



The Chartered Institution of Wastes Management

The Chartered Institution of Wastes Management (CIWM) is the professional body which represents over 7,000 waste management professionals, predominantly in the UK but also overseas. The CIWM sets the professional standards for individuals working in the waste management industry and has various grades of membership determined by education, qualification and experience.

In producing this Position Statement on Street Cleansing in Scotland, CIWM aims to reflect the views of its Scottish members. However, given the diversity of the membership, there is always potential for a variety of opinions to co-exist on any matter. Where that occurs, the Position Statement is designed to reflect the views of the broad church of the membership with any significant varying views being highlighted.

POSITION STATEMENT ON STREET CLEANSING

This position statement is issued by CIWM Scotland in advance of the Scottish Government's planned Litter Summit to be held on 26th November 2008.

CIWM SCOTLAND COMMENDS THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT FOR CALLING THE LITTER SUMMIT AND ACKNOWLEDGES THE CONSIDERABLE DEGREE OF INTEREST IN AND CONCERN ABOUT THIS SUBJECT ACROSS THE FULL SPECTRUM OF SOCIETY IN SCOTLAND.

HOWEVER, CIWM SCOTLAND EMPHASISES THAT THE ISSUE OF LITTER SHOULD BE ADDRESSED AS PART OF A COMPREHENSIVE AND INTEGRATED STRATEGY FOR STREET CLEANSING, WHICH IS NOW MORE OFTEN REFERRED TO AS 'STREET SCENE' TO MORE ACCURATELY REFLECT THE DIVERSITY OF SERVICES AND ISSUES THAT FALL WITHIN THIS IMPORTANT FUNCTION. THESE INCLUDE STREET SWEEPING, FLY-TIPPING, FLY-POSTING, GRAFFITI, STREET AND STREET FURNITURE WASHING, DOG FOULING, AND SOFT LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE, AND OF COURSE LITTER, WHICH IS AN IMPORTANT AND VISIBLE ISSUE.

The current context

THE ROOTS OF STREET CLEANSING LIE IN THE PUBLIC HEALTH AGENDA, WHICH CAN BE TRACED BACK MORE THAN 100 YEARS, AND IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN CLOSELY LINKED TO THE PUBLIC HEALTH FUNCTIONS OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES. OVER THIS PERIOD, MANY LOCAL AUTHORITIES HAVE PERFORMED AN INVALUABLE ROLE IN MAINTAINING THE CLEANLINESS OF THE TOWNS, STREETS AND OPEN SPACES OF SCOTLAND, AND CIWM SCOTLAND ALSO RECOGNISES THE SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION MADE BY KEEP SCOTLAND BEAUTIFUL (KSB) AND THEIR COUNTERPARTS ELSEWHERE IN THE UK, PARTICULARLY IN RECENT YEARS.

IT MUST BE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT LITTER AND LITTERING HAVE CHANGED MARKEDLY OVER THE PAST 15 OR SO YEARS, WITH SOME OF THE MAIN CONTRIBUTORY FACTORS BEING THE SIGNIFICANT INCREASES IN FAST FOOD CATERING, PACKAGING, DISPOSABLE INCOMES AND PERSONAL MOBILITY. AS A RESULT OF THE DETAILED WORK BY KSB AND OTHER ORGANISATIONS, WE NOW HAVE A FAR BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE SCALE OF THE LITTER PROBLEM AND ITS CAUSES AND INDEED MONITORING IN ACCORDANCE WITH GUIDANCE FROM KSB INDICATES THAT THE CLEANLINESS OF OUR PUBLIC AREAS HAS IMPROVED IN SOME ASPECTS. HOWEVER, CIWM SCOTLAND BELIEVES THAT THE PROBLEM OF LITTER AND LITTERING IS INCREASING AND MANY PUBLIC PERCEPTION SURVEYS INDICATE THAT THIS VIEW IS SHARED BY THE GENERAL PUBLIC.

The issues

WHILE THE LITTER PROBLEM HAS BEEN GROWING, THERE HAS BEEN A DECLINE IN THE LEVEL OF RECOGNITION AND RESOURCING THAT THE STREET CLEANSING FUNCTION ENJOYS.

THE MODERN AGENDA OF COMMUNITY WELLBEING DOES ENCOMPASS CLEANER, SAFER, HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES, BUT CIWM SCOTLAND BELIEVES THAT LOCAL AUTHORITY EXPENDITURE IN THIS AREA HAS SUFFERED IN THE FACE OF OTHER FINANCIAL PRESSURES, PARTICULARLY FROM DEMAND-LED AREAS SUCH AS REFUSE COLLECTION, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WORK. IT IS ESTIMATED THAT SCOTLAND SPENDS WELL OVER £100M PER ANNUM ON STREET CLEANSING. BY IMPLEMENTING AN EFFECTIVE STRATEGY TO CHANGE PUBLIC BEHAVIOR, THIS MONEY COULD BE DIVERTED TO FUND OTHER EQUALLY IMPORTANT STREET CLEANSING FUNCTIONS, AS WELL AS TACKLING OTHER NATIONAL PRIORITIES.

THE PRIORITY ASSIGNED TO THE STREET CLEANSING FUNCTION ALSO APPEARS TO BE IN DECLINE. THE CODE OF PRACTICE ON LITTER AND REFUSE (COPLAR), REVISED RECENTLY (DEC 2006) IN SCOTLAND BY KSB, RECOMMENDS THAT STATUTORY UNDERTAKERS SHOULD REVIEW THEIR LITTER PLANS AT APPROPRIATE INTERVALS. THE CHANGES MADE TO COPLAR SHOULD HAVE CAUSED MOST AUTHORITIES TO INITIATE A REVIEW, BUT CIWM SCOTLAND BELIEVES THAT FEW, IF ANY, LOCAL AUTHORITIES ACTING AS PRINCIPAL LITTER AUTHORITIES HAVE FOLLOWED THIS RECOMMENDATION.

IN ADDITION, WHILE THE LEGISLATION EXISTS TO TACKLE ASPECTS OF LITTERING, ITS APPLICATION VARIES CONSIDERABLY ACROSS THE COUNTRY IN TERMS OF BOTH COMMUNICATION AND ENFORCEMENT.

Recommendations

IT IS CLEAR THAT A STEP CHANGE IN BEHAVIOR IS REQUIRED TO TACKLE THE PROBLEM OF LITTER AND CIWM SCOTLAND BELIEVES THAT A SUSTAINED APPROACH BASED ON 'ZERO TOLERANCE' IS NEEDED. EDUCATION AND MARKETING ARE RECOGNISED AS VITAL ASPECTS OF THE SOLUTION, BUT UNLESS THEY ARE BACKED UP BY CONSISTENT ENFORCEMENT, THE BENEFITS ARE SUBSTANTIALLY LOST.

CLEAR ANALOGIES CAN BE DRAWN WITH THE APPROACHES ADOPTED TO ADDRESS OTHER SIGNIFICANT PUBLIC HEALTH CHALLENGES. FOR EXAMPLE, DESPITE SUSTAINED EDUCATION CAMPAIGNS ABOUT THE HAZARDS OF SMOKING, IT HAS ULTIMATELY REQUIRED A WIDELY ENFORCED BAN TO SIGNIFICANTLY CHANGE PUBLIC BEHAVIOUR. THE LITTERING MESSAGE NEEDS TO BE INTEGRATED WITH THE OTHER WASTE AND INCIVILITY MESSAGES AND WE NEED TO LEARN FROM OTHER SUCCESSFUL ENFORCEMENT INITIATIVES SUCH AS SEATBELTS AND DRINK DRIVING.

TO DELIVER THIS 'ZERO TOLERANCE', CIWM SCOTLAND BELIEVES THAT THERE NEEDS TO BE A CONSISTENT AND SUSTAINED APPLICATION OF THE LEGISLATION, INCLUDING THE FULL RANGE OF ENFORCEMENT MEASURES, ACROSS THE COUNTRY. IT CALLS ON THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT TO

CHANGE THE EXISTING LEGISLATION ON LITTER TO CLARIFY AND STREAMLINE CERTAIN OPERATIONAL ASPECTS AND TO REQUIRE ITS APPLICATION BY ALL STATUTORY UNDERTAKERS IN A HIGH PROFILE, CONSISTENT AND SUSTAINED WAY THAT WILL BE EFFECTIVE IN MODIFYING PUBLIC BEHAVIOUR.

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT SHOWS STRONG LEADERSHIP ON MATTERS THAT IMPACT ON PUBLIC HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING. A NUMBER OF SCOTTISH LOCAL AUTHORITIES HAVE STARTED TO TAKE PROACTIVE STEPS TO ADDRESS THE LITTER PROBLEM AND CIWM SCOTLAND COMMENDS THE CITY OF GLASGOW COUNCIL AS ONE SUCH AUTHORITY. ULTIMATELY, IT MAKES SENSE FROM ECONOMIC, ENVIRONMENTAL, ROAD SAFETY AND PUBLIC HEALTH PERSPECTIVES.

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