

# Littering behavioural insights project update

*Jan 2021*

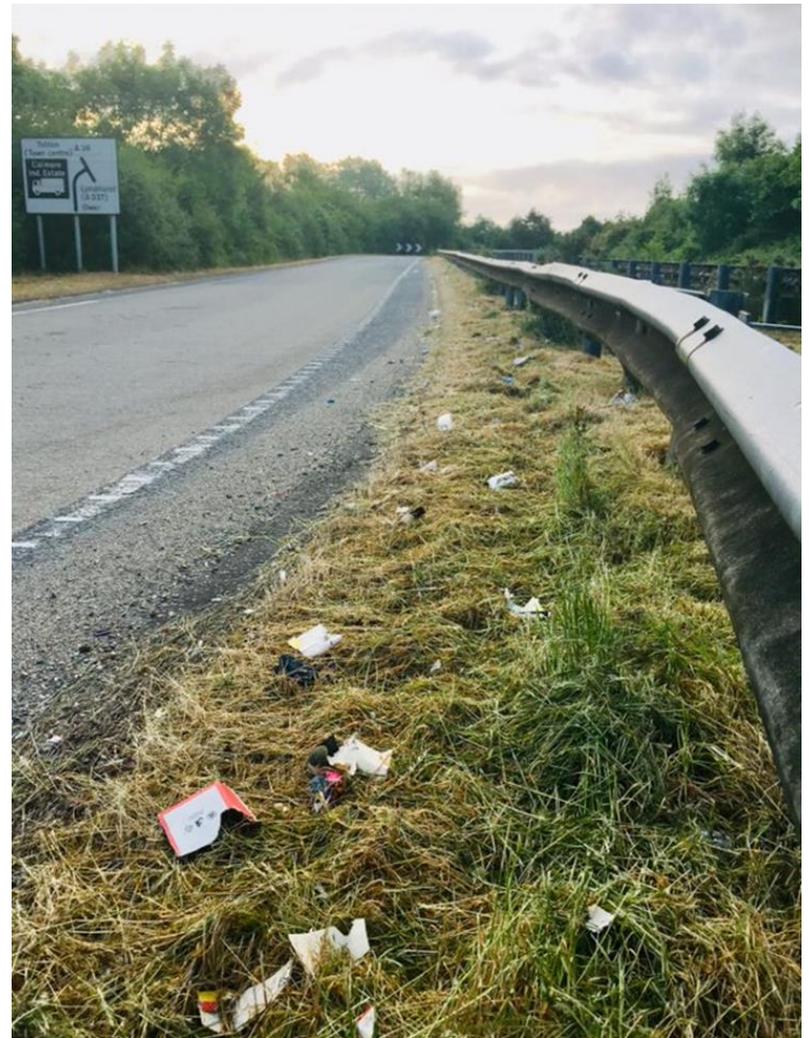
social engine



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*

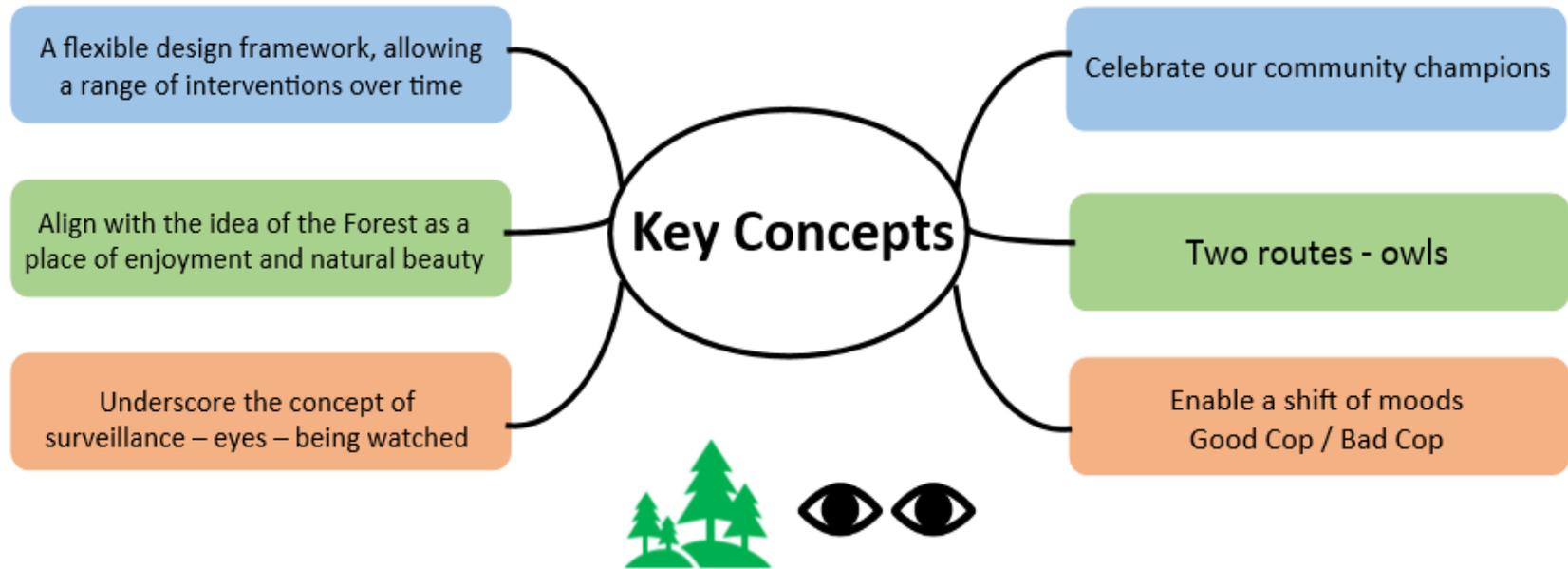
Residents of the New Forest are very proud of where they live.



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 this 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 dark green background. 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)

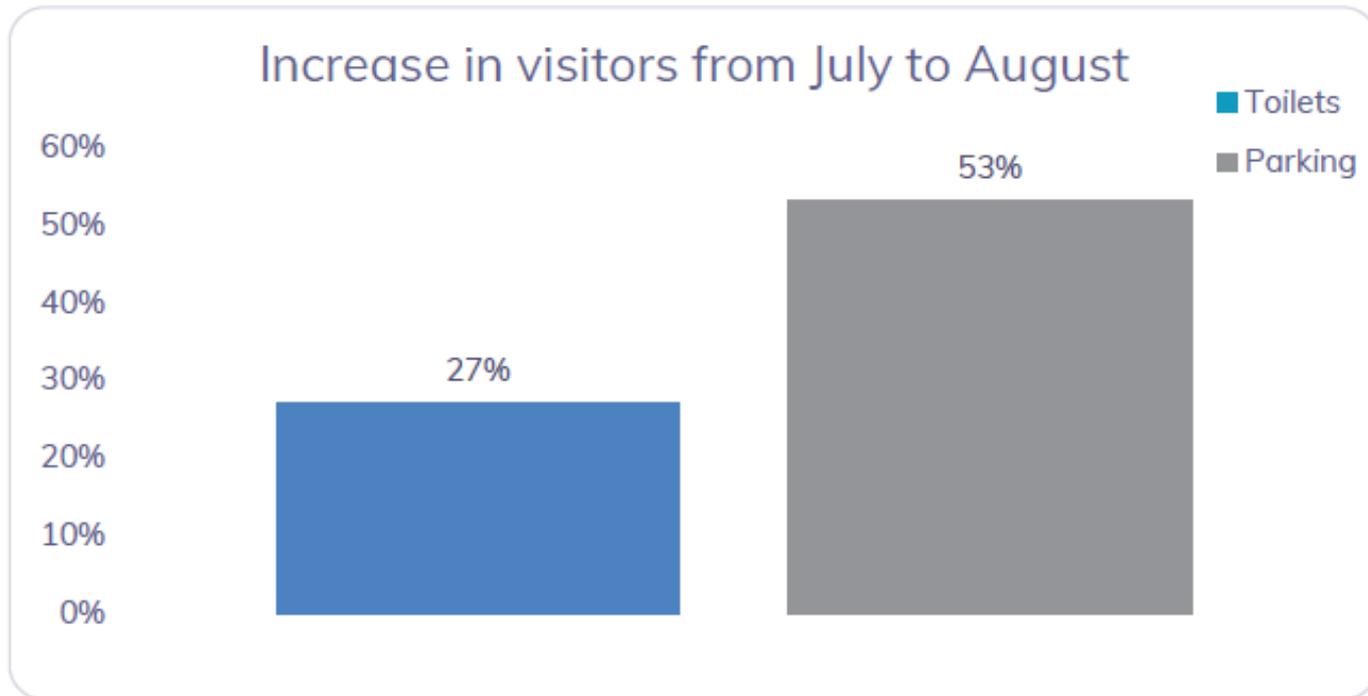
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**73** bags per site  
per day

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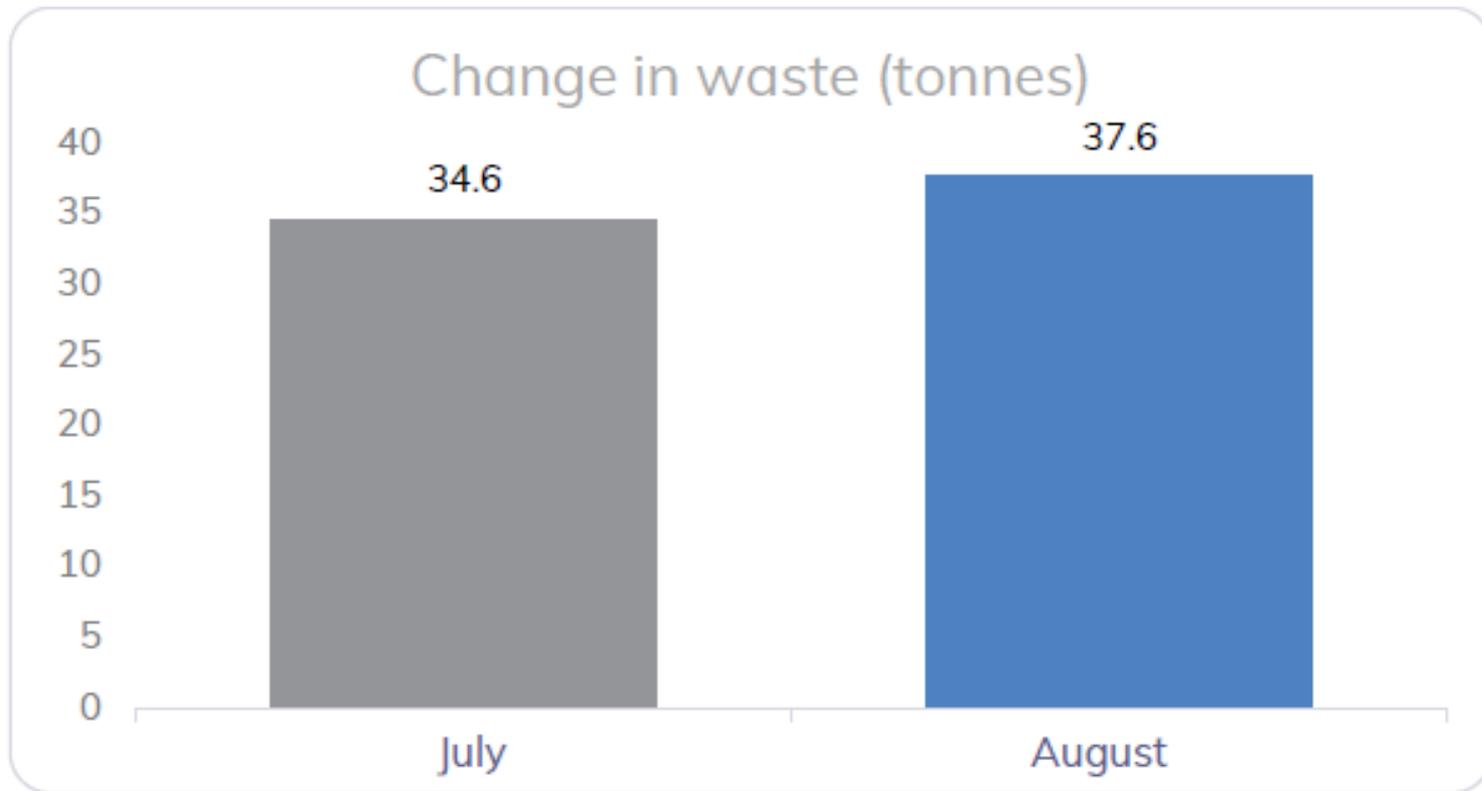
replaced **1** roll  
every **2** days

# Visitor numbers

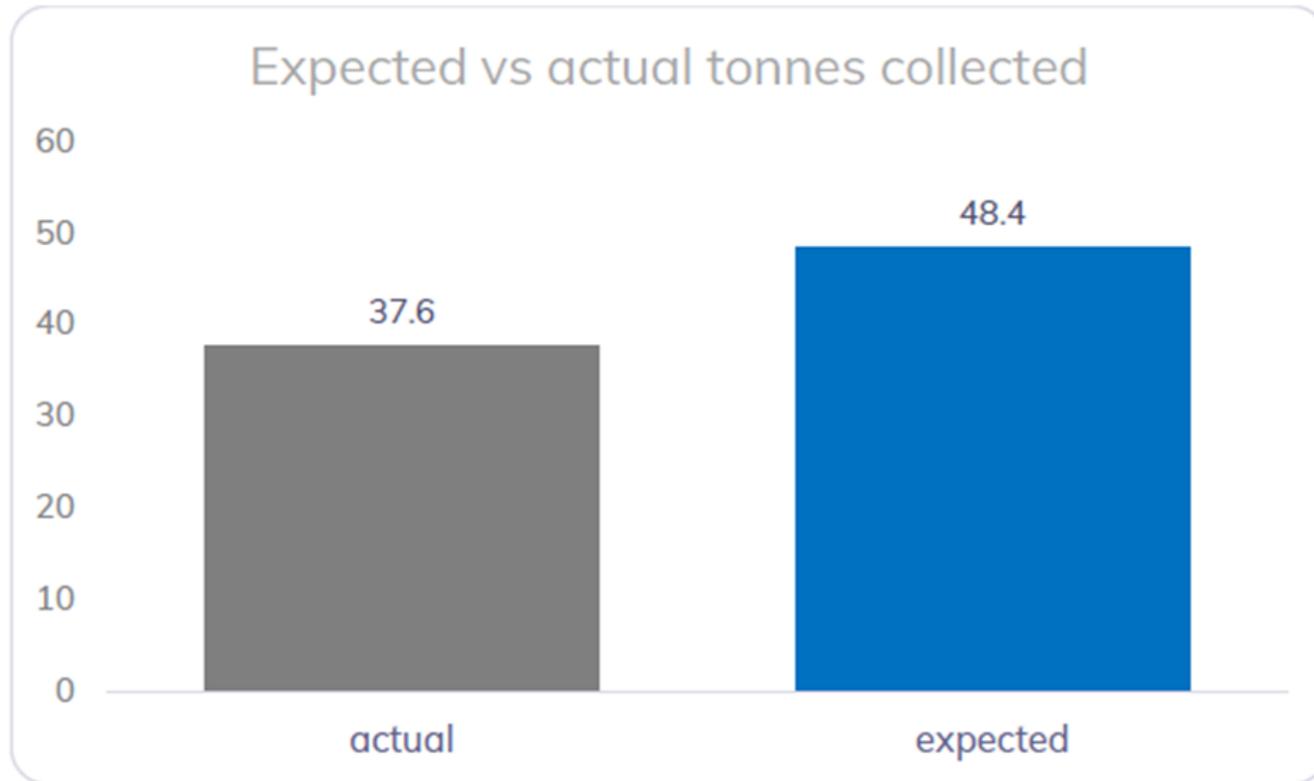


- Increase in visitors July to August **40%**

# 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.”*

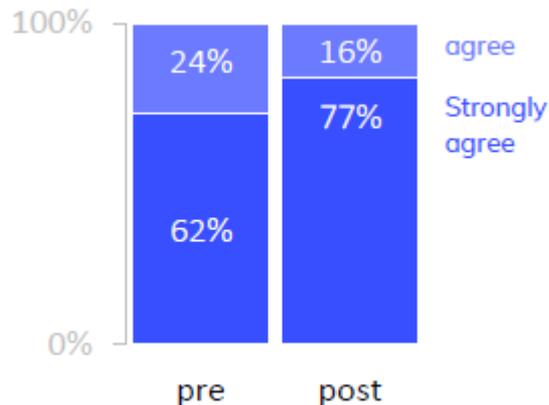
*“People used the bins more but only a few took it [their rubbish] home”*

# Community survey

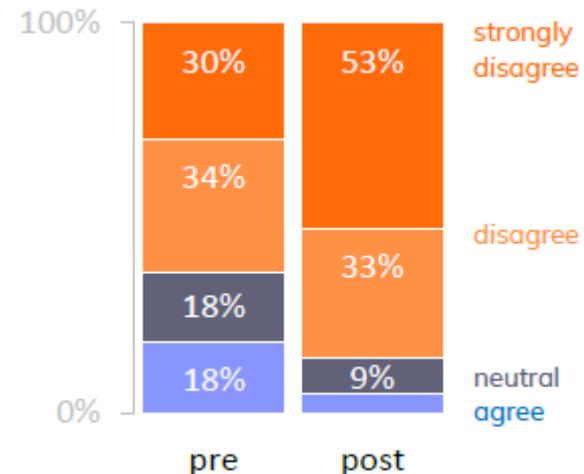
Comparisons in responses to questions on perceptions of littering between the two surveys showed a positive change between pre-intervention and post-intervention results across all six perception measures.

For example:

‘There is never an excuse for dropping litter.’

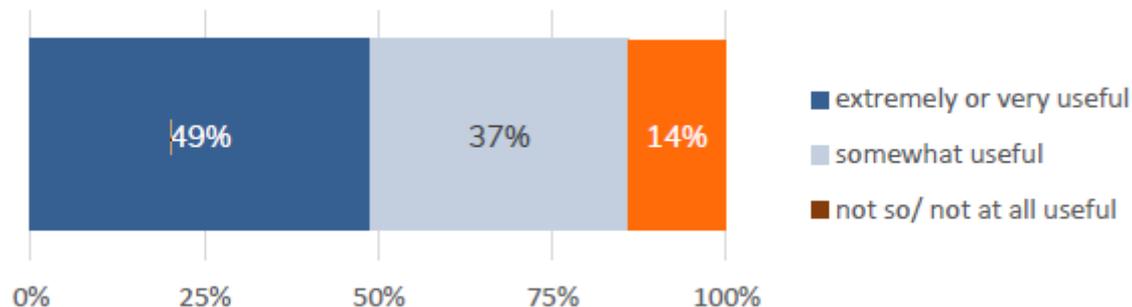


‘It’s ok to litter as long as the item is biodegradable.’



# 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?