

Committee(s): Port Health and Environmental Services – For Information	Date: May 2019
Subject: Litter Intervention Trial	Public
Report of: Carolyn Dwyer – Director of the Built Environment	For Information
Report author: Jim Graham – Assistant Director Cleansing	

Summary

This report details the Litter Intervention Trial carried out by the Cleansing Service in January and February 2019. The trial was carried in partnership with Keep Britain Tidy and funded by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. The intervention involved placing three signs with an antilittering message printed on a mirrored background in three high profile locations around the which were hotspots for “careful” littering. These sites were monitored for two weeks before the trial and two weeks during the trial. The litter monitoring results found that the intervention delivered an average 19.5% reduction in placed litter during the trial across the three sites. It also showed a consistent +1 improvement at each site, based on the NI195 grading system.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.
- Note that the intervention will be considered for future use at appropriate locations at different times of the year.

Main Report

Background

1. Through the Litter Innovation Fund, Keep Britain Tidy received a grant of £9,918 to pilot a ‘Reflective Litter’ campaign innovation with the City of London. The purpose of the trial was to use innovative poster materials (mirrors) at known ‘careful littering’ hotspots such as benches, ledges and fences, to make litterers stop and think about how leaving litter reflected on their personal image.
2. The project focused on ‘careful littering’ where people place litter in a spot, rather than throwing onto the floor. Those people tend to perceive they are not littering by carefully placing an item. There is strong evidence litter placement is most prevalent in areas of high-footfall outside, such as outside train stations, shops, seated areas and also on public transport. The items that are mostly commonly observed to be carefully placed are newspapers, cigarette butts, coffee cups and drinks bottles/cans.

3. In an age of social media, smart phone and selfies, image seems to be everything. We proposed to use this insight to help people see that they are indeed littering and acting anti-socially when placing an item carefully and that littering can have a negative impact on what people think of them. Using mirrors within the intervention, it looked to 'reflect back' the image of that person, with a message that littering looks bad on all of us. This kind of messaging has been tested before to tackle blatant littering, but never to highlight the that carefully placing an item anywhere other than a bin is just as bad.

Current Position

4. The intervention was installed at three identified key 'litter placement' hotspots, Moorgate outside the Metropolitan University, Royal Exchange and Cheapside near St Pauls Station. The idea was that people would then catch themselves in the 'frame' as they littered and would choose not to do so, raising awareness that the act is indeed anti-social. The University location was specifically chosen to target the intervention at a younger more image aware audience group to see if this further increased or decreased effectiveness.
5. A monitoring and evaluation framework was used to establish the effectiveness of the intervention. This consisted of litter monitoring to identify the impact on littering behaviour (manual litter count and NI195 inspection) and perceptions surveys with members of the public at the site to assess their attitudes towards and awareness of the intervention, and
6. The litter monitoring results found that the intervention delivered an average 19.5% reduction in placed litter during the trial across the 3 sites. It also showed a consistent improvement of +1 grade at each site, based on the NI195 grading system.
7. The litter count of placed items left at each of the trial locations showed that the trial delivered an overall average reduction of 19.5%, with 13.2 items littered daily on average before the trial and 10.9 littered daily on average during the trial. With regard to performance at each location, Moorgate Metropolitan University was the only site that actually saw an increase in the average daily number of placed litter items during the trial. With a daily average of 6.5 items prior to the trial and a daily average of 6.6 during the trial. This was in part skewed by a particularly bad day on the 31 January when street sweeping was suspended due to snow. This saw 22 items of place litter left at Moorgate. Excluding this day the daily average at Moorgate during the trial was 4.9 items and therefore a reduction of 24% from the pre-trial average of 6.5 items.
8. St Pauls delivered the biggest reduction in placed litter during the trial, from an average of 4.4 items per day pre-trial to 2.2 during the trial, seeing almost a 49.6% reduction.
9. Whilst perceptions survey respondents were sceptical about the effectiveness of the posters, and many initially found them difficult to notice, the survey did reveal that 71.30% agreed It was easy to understand what the posters were about and

63.30% agreed that reflective posters like these should be used in other areas to discourage litter.

10. The perceptions survey indicated that larger, more noticeable posters may have had a greater impact on the litter reduction and public perception of the intervention. It was also felt that it would be more apt to conduct the trial in Spring/Summer when the issue of placed litter is more prevalent.

Proposals

11. This intervention has proven to be useful at reducing careful littering in hot spots. Due to the problems with visibility of the signs careful consideration should be given to any future locations that it is used at. However, it should be considered for use at appropriate locations at different times of the year as part of the range of interventions that the Cleansing Service has available to reduce littering. The effect of the seasonal weather conditions on the results in Moorgate indicate that the intervention may have a different impact in better weather conditions. The Cleansing Service will look to trial this again in the summer.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

12. Using this litter intervention project supports outcomes eleven and twelve of the Corporate Plan, ensuring “We have clean air, land and water and a thriving and sustainable natural environment” and that “Our spaces are secure, resilient and well maintained.”

Implications

13. The costs for production of the materials have already been covered by this project and any future costs would be met from local risk budget.

Conclusion

14. This project proved effective in reducing litter at three hotspots for careful littering and will be considered for future use at appropriate locations at different times of the year. It will be added to the range of methods Cleansing use to influence behaviour including targeted education and enforcement using Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs).

Appendices

- None

Jim Graham

Assistant Director Cleansing

T: 020 7332 4792

E: jim.graham@cityoflondon.gov.uk