

# Littering behavioural insights project update

*Jan 2021*

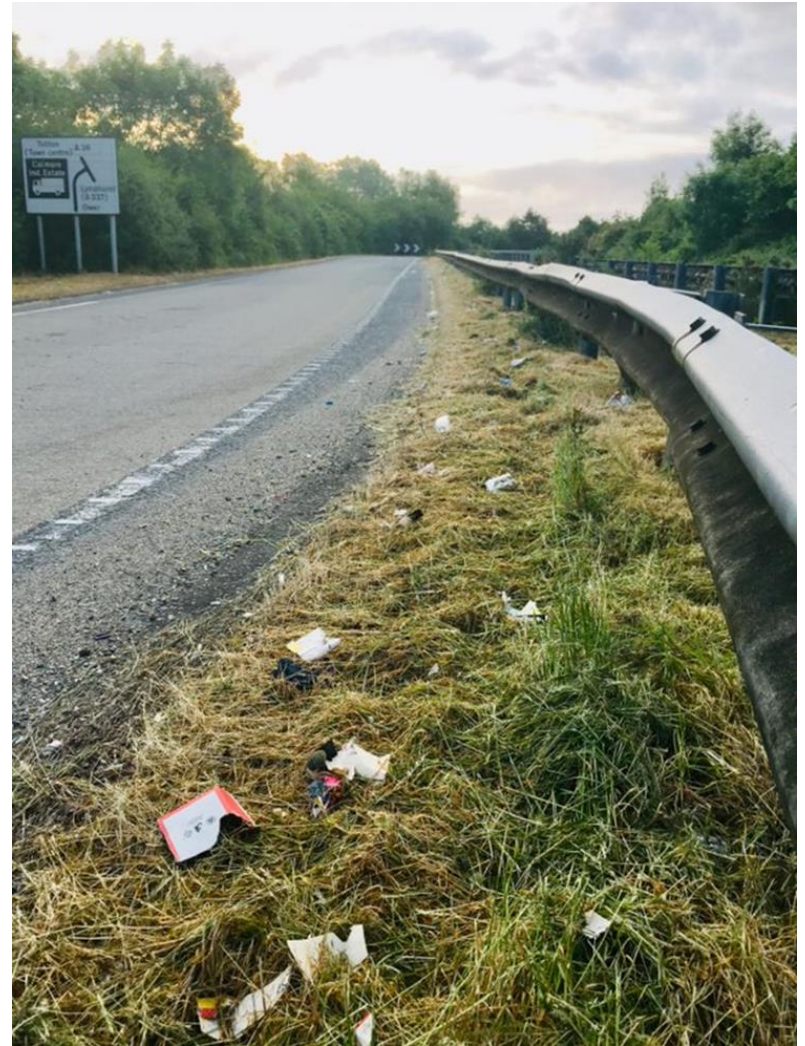
social engine



**Local**  
**Government**  
Association

# Recap

- Local Government Association behavioral insights programme funding
- what motivates people to discard litter from vehicles?
- what influences and approaches can positively alter this?



# Why this project?

- Street scene costs annually, £1.5 million
- Verge litter clearance is estimated at £125,000 per year
- Threat to wildlife
- Traffic disruption
- Dangerous for our operatives
- Unsightly

# Methodology

Extensive evidence and insight gathering which included:

- Desk research and literature review
- Key stakeholder workshop
- In-depth telephone interviewing - including key stakeholders, community, councillors, enforcement officers, local restaurants
- Observation of littering behaviour
- Workshop and focus group with young people
- Online perception survey – over 800 responses

# Findings

## *Two key strands*

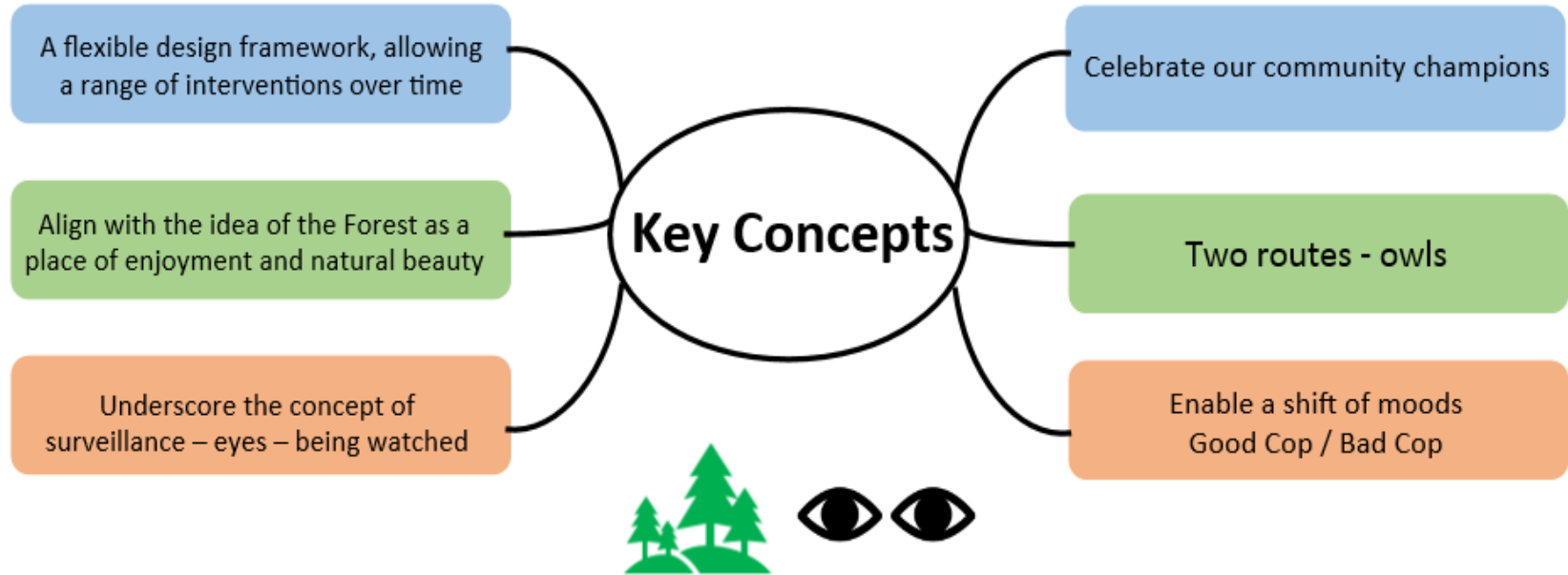
Residents of the New Forest are very proud of where they live.



People are more likely to litter if they are alone and think they won't get caught.



# Framework





**LET'S  
CATCH  
LITTER  
BUGS!**

TEXT THEIR VEHICLE REG TO **61116**

New Forest  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

LOOK OUT FOR OUR FOREST

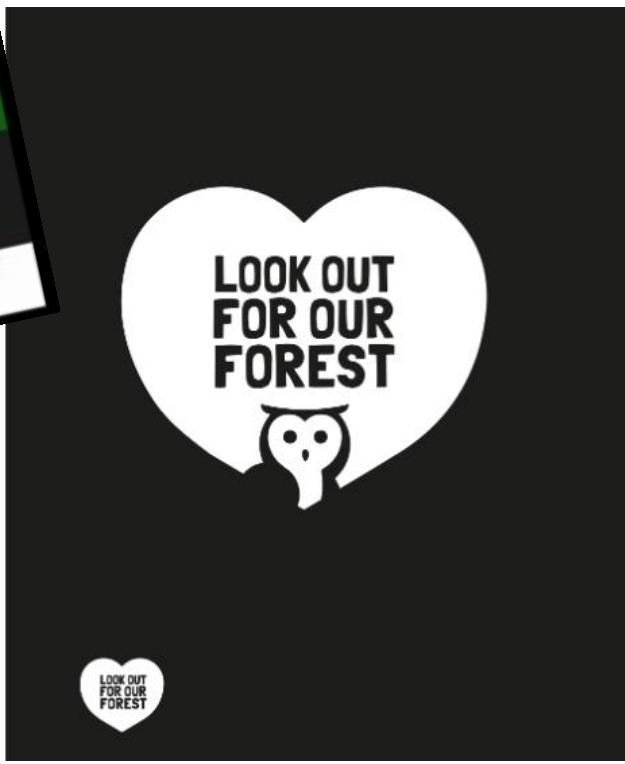
This poster features a green background with a stylized owl icon at the top. The main text is in large, bold, black and yellow letters. A black banner at the bottom contains the text 'TEXT THEIR VEHICLE REG TO 61116' in white and red. The New Forest District Council logo is in the bottom left, and a small green heart icon with the text 'LOOK OUT FOR OUR FOREST' is in the bottom right.



**LOOK OUT  
FOR OUR  
FOREST**

LOOK OUT FOR OUR FOREST

A green heart-shaped graphic with a stylized owl icon at the bottom. The text 'LOOK OUT FOR OUR FOREST' is written in yellow and white inside the heart.



**LOOK OUT  
FOR OUR  
FOREST**

LOOK OUT FOR OUR FOREST

A black background featuring a large white heart in the center. Inside the heart, the text 'LOOK OUT FOR OUR FOREST' is written in black, with a stylized owl icon below it. A smaller version of the same heart and owl icon is located in the bottom left corner.



**LOOK  
OUT,  
LITTER  
BUG!**

New Forest  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

LOOK OUT FOR OUR FOREST

A vertical poster with a green background and a stylized owl icon at the bottom. The text 'LOOK OUT, LITTER BUG!' is written in large, bold, yellow and green letters. The New Forest District Council logo is in the bottom left, and a small green heart icon with the text 'LOOK OUT FOR OUR FOREST' is in the bottom right.

# Proposed Interventions

- Intervention One – Launch of the framework: Look Out For Our Forest
- Intervention Two - Letter to van drivers
- Intervention Three - Mobilisation of Local Champions
- Intervention Four - Text In Line to Report Littering

\*To be supported by additional part time staff resource



# Project Suspension

- Late March 2020 – late June 2020
- Progressing not viable
  - Seasonality of litter monitoring
  - Reduced traffic flow through monitoring period
  - Reduced capacity for delivering and measuring
  - Recruitment freeze
  - A change in local litter context (coastal and fly tipping)

# Shifting focus to coastal litter

- Huge increase in rubbish left at the coast
  - Increase visitor numbers – outdoor socialising
  - Increase in takeaways
  - Good weather
  - Increase in tourists and day trippers (staycation)



# A new intervention

## What did we want to achieve?

- Adapting the original framework
- Challenging 'polite' littering
- Encouraging people to take their litter home
- Implement quickly

# #CRABBY



New Forest  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

#CRABBY  
TAKING A CRABBY TO LITTERING

LITTERING HURTS COASTAL CREATURES AND IS  
A CRIMINAL OFFENCE WITH A SUBSTANTIAL FINE.



# #CRABBY



## **Intended outcomes:**

1. Reduction in litter volumes at the coast
2. Raised awareness
3. Public perceptions that litter interventions had helped tackle the problem

## **Evaluation methods:**

1. Weighbridge data
2. Visitor numbers (car park and public toilets)
3. Number of rubbish bags distributed
4. Community survey
5. Street scene operatives/Cllrs/town & parish Councils

## Refuse bag distribution

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**6,750** refuse bags  
(August 2020)

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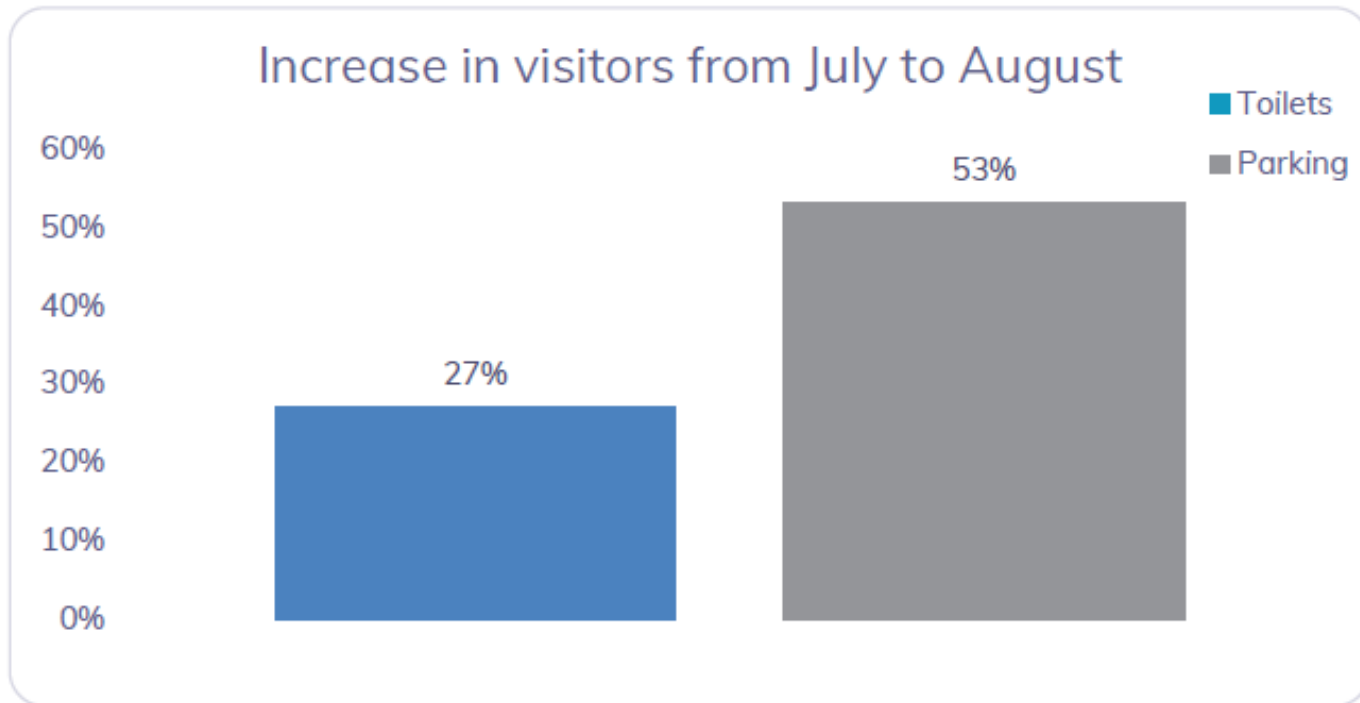
**73** bags per site  
per day

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replaced **1** roll  
every **2** days

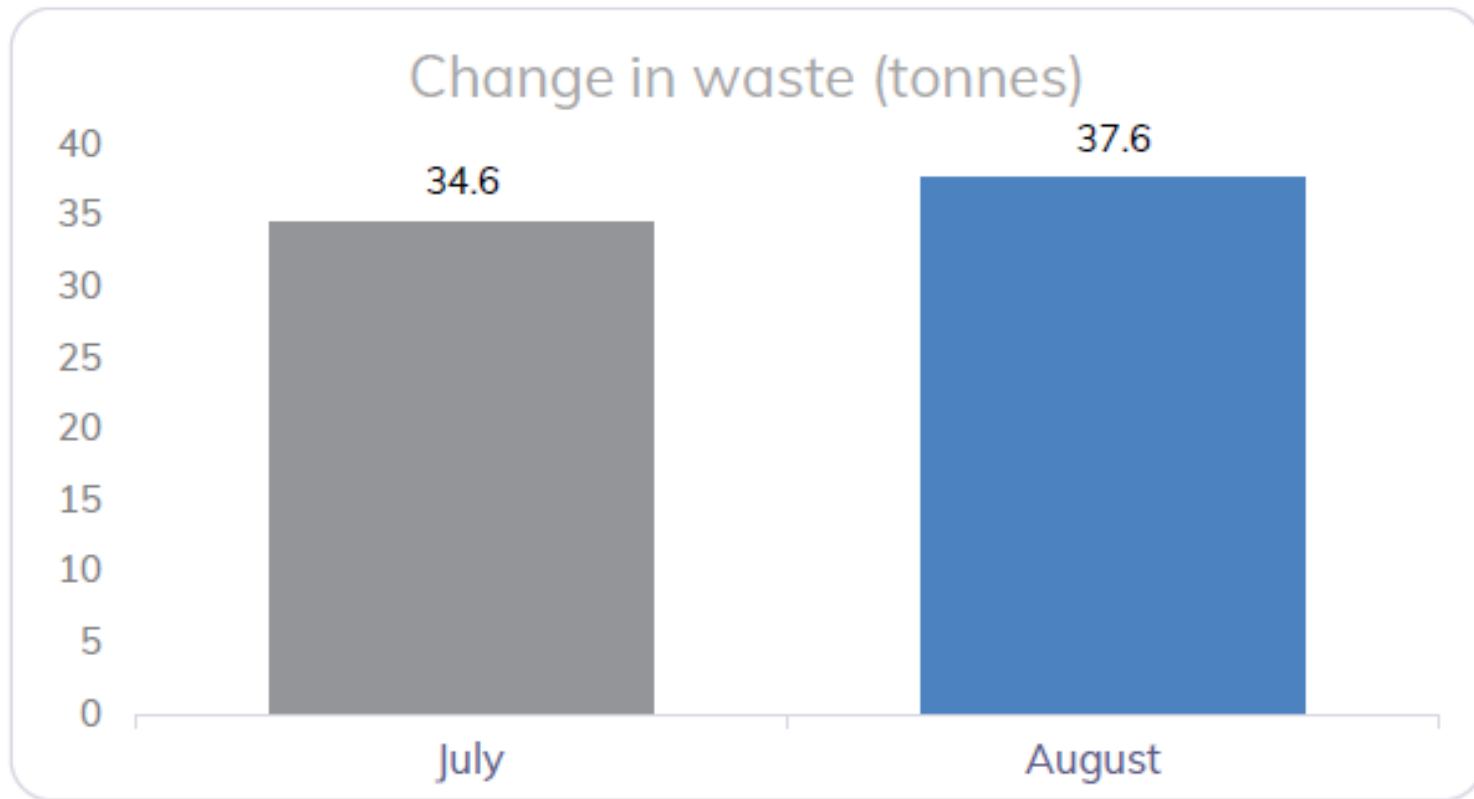


# Visitor numbers

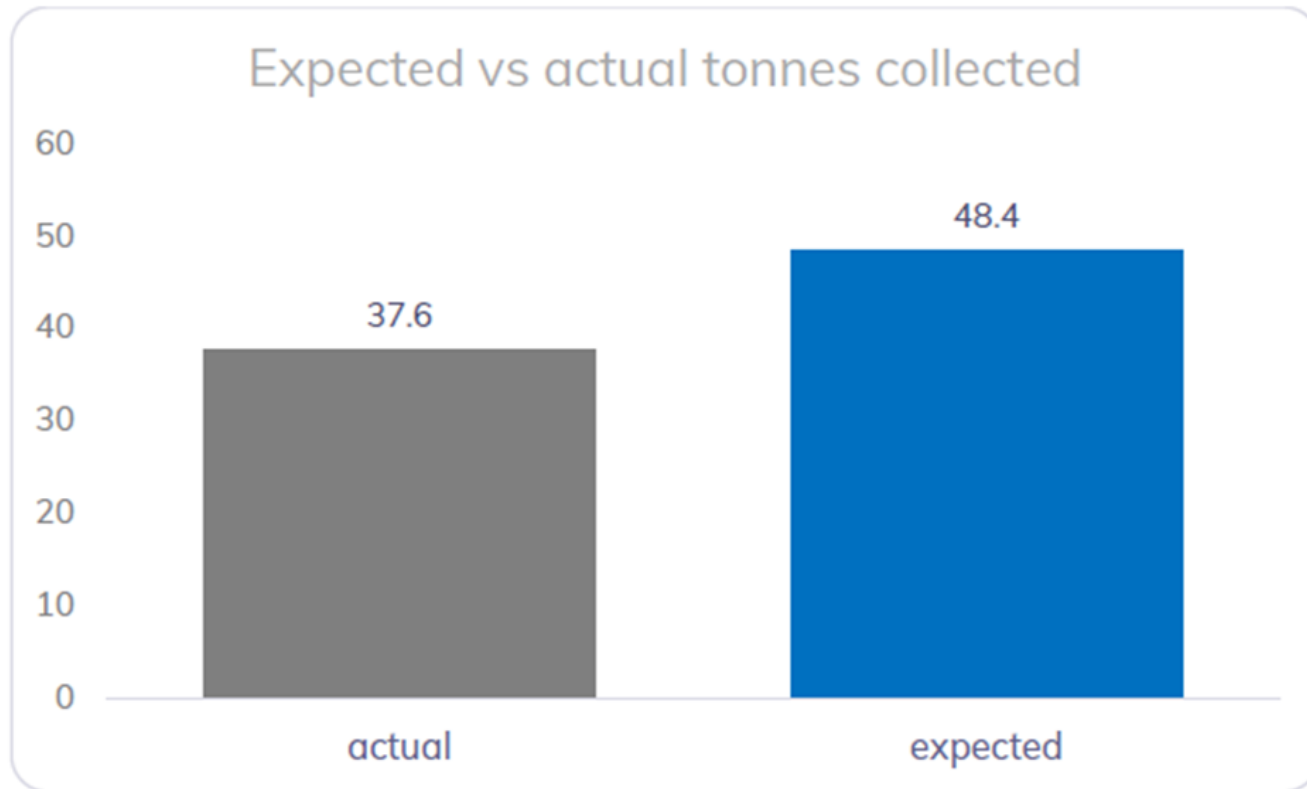


- Increase in visitors July to August **40%**

# Litter tonnages



# Litter tonnages



We therefore estimate that the coastal litter intervention reduced the amount of litter discarded by 10.8 tonnes over the one month intervention period.

**This represents a reduction in litter of 29%.**

# Stakeholders

*“Busy summer holiday meant more visitors and more litter. The campaign helped not to increase litter further at Milford. It was a particular problem in May and June straight after lockdown”*

*“We didn’t have the amount of litter that we’ve had in previous years even with the influx of visitors to the area.”*

*“Given this year we have a huge number of visitors – I have never seen Calshot so busy – we didn’t have as much litter as I expected at all.”*

*“Most people don’t have their own litter bag or even think to bring a bin bag. So it’s easy for them to collect the bags and put their litter in.”*

*“Made it easier to do my job”*

*“The beach appeared visibly cleaner.”*

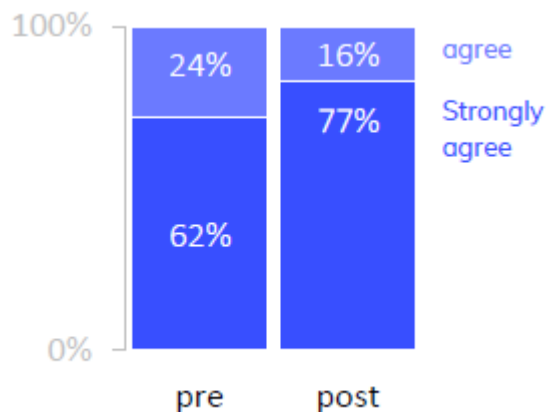
*“People used the bins more but only a few took it [their rubbish] home”*

# Community survey

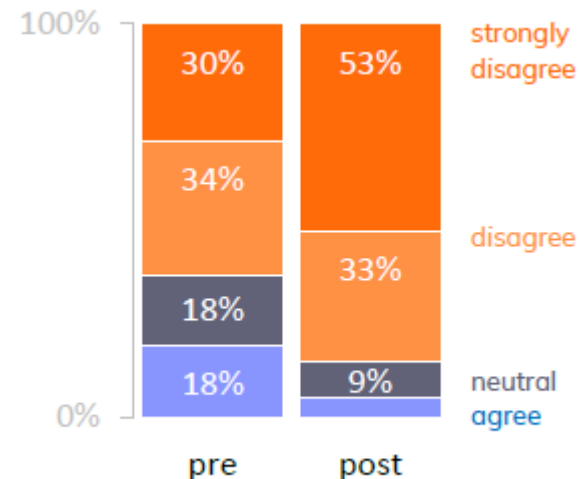
Comparisons in responses to questions on perceptions of littering between the two surveys showed a positive change between pre-intervention and post-intervention results across all six perception measures.

For example:

‘There is never an excuse for dropping litter.’

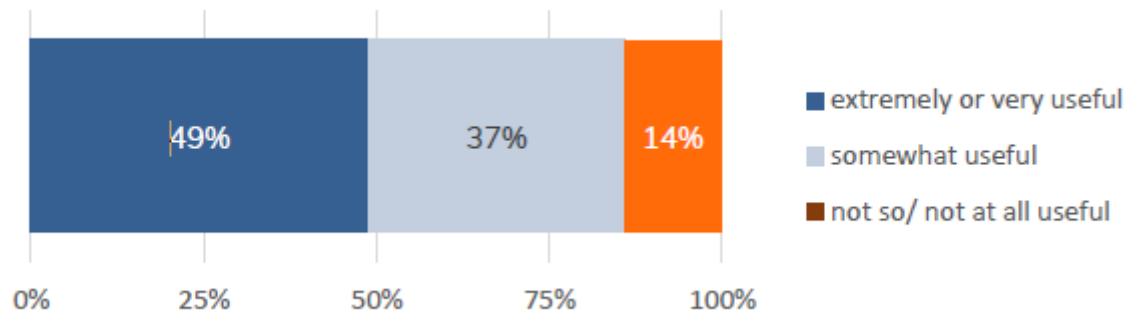


‘It’s ok to litter as long as the item is biodegradable.’



# Public perceptions

- 58% of people were aware of a local litter campaign for summer 2020
- 4 out of 10 were familiar with #crabby coastal litter campaign
- Strong indications council is perceived to be 'taking action' 61% agreed the council is taking action
- 86% of people found the bags to be useful or extremely useful



# Public perceptions

*“Good idea. The bottom line is that whilst people should take their litter home, too many people don’t. This is a compelling solution that is kid-friendly and will maybe make an activity out of some rubbish picking. Some of the piles of rubbish left on beaches during recent hot days have been appalling.”*

*“Keep up the positive work @newforestdistrictcouncil in my opinion, you're providing solutions that responsible people can work with. 👍”*



# Conclusions



- **Proven adaptable framework**
- **Environmental benefit**
- **Potential financial benefit**
  - The daily cost of one operative and one vehicle is £187.
  - To collect 10.8 tonnes of litter over the course of a month, would require 1.77 full-time operatives and a waste collection vehicle.
  - This equates to a cost of £468 per day.
  - **Multiplied by 31 days during August equals £10,261**

*Based on the evidence available, the use of a salient and behaviourally-informed intervention, deployed in a timely way, positively contributed to avoiding a huge rise in littering and raised awareness of the council's efforts to practically and creatively tackle the issue.*

# Next steps

- Positive feedback from LGA
- Project used as an example for other local authorities

<https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/efficiency-and-income-generation/behavioural-insights/lga-behavioural-insights-projects>

- Repeat #crabby
- Revisit littering from vehicles interventions
- Partner organisations share framework next JLWG meeting March 2021

# Questions?