	0.06
		detritus	5.48	28.38	36.03	22.00	6.33	1.87	0.00	0.17
	Main retail & commercial	litter	1.24	16.34	52.48	29.21	1.49	0.50	0.00	0.00
		detritus	0.00	63.37	32.18	4.46	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Other retail & commercial	litter	3.71	0.99	48.02	44.06	6.44	0.05	0.00	0.00
		detritus	0.74	42.57	43.56	12.38	1.49	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Housing high obstruction	litter	4.95	6.44	44.06	40.49	7.92	0.50	0.50	0.00
		detritus	13.37	13.86	24.75	38.61	18.81	3.96	0.00	0.00
	Housing med obstruction	litter	3.96	13.37	55.45	24.26	5.94	0.99	0.00	0.00
		detritus	4.95	19.80	44.06	27.72	6.93	1.49	0.00	0.00
	Housing low obstruction	litter	0.50	22.28	58.42	18.32	0.99	0.00	0.00	0.00
		detritus	3.22	27.23	48.51	19.31	3.47	1.49	0.00	0.00
	Industrial retail warehousing	litter	6.44	4.95	52.97	31.19	8.91	1.98	0.00	0.00
		detritus	6.19	13.86	40.10	36.63	6.44	2.97	0.00	0.00
	Main roads including multi-lanes and High speed roads	litter	1.98	5.94	59.9	31.19	1.98	0.50	0.50	0.00
		detritus	6.19	25.74	38.61	26.24	6.44	1.98	0.00	0.99
	Other highway	litter	12.38	9.41	44.55	26.73	13.86	4.95	0.00	0.50
		detritus	10.45	21.29	38.61	23.27	11.88	3.96	0.00	0.50
	Recreational hard and soft	litter	4.95	21.78	52.48	18.32	4.95	0.99	0.00	0.00
		detritus	3.24	27.72	13.86	9.41	1.49	0.99	0.00	0.00

NI 195 scores for litter are usually consistently within target (4.46% or below).

Figure 5: NI 195 survey results



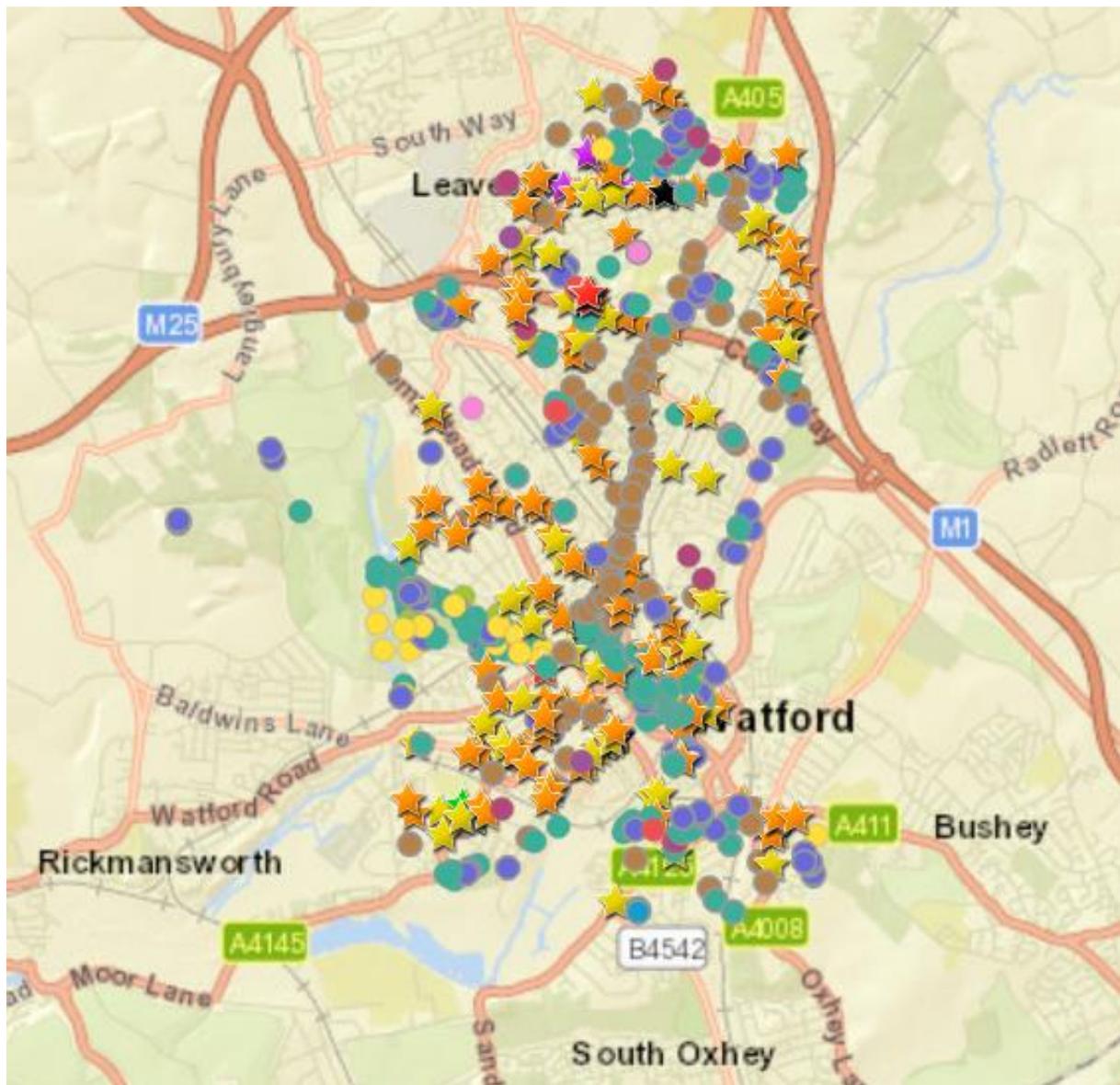
APSE have now also developed a survey for measuring environmental cleanliness, called the Land Audit Management System (LAMS). Results can be input using an app, and submitted to APSE for analysis and benchmarking against other local authorities. This option will be explored further to see if it is something that could work for Watford.

3. Binrastructure Optimisation

3.1 Audit of existing assets

In order to understand current litter bin provision, an audit has been carried out of all litter bins across the borough. Each litter bin has been mapped on GIS with a record of location, manufacturer/type and condition of the bin along with a photo. This was last carried out in 2018 and recorded a total of 766 bins across the town - further updates are required.

Figure 6: Litter bin audit 2018



3.2 Identification of hotspots

Identifying hotspots is based on reports of where there are relatively high levels of litter in comparison to other areas. This may be litter dropped on the ground, or in litter bins. Litter may accumulate faster in some locations than the normal cleansing schedule for that type of land is able to keep up with.

Hotspots may be high footfall areas, or places where litter is easily trapped. Littering often takes place in shared areas for which no one feels responsible, for example:

- Places where people congregate
- Places where people stop to do something
- Areas close to pubs, clubs, cafes and takeaways
- Transport hubs including bus stops
- Some commercial areas, car parks or unused land
- Near to schools and colleges
- Roads that connect these places to shops
- Around existing bins

In Watford, particular focus should be on:

- Business areas and industrial estates e.g. town centre, shop fronts
- The busiest public open spaces e.g. Cassiobury Park, Oxhey Activity Park, Harwoods Adventure Playground
- Waterside land e.g. canals, rivers, wetlands
- Transport interchanges e.g. train stations, taxi ranks
- Temporary events

Figure 7: Litter hotspots 2020/21 (based on reported issues)

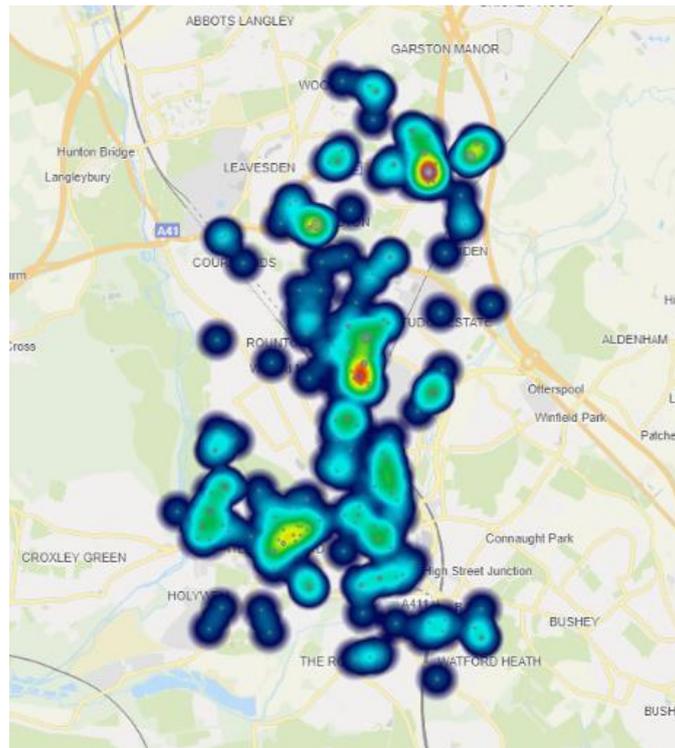
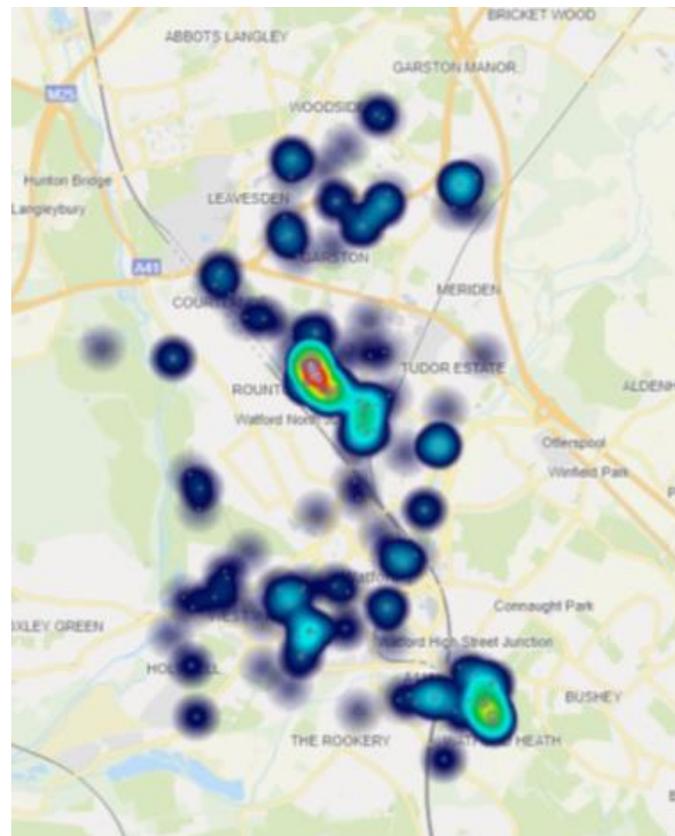


Figure 8: Overflowing litter bin hotspots 2020/21 (based on reported issues)



3.3 Determining whether current assets are meeting current needs

It is important to map hotspots so these can be compared against current litter bin locations and any adjustments made accordingly to avoid oversupply or undersupply.

Figure 9: Things to consider to ensure suitable litter bin provision

Litter hotspot?	At least one bin at the location	No bins at the location
Yes	<p>POSSIBLE UNDER-PROVISION Consider whether ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of bins is inadequate <p>POSSIBLE NEED FOR IMPROVEMENT Consider whether ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Siting or type of bins is inappropriate • Visibility of bins needs to be improved • Condition of bins is contributing, e.g. are they dirty and is this off-putting • Signage or public information needs improvement 	<p>LIKELY UNDER-PROVISION Consider whether ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of bins would help solve the problem, or whether there are other root causes (e.g. windblown litter, waste escaping from refuse collection vehicles during household waste collection)
No	<p>LIKELY APPROPRIATE PROVISION Consider whether ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lessons from this area could be transferred elsewhere <p>POSSIBLE OVER-PROVISION Consider whether ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provision might be too high e.g. could the bin could be removed to save money, or would that result in dropped litter? 	<p>NO PROBLEM Keep under review</p>

* WRAP's *The Right Bin in the Right Place 2020*

Areas should be focussed on in order of priority, if resources are limited and to avoid over-provision or unnecessary ‘street clutter’.

Figure 10: Priority assessment criteria

High priority	<p>Areas of high intensity of use</p> <p>Areas which, through intense pedestrian and/or vehicular movements, are prone to fluctuations in litter and refuse and require both high levels of monitoring and frequent cleansing</p>
Medium priority	<p>Areas of medium intensity of use</p> <p>Areas affected by moderate levels of pedestrian and vehicular activity and therefore less prone to fluctuations in litter and refuse, usually situated outside centres of retail or commercial activity, but used regularly by members of the public</p>
Low priority	<p>Low intensity of use</p> <p>Areas subject to low or infrequent levels of pedestrian and vehicular activity and therefore less prone to fluctuations in litter and refuse, often located in more rural areas</p>
<p>It may be necessary to prioritise further, perhaps within the high priority areas, in which case local authorities and BIDs should define their own priorities based on local needs, for example:</p>	
Priority 1	<p>Town centre daytime and night-time economy areas</p> <p>Areas around fast food outlets</p> <p>Town centre public transport stops and taxi ranks</p> <p>Tourist attractions/heritage sites</p>
Priority 2	<p>Major gateways, for example school entrances and shopping precincts</p>
Priority 3	<p>Dog-walking routes</p> <p>Congregation points e.g. benches and seating areas</p>
Priority 4	<p>Local litter hotspots</p>
Priority 5	<p>Public or elected member requests where the problem has been acknowledged</p>

* WRAP’s *The Right Bin in the Right Place 2020*

3.4 Improving understanding of the issues

In order to better understand why litter may be occurring, statistical analysis can be carried out using the information gathered during the bin audit (e.g. capacity) and mapping of hotspot locations. Visual observations could also be undertaken of the type litter being dropped, the distance from a bin and by who – however this would require additional resources. Feedback from enforcement officers may also highlight areas of concern.

3.5 Recycling on the Go

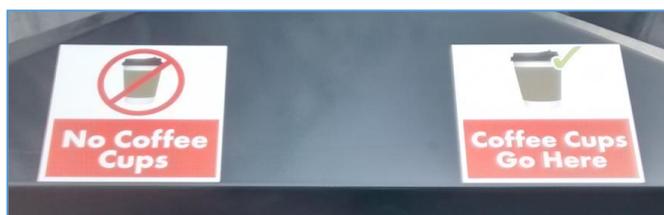
Watford has 10 'Recycling on the Go' bins in the town centre, and 3 in Cassiobury Park - 2 additional units are soon to be installed in Cassiobury Park as companion stations to smart general waste litter bins. The intention is to install recycling bins at all parks with cafés – including the new Oxhey Activity Park and Woodside Community Sports Village once the development is complete. The bins currently in use are Unicorn Urban double units (2 x 120 litre capacity), and each unit has one side for litter and one side for recycling.



It is commonly known across local authorities that recycling bins can be subject to misuse and contamination with non-recyclable materials. The following approaches could help deter contamination:

- Use consistent colour to denote bins of different types
- Provide clear signage of acceptable materials, and make sure it is not overpowered or obscured by any other signage, such as corporate branding
- Co-locate other bins, especially food waste and residual waste
- Ask operatives to remove large, visible items of contamination
- Use signage to explain what to do with liquids prior to deposit

In Watford, clear sacks are used to line the bins to enable operatives to assess the contents and determine the level of contamination. The litter side tends to be used more than the recycling side and therefore requires emptying more frequently. Sacks with more than 20% contamination are not considered of high enough quality to recycle. Unfortunately, contamination is an issue, and the main contaminants are coffee cups and various food packaging. New coffee cup stickers have been added to the bins with the aim of reducing contamination with this item, and monitoring will continue.



3.6 Consider bin removal

As well as introducing new bins to identified hotspots, removing unused or underused bins should also be considered for most effective use of assets and resources. Where bins are removed, the area will be kept under observation and the decision reviewed or cleansing frequency enhanced if litter increases to an unacceptable level.

Litter bin removal may also take place if the bin is very well-used and known to attract fly tipping. This has happened on some occasions in Watford, upon request from the Environmental Enforcement team.

3.7 Working in partnership

Stakeholders that may need to be considered in any decision around litter bin provision, and consulted about new installations or removals include:

- Operational staff
- Elected members
- Voluntary and community groups e.g. Resident associations, 'Friends of' parks
- Charities e.g. Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust, Green Gym
- 'Interest' based groups and other users e.g. dog walkers, sports clubs, park-runners, allotment tenants, workers, tourists
- Schools and other educational establishments
- Leaseholders e.g. cafes, sports clubs
- Business Improvement District (BID) or other local business associations e.g. Chamber of Commerce
- Other local authority departments e.g. enforcement, waste management, highways, planning, public health, transport
- Neighbouring local authorities
- Other statutory duty holders e.g. Canal & River Trust, Network Rail, Highways England
- Housing associations e.g. Watford Community Housing and Thrive Homes
- Utility companies
- Other significant local landowners including land for development
- Police

Litter issues on private land should be reported to the council's Community Protection department who have powers to serve a Litter Clearing Notice.

Commercial businesses, in particular providers of food and drink consumables, may wish to take some responsibility through providing litter bins outside of their premises or undertaking litter picking. McDonald's and Tesco have been known to participate in community litter picking events in Watford. This is positive for their reputation and brand, rather than being associated with being part of the problem.



The Hertfordshire Waste Partnership was formed in 1992 bringing together the 10 borough and district councils in their capacity as waste collection authorities and the county council as the waste disposal authority. The shared aim is for all households to reduce the amount of waste they produce, as well as reusing or recycling as much waste as possible.



This partnership is also made up of the 10 borough and district councils in Hertfordshire along with the county council, in order to share best practice, discuss common issues and goals, and collaborate on procedures, procurement and events.

3.8 Bin design

Based on the 2018 litter bin audit data, there are currently a total of 766 litter bins in use across the borough's streets and parks, which is made up of 22 different types, acquired over many years.

We are keen to standardise the types of litter bin used in the town, in order to achieve a more uniformed and consistent appearance of street furniture. This can also bring cost savings, de-clutter street scenes and make it easier and more efficient to empty, clean and repair bins. It also makes it easier for users to find a bin, and less likely that contamination will occur in 'Recycling on the Go' bins, as users are more likely to know what different bins look like and what goes in each type.

The current litter bins installed on streets are:

Unicorn Urban 120 litre Strangford

Town centre: Dark grey (RAL 7016 as per *Watford Town Centre – Streetscape Design Guide 2013*)

Elsewhere: Black



The current litter bins installed in parks are:

Broxap Derby Standard 120 litre - black



Broxap Derby E Double 240 litre – black



These bins have been in parks for approximately 10 years and experience issues of rusting due to dog urine. In 2021 the specification was upgraded to include a galvanised coating which is more resistant to corrosion in this way, along with the council logo.

Factors to consider when deciding on bin design:

- Siting requirements
 - Fixings
 - Permissions
 - Avoiding bins becoming hazards
 - Accessibility
- Apertures
- Colours – A suite of colours denoting different material types has been developed as part of the national Recycle Now brand and this is now widely used and recognised by the public



- Local environmental considerations
- Smart bins e.g. sensors, solar, Wi-Fi, USB
- Underground bins and vacuum systems
- Innovative bin options
- Commonly littered items e.g. coffee cups, chewing gum, cigarette butts, dog fouling

In Watford, we target some commonly littered items through innovative bin solutions, specific cleaning regimes and targeted campaigns:

Cigarette butts

We have 2 ballot boxes for cigarette butts, to engage with members of the public and encourage disposal of these in a fun way, and any new litter bin purchases include integrated ash trays.

Chewing gum

Each year a 'Spring Clean' is undertaken in the town centre which includes removal of chewing gum – in other areas this is carried out on a case by case basis.

Coffee cups

Coffee cups are targeted through social media in order to encourage reusable cups instead and to minimise contamination of 'Recycling on the Go' bins – see section 4.2.

Dog fouling

We have now phased out most of our dedicated dog waste bins as this is no longer considered hazardous waste, and encourage people to use general litter bins instead. A 'responsible dog ownership' campaign is currently being developed which is likely to include providing voluntary and community groups with posters and dog poo bags to give to park users, hosting an annual Pet Wise event, installing signage, and publicity including linking to national campaigns such as the Dogs Trust's "The Big Scoop".



We are also currently trialling use of bin sensors in 13 of our standard litter bins across streets and parks, which were installed to the bins in September 2019. The data is being monitored and if efficiencies and cost savings can be demonstrated, we may look to roll this out more widely in the future.

3.9 Litter in parks

Parks are subject to seasonal variations in litter levels, usually increasing over the summer months or during large events. There are also certain hotspot locations which experience higher levels of litter all year round. This includes cafés, play areas, skate parks, car parks and routes of high footfall. The pandemic has also seen a drastic increase in litter levels both seasonally and generally. In 2020/21, 137 tonnes of litter was generated in parks.

Littering is experienced across all of our green spaces but is most prevalent in Cassiobury Park, which is our largest park, covering approximately 250 hectares. In 2020/21, 77 tonnes of litter was disposed of from Cassiobury Park alone. Although operatives are based in the park each day emptying the existing litter bins at least daily, and up to three times per day during busy periods, it has remained a challenge at times to empty the bins fast enough. In order to manage litter here to an acceptable level in the summer of 2020, we spent circa £27,000 deploying additional operatives at weekends in order to keep on top the problem, compared with circa £14,000 in 2019. We also installed temporary open wire bins to capture some of the additional litter. As well as this, the Friends of Cassiobury Park carry out monthly litter picking events.

In 2021, Watford Borough Council were successful in being awarded £25,000 from WRAP's Litter Binrastructure Grant which will be used to purchase 'smart' compacting solar powered bins to tackle litter at hotspot locations in Watford's flagship park – Cassiobury Park. Some of these will be dual stations for recycling as well as general litter, as we are keen to increase recycling opportunities within the park, and raise awareness of the importance of doing so, and to increase the proportion of litter that is recycled. The smart bins will also be utilised for branding and to deliver anti-littering messages.

Litter in Cassiobury Park summer 2020



Rubbish in our rivers is also a big issue in Watford. The River Gade runs through Cassiobury Park, and the River Colne runs through many of our other green spaces. We support Community Connection Projects CIC in carrying out regular river improvement activities across Watford which includes litter and fly tipping clearances from river banks and within the channel.



3.10 Street scene

The wider street scene environment should also be considered in any decision around litter bin locations and design, such as:

- Litter traps e.g. behind utility boxes, tree grills, planting, shredding
- Litter sinks e.g. over the fences of electricity sub-stations, over bridges onto railway embankments, or onto fenced off disused land.
- Design for easier cleaning and to reduce clutter
- Signage e.g. footprints

It is important that there is good communication between the department responsible for litter clearance and litter bin maintenance, and those responsible for street design and regeneration.

4. Education, Awareness and Enforcement

It is thought that littering behaviour may occur due to a real or perceived lack of bins, litter on the ground encouraging more to be dropped, and littering rates increasing with distance from a bin. In order to change, litterers need to both understand what they ought to be doing and be motivated to do the right thing. Any strategy and changes to bin infrastructure need to be communicated to the affected stakeholders – see section 3.7.

4.1 Working with schools

Veolia regularly delivers school classroom talks and assemblies about waste, recycling and litter. In 2019/2020 Veolia delivered 35 school sessions, with 3,995 children educated. As a result of the coronavirus pandemic, Veolia have developed a series of e-learning packages for KS2 students which include the topic of litter. There is also a secondary school programme called ECO Leaders, which seeks to create proactive student-led group projects focused on the theme of sustainability, to improve the school and local communities' overall environmental performance.

A school e-newsletter is circulated twice per year covering a wide range of topics including litter picking events, seasonal messages, how to achieve Eco School status and sustainability.



Competitions are also run to tackle litter issues, for example to design high impact posters to display at hotspot locations in streets and parks to deter littering behaviour.





For World Oceans Day in June 2020, Veolia asked schools to take part in creating a masterpiece that encourages people to protect and preserve our oceans by recycling more, and ensuring all waste ends up in our bins, not our seas. The artwork could be a drawing, a sculpture, or a painting, but it must be made out of recyclable materials (so it can be recycled when finished with it). The winning design by Nascot Wood Junior School was celebrated and featured on Veolia's and Watford Council's social media channels.

4.2 Roadshows

Veolia aim to attend at least 4 community events per year. This usually includes the annual Allotment Forum and Family Fun Days in parks among others. Providing information around litter is particularly important as it is a big problem at such locations.



4.3 Reducing single-use plastics

It is estimated that of the 400 million tonnes of plastic produced each year, 40% of that is single-use. Approximately 12 million tonnes of plastic is dumped in the sea each year, as well as littering streets, parks and water courses.

Watford's Waste and Recycling service in line with the council's *Sustainability Strategy* aims to reduce plastic waste through:

- Working towards becoming a single-use Plastic Free council. This involves auditing our use and replacing with sustainable alternatives wherever possible, and to expect the same from partner organisations. This includes coffee cups, plastic cups, straws and stirrers. These have already been completely eliminated from the Town Hall.
- Introducing a scheme by which businesses are encouraged and rewarded for reducing single-use plastics – targeting takeaway premises
- Working with Watford BID to promote the national Refill campaign and encourage local bars, cafés and restaurants to sign up to the scheme. The mission is to help both visitors and residents reduce plastic pollution by allowing everyone access to free drinking water in reusable bottles instead of buying single-use plastic. Numerous council buildings have registered as Refill stations.
- Promote WasteAware's 'Remember Your Reusables' campaign



4.4 Social media

Watford Borough Council has a strong social media presence which is supported by Veolia. This platform is often used to raise awareness of key environmental messages for people to learn, engage and share across their own networks. Veolia provides the council's Communications team with an annual social media planner addressing key issues and national campaigns, and this is added to as required throughout the year.

In 2020, we published a total of 27 posts with litter themes, which had 2481 likes, 1005 shares and 149 comments. Members of public may be persuaded to take litter home with them, or switch to reusable items such as water bottles and coffee cups.

It is important to convey Watford's own messages to target local issues, along with supporting county-wide messages in partnership with WasteAware, as well as Keep Britain Tidy's national campaigns so that consistent messages are delivered across the country in line with the *Litter Strategy for England*.



4.5 Enforcement

The council's Community Protection department are responsible for enforcing environmental crimes such as littering, which includes dog fouling. In Watford, anyone caught littering will be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice of £75. For dog fouling it's £50. Failure to pay an FPN could result in a prosecution for the offence.

There is a Town Enforcement Officer dedicated to patrolling the town centre, and other hotspot areas in the borough, engaging with members of the public and issuing fines as required – most commonly for cigarette litter. Bird feeding (which can be classified as littering) is also a prevalent issue in the town centre, particularly at St Mary's Churchyard and the pond, this is dealt with through displaying signage and talking to people observed doing this. We may consider action for persistent offenders. Illegal flyer distribution is also tackled, as these are a major cause of litter.

The team carry out proactive and reactive 'Duty of Care' inspections at businesses to ensure they have a suitable waste collection service and that their waste is secure and contained. Information and advice is given on their 'Duty of Care' and on the waste hierarchy for reuse, then recycling, then recovery of waste, such as packaging. Food businesses are also given advice on waste produced by their customers. Formal action is only taken against those businesses that continue to fail in their 'Duty of Care'.

Incidents of littering and dog fouling can be reported at www.watford.gov.uk/report-it both for clearance and to report the person or business responsible if any identification details are known such as name, address or vehicle.

5. Voluntary and Community Groups

Watford has a network of amazing volunteers who contribute their time and energy to help maintain the borough's public spaces so that they are wonderful places for everyone to visit and enjoy.

5.1 'Friends of' and other resident groups

There are a number of active local resident groups that help look after Watford's green spaces, and represent the interests of park users, as listed below:

- Friends of Cassiobury Park
- Friends of Oxhey Park
- Friends of Harebreaks Wood
- Friends of Woodside Playing Fields
- Oxhey Village Environment Group (OVEG)
- Courtlands Residents Association (Goodwood Recreation Ground)
- Ridge Residents Association (Orchard Park)
- Watford Fields Residents Association



'Friends of' and other resident groups preserve and enhance the natural environment in many ways, which includes carrying out regular litter picking activities and reporting of issues. Their contributions are invaluable and they are true assets to local communities.

5.2 Green Gym

Green Gyms are run by The Conservations Volunteers (TCV), a charity that supports communities to improve their local area and tackle issues that matter to them, which includes creating, protecting and enhancing green spaces, as well as developing new skills and improving health and wellbeing.

Although Green Gyms focus on practical conservation activities incorporating health and fitness, the groups do also carry out some litter picking activities as part of their sessions.



In Watford, there are two Green Gyms in place – one at Cassiobury Park which meets weekly, and another that meets twice per week covering multiple parks including Knutsford Playing Fields, Radlett Road Playing Fields, Waterfields Recreation Ground and Garston Park.

5.3 Supporting community clean up events

Watford Borough Council and Veolia are proactive in working with voluntary and community groups to carry out litter picking events. Special kits are available to borrow free or charge, in order to help people keep their local environments clean and tidy. Kits contain litter pickers, protective gloves, high visibility vests and separate coloured bags for non-recyclable litter and recyclable litter such as plastic bottles and cans. A risk assessment is a requirement before any event is carried out, and Veolia will then collect and dispose of any rubbish from an agreed location. In order to increase the amount of waste recycled in the town, plastic bottles and cans can be separated in clear sacks.

Watford has been particularly proactive in its support of Keep Britain Tidy's campaign *The Great British Spring Clean*.

Great British September Clean 11 to 27 September 2020	Great British Spring Clean 28 May to 13 June 2021
Over 70 participants (groups sizes were limited to a maximum of 6 with social distancing measures in place due to the pandemic)	Over 250 participants from 16 groups - businesses, schools, community groups and individuals
100 bags of litter were collected, 25% of which was recycled	150 bags of litter and 40 bags of recycling collected



5.4 Funding



Veolia's Sustainability Fund will provide cash sponsorship, in-kind resources or staff volunteers to support not-for-profit organisations and community groups to transform their local community or environment (standard pledge amount is a maximum of £1000).

A successful project will provide evidence of one or more of the following:

- Enhancing biodiversity
- Promoting sustainable waste behaviours (reduce, reuse and/or recycle)
- Protecting or preserving resources and the environment
- Its use of recycled, reused or reclaimed materials

Previously named Veolia's Recycling Fund for Communities, projects that have benefitted from this funding in Watford include:

Watford Education Project Sustainability Award

Support a Sustainability Award for students taking part in the Young Enterprise Company Programme. Students design a product that will reduce the amount of plastic waste on land and in the sea. They set up a business and then sell this product to the general public.

Awarded: £600

Pastoral Gardens at Beechfield Primary School

Creating a sensory play area made from recycled items allowing children and families space to explore the natural environment.

Awarded: £1,000

Veolia also offers another funding scheme specific to Watford, known as Friends in Green Spaces.

Veolia FIGS (Friends in Green Spaces)



Watford is blessed with a network of amazing volunteers who contribute their time and energy to help maintain the town's parks and green spaces so that they are wonderful places for everyone to visit and enjoy. Veolia's Park Rangers already link up with many of you through the Friends Of groups and clean-ups but we want to do more to support everyone volunteering in our green spaces and promote the work you're doing.

How can we help you?

- We can arrange for the collection of rubbish after clear-ups.
- We can lend community clean-up kits and tools.
- We can offer support and advice.
- We can arrange for the use of meeting spaces at the new Cassiobury Hub and at Cheslyn House.
- We'd be particularly keen to assist anyone wanting to establish a new *Friends Of* group in any parks not already represented.



We also have a small fund of £1500 to help with your projects in parks and we'd welcome any bids now for an allocation of this. We're not specifying a limit but we'd like to spread it around the borough as much as possible. You could use this money for tools, bulbs, tree whips, supplies or specific projects or even to maintain your team's critical tea and biscuits supplies. To apply for funds or help with any of the above simply fill in the attached form and return it by email or to one of us directly.

6. Monitoring and Evaluation

6.1 Strategic aims

The Litter Strategy for Watford has the following aims, in line with the aims of the Street Cleansing, Parks and Open Spaces services:

- To maintain the current baseline cleansing standards across the borough overall and by individual land uses
- To ensure standards of cleanliness and the requirements of the contract are continuously monitored in order to proactively apply the *Zonal Performance and rectification timescales*, to ensure standards of cleanliness and public satisfaction are maintained
- To ensure the gateways into the borough impart a positive image of Watford in being maintained to the required performance standards
- To achieve the overarching strategic objectives of the council's Green Spaces Strategy
- To deliver a high quality service to the residents of Watford maintaining or improving on the current customer satisfaction rate of 78% for Street Cleansing service and 96% for the Parks and Open Spaces service

In addition to this:

- To maintain land so it is predominantly free of litter except for some small items, in the most cost/resource efficient way
- To maximise recovery of recyclable materials from waste disposed of on-the-go
- To support and encourage behaviour change such as waste reduction/reuse/recycling, and appropriate disposal through use of litter bins or taking rubbish home.

Any objectives created in relation to these aims or new intervention methods would need to be measurable as either absolute, relative or a direction of travel, depending on monitoring data available.

6.2 Measuring achievement of aims

There are already numerous monitoring practices in place which help measure the amount of litter on the ground and collected from bins, which will continue:

- Recording the tonnages of street cleansing waste taken for disposal, and waste collected from parks
- Carrying out quarterly surveys of environmental cleanliness – currently using NI 195 methodology
- Logging of enquiries and complaints
- Monitoring quantity and quality of materials in 'Recycling on the Go' bins
- Recording the number of individuals engaged with through school and community outreach, social media
- Staff observations and feedback
- Contractor schedules

Ideally, monitoring is needed before, during and after any interventions, in order to measure effectiveness. Data is most reliable when collected at frequent intervals over an extended time period.

6.3 Constraints to achieving aims

- A limited number of surveys are carried out to assess levels of litter, and location varies each time making it difficult to determine changes at a particular site
- Street cleansing tonnages recorded do not only include litter but other materials such as detritus and leaves during leaf fall season
- Lack of resources to introduce new monitoring methods

7. Action Plan

Ref	Action	Owner	Timescale / Frequency
Watford's Street Cleansing, Parks and Open Spaces Services			
1	Liaise with Hertfordshire County Council and their contractors to find out their grass cutting programme along high speed road verges. These must be litter picked in advance to prevent litter being shredded and spread by the grass cutting machinery. The area must also be checked after grass cutting and litter picked to Grade B+.	Veolia	Annual (February to October)
2	Adopt a proactive approach to referring litter issues on private land to the relevant land owner or statutory duty holder, such as Watford Community Housing, Hertfordshire County Council, Network Rail, Canal & River Trust. Customers should also be correctly signposted to report issues to the appropriate organisation.	WBC Veolia	Ongoing
3	Review cleansing standards/zones and identify changes in land use to ensure the optimum overall cleansing service is provided	Veolia	Annual
4	Review/update street cleansing schedules on GIS	Veolia	Annual or as changes are made
5	Use a dedicated Green Flag team to ensure Grade A standards across all Green Flag parks	Veolia	Ongoing
6	Ensure that litter bins are cleaned regularly to avoid deterring use	Veolia	Weekly in Zone 1a, annually elsewhere
Binrastructure Optimisation			
7	Carry out a regular litter bin audit / review of audit data to ensure records are up to date	Veolia	Annual or as changes are made
8	Consider innovative bin solutions in parks and streets litter hotspots	WBC Veolia	Ongoing
9	Install smart bins in Cassiobury Park, using £25,000 WRAP Litter Binrastructure Grant funding	WBC Veolia	September 2021
10	Install 'Recycling on the Go' bins at Oxhey Activity Park and Woodside Community Sports Village	WBC Veolia	2021 onwards
11	Review binrastructure provision in line with changes in legislation and any introduction of a Deposit Return Scheme	WBC Veolia	TBC
12	Assess each request for a new litter bin based on the guidance in <i>Figure 9: Priority assessment criteria</i> . Use monitoring tools to assess need and review use of any new bins installed.	WBC Veolia	Ongoing
13	Ensure that all new litter bins have ashtrays, and look into solutions for existing bins which do not currently have ashtrays, especially in high footfall areas	WBC Veolia	Ongoing

Education, Awareness and Enforcement			
14	Promote the council's online reporting form for parks and streets issues www.watford.gov.uk/report-it to increase the number of reports for more accurate identification of priority areas	WBC Veolia	Ongoing
15	Promote community clean up events through social media, direct mailings to schools/community groups/businesses and press releases. Encourage these in areas most in need to improve NI 195 scores. Arrange a minimum of 2 litter picks per year. Measure success through increased participation, impressions from social media posts, amount of rubbish collected.	WBC Veolia	Annual (January to March)
16	Aim for participation from at least one business, school and community group in the Great British Spring Clean	Veolia	Annual (March)
17	Provide clear bags for plastic bottles and cans recycling during community clean up events	Veolia	Ongoing
18	Deliver waste and recycling/litter awareness talks to two schools per term which may include classroom or assembly and receive an average satisfaction rating of 4.5 out of 5. Measure success through number of schools participating, number of residents engaged with, school feedback form.	Veolia	Ongoing
19	Produce a bi-yearly digital newsletter to all primary schools to keep schools informed about talks, litter pick events, Eco Schools and sustainability. Measure success through increased school talks, more interest in FIGS/Sustainability Fund.	Veolia	Bi-annual (June and October)
20	Deliver a minimum of 4 pop up roadshows/public events per year	Veolia	Annual
21	Promote Veolia's FIGS/Recycling Fund for Communities via About Watford magazine, social media posts, school newsletter, flyers at roadshows, posters on park noticeboards. Measure success through number of applications, number successfully awarded.	WBC Veolia	Ongoing
22	Veolia to produce an annual social media planner to share positive new stories generated from campaign work engagement, call to action and raise awareness to create environmental behavioural change. To use on council Facebook, Instagram, Twitter. Measure success by number of impressions and engagement.	WBC Veolia	Annual (March)
23	Promote WasteAware's 'Remember Your Reusables' campaign and the national Refill initiative to businesses and members of public. The aim is to maximise the number of food/drink establishments supporting the Refill campaign and displaying a poster in their shop window to inform people they can refill their reusable bottle in their premises. Promote on social media and tag Watford BID to repost. Measure success through number of establishments signing up.	WBC Veolia	Ongoing

24	Develop and deliver a 'responsible dog ownership' campaign to tackle dog fouling, to include distribution of dog poo bags, events, signage and publicity	WBC Veolia	2021-2023
25	Target campaigns and consider adapting bininfrastructure towards commonly litter items such as coffee cups, chewing gum, cigarette butts and dog fouling.	WBC Veolia	Ongoing
26	Install posters or stickers on/near litter bins which are heavily used to encourage people to take their litter home or report an overflowing bin	WBC Veolia	Ongoing
Monitoring and Evaluation			
27	Continue NI 195 surveys of environmental cleanliness	WBC Veolia	Quarterly
28	Explore option of using APSE's Land Audit Management System (LAMS) to survey environmental cleanliness	WBC Veolia	2022/23
29	Feedback from operatives on quantity and quality of materials collected from 'Recycling on the Go' bins in the town centre and Cassiobury Park	Veolia	Weekly
30	Create regular litter hotspot maps	WBC Veolia	Quarterly and annually
31	Share data and successes/lessons learned across local authority networks such as the Hertfordshire Waste Partnership and ParksHerts, other Veolia contracts, and publishing nationally	WBC Veolia	Ongoing
32	Regularly review delivery of the strategy at contract meetings, report progress to Leadership Board annually and record updates on the Action Plan as an appendix	WBC Veolia	Annually