

# Street Cleansing Policy



## Document Control

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### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Street Cleansing Team maintains much of the environment for our community. Clean, safe, accessible and attractive streets & open spaces are a fundamental to delivering a borough to be proud of, which is pleasant to live and work in and to visit.
- 1.2. Under the Environment Protection Act, the Council has a duty to keep the streets clear of litter and remove fly-tipped waste on public land.
- 1.3. The Street Cleansing Team shall remove accumulations of litter on the public highway, in parks & open spaces, in public car parks and on any other relevant public land to the standard determined by the Litter Code of Practice and as directed by the Assistant Director (Operations) and Street Cleansing Manager.

1.4. The policy is in-line with the Council's Corporate Plan aims and priorities, specifically '#1 People: To create clean, welcoming neighbourhoods and parks.'

## 2. Service specification for street cleansing

2.1. A clean, green, and safe environment is a high priority for Gravesham Borough Council. We manage and maintain public parks, recreation grounds, highway verges and green open areas.

2.2. The street cleansing services duties & key functions provided by the Street Cleansing Team include:

- Emptying litter bins
- Removal of fly-tipped materials from Council-owned land and the highway
- Cleansing of gullies
- Cleansing of highways and adjacent verges
- Maintenance of Council-owned rear access ways and alleyways
- Removal of graffiti and fly-posting
- Cleansing of parks & open spaces
- Clearance of dog fouling, broken glass, syringes & other hazardous litter
- Cleansing of public car parks
- Street washing in high footfall areas
- Cleansing of industrial estates
- Removal of dead animals

2.3. Relevant definitions & terminology are set out in the glossary of terms under Appendix A.

## 3. Overall responsibilities

3.1. The following table summarises the Street scene functions undertaken by Gravesham Borough Council and third-party partners.

Street Scene	GBC	KCC Highways	National Highways
Litter & dog fouling	X		
Fly-tipping on public land	X		
Blocked gully	X		
Weeds - dead & brown	X		
Graffiti (on public property)	X		
Car parks (GBC-owned)	X		
Fallen tree (parks & open spaces)	X		
Abandoned vehicle	X		
Dead animals	X		
Street name sign issue	X		
Fly-tipping obstructing public roads		X	
Weeds - alive & green		X	
Fallen tree (highway)		X	
Blocked drain		X	
Broken streetlight		X	
Potholes		X	
Highway signage issue		X	X
Grit bins		X	
Litter on A2 verges & slip roads			X

#### 4. Street cleansing – scheduled work

- 4.1. The service provided shall be delivered in line with of current street cleansing law and any modifications or re-enactment thereof and shall be in accordance with all relevant codes of practice, guidance and statutory instruments relating to the Street Cleansing Service. Street cleansing must accord with the following:
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
  - The Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse (DEFRA).
- 4.2. All staff deployed by the Street Cleansing Team in the management, administration and operation of the Street Cleansing Service are always properly and sufficiently qualified, experienced, and instructed regarding:
- The task or tasks each person must perform.
  - All relevant provisions of this Service Specification.
  - All relevant Law and Codes of Practice relating to the provision of the Street Cleansing Service.
  - The need to maintain the highest standards of courtesy and consideration.
  - The need to always carry out their duties in a professional manner.
  - All relevant Health and Safety procedures.
- 4.3. The Street Cleansing Team shall undertake the cleansing of all carriageways, footways, footpaths, precincts, channels, kerbs, and footpaths.
- 4.4. The Street Cleansing Team shall initiate and maintain a properly documented system of quality control including self- monitoring and audit, which is designed to ensure that the service is provided in all respects in accordance with the specification.
- 4.5. During adverse weather conditions, such as snowfall, when normal operations are impossible, the approved cleansing schedules may be suspended in part or all the borough by the Assistant Director (Operations) or Waste & Transport Manager. In these circumstances, street cleansing resources shall be re-deployed to assist in other activities, such as snow and ice clearance.
- 4.6. The Street Cleansing Team shall be required to take all reasonable steps to prevent damage to buildings, fences, gates, walls, roads, footpaths, paved areas, and any other parts of sites during the execution of street cleansing operations.

#### 5. Hours of operation & outline of service functions

- 5.1. The hours of operation for the Street Cleansing Team are set out below:

##### Weekdays

Service	GBC shall ensure a cleansing service presence between:	Cleaning operations shall commence no later than; and the hours of work shall be:
Manual Cleaning (litter picking)	07:00 - 15:30 (Monday - Thursday) 07:00 - 14:30 (Friday)  Shopping parades (Saturdays & Sundays)	07:00 7 hours and 40 minutes (Monday - Thursday) 7 hours (Friday)

Service	GBC shall ensure a cleansing service presence between:	Cleaning operations shall commence no later than; and the hours of work shall be:
Mechanical Sweeping	07:00 - 15:30 (Monday - Thursday) 07:00 - 14:30 (Friday)	07:00 7 hours and 40 minutes (Monday - Thursday) 7 hours (Friday)
Litter Bin Emptying	07:00 - 15:30 (Monday - Thursday) 07:00 - 14:30 (Friday)  Shopping parades, parks & open spaces (Saturdays & Sundays)	07:00 7 hours and 40 minutes (Monday - Thursday) 7 hours (Friday)

#### Town centre

Service	GBC shall ensure a cleansing service presence between:	Cleaning operations shall commence no later than; and the hours of work shall be:
Manual Cleaning (litter picking)	07:00 - 18:00 (Monday - Sunday)	07:00 10 hours (Monday - Sunday)
Litter Bin Emptying	07:00 - 18:00 (Monday - Sunday)	07:00 10 hours (Monday - Sunday)

## 6. Street Sweeping

- 6.1. We do not have sufficient resources to clean every street at the same frequency, so our sweeping programmes reflect the vehicular and pedestrian usage of streets and the business & retail establishment types in the locality.
- 6.2. Streets on the schedule will be swept at least once every 8 weeks.
- 6.3. Some streets regularly experience parked vehicles and other obstructions which cause difficulty in thoroughly cleansing the channels of such highways. However, every effort will be made to keep such streets thoroughly cleansed using appropriate equipment and an appropriate cleansing programme following consultation and dialogues with residents to ensure that affected streets are kept free from vehicles and obstructions at designated times.
- 6.4. The Street Cleansing Team will obtain water in a manner approved by Southern Water Ltd and be responsible for any charges for water used or standpipe provision required for carrying out specified street cleansing services.

## 7. Fly-Tipping

- 7.1. Fly tipping is the illegal dumping of waste. Fly-tipping adversely affects our environment and the cost of removing and safely disposing of the waste ultimately falls to the local taxpayer.
- 7.2. We can clear fly-tipping on publicly accessible land that we control. We cannot clear fly-tips from private land or private property.
- 7.3. If the fly-tip is on a road or highway and it is causing an obstruction, Kent County Council (KCC) are responsible for its removal can be contacted by calling 03000 41 81 81.



- 7.4. The Street Cleansing Team work closely with the Council's Environmental Enforcement Team to ensure that fly-tipping is investigated wherever possible. Our Environmental Enforcement Team, work with partner agencies and other local authorities to investigate and prosecute fly-tippers.
- 7.5. Those who are caught fly-tipping may be fined up to £50,000 and/or sentenced to six months' imprisonment.
- 7.6. Once our Environmental Enforcement Team have assessed a fly-tip, the details are sent to the Waste Management Unit for clearance, after which the removal team will clear the fly-tipped waste within five working days. This is dependent upon access and whether specialist equipment or contractors are required for the clearance work.

## **8. Litter & Dog Waste Bins**

- 8.1. The Street Cleansing Team shall ensure that all litter bins are:
  - emptied prior to or as soon as they become full
  - kept in a clean condition inside and outside by washing and disinfecting and by removing flyposting and graffiti; and any waste in the vicinity of the litter bin is swept up and removed when the litter bin is emptied.
  - For more information, please consult the Council's Litter & Dog Waste Bin Policy.

## **9. Graffiti**

- 9.1. Graffiti is a form of criminal damage and refers to any drawings, scribbles or 'tags' which are written, painted, sprayed, or scratched on the surface of any property. Removing graffiti is costly, it can take a significant time to remove and requires specialist equipment.
- 9.2. We are responsible for removing graffiti from public buildings, street furniture, litter bins, monuments, and playgrounds.
- 9.3. Council Officers and Operatives regularly monitor the borough for areas that have been affected by graffiti.
- 9.4. The Street Cleansing Team shall remove offensive graffiti within one working day of receipt of the report. All other graffiti on public property will be removed within seven working days of being reported.
- 9.5. We may remove graffiti from private property if it is accessible at ground-level and depending on the extent of the graffiti & the resource required to remove it.
- 9.6. Other items such as utility boxes and telephone boxes are the responsibility of the company that has placed them there. Such instances of graffiti will be reported using the links below:
  - Telephone box - email [customer.serv.payphones@bt.com](mailto:customer.serv.payphones@bt.com)
  - Post box - email [postbox.appearance@royalmailpfs.com](mailto:postbox.appearance@royalmailpfs.com)
  - [Report issue with electricity substation online to UK Power Networks](#)
  - [Report issue with Highway Road signs, bollards, street lighting or traffic lights online to Kent County Council](#)



## **10. Dead Animals**

- 10.1. The Street Cleansing Team shall remove any animal carcasses from the public highway; however, this will be limited to dogs, cats, or wild animals such as badgers and foxes:
- as part of the normal cleansing operations; or
  - within 24 hours of being notified of a requirement to remove an animal carcass.
- 10.2. The Street Scene Service shall remove any identification discs or collars found on dead animals and inform the owners of such animals. The animal will be kept for a period of two weeks, after which appropriate arrangements for disposal of carcasses will be made.
- 10.3. Details of the dead animal will be logged centrally by the Waste Management Team.

## **11. Leafing**

- 11.1. Fallen leaves on roads and pavements which are causing a hazard should be reported to Gravesham Borough Council. From the end of October to December, we re-assign crews and equipment to clear leaves to prevent pavements and roads becoming slippery and messy and to prevent blockages in gullies. Due to the rate of leaf fall varying through the season the amount of time taken to complete a full cycle of the schedule is unpredictable, so it is not possible to provide firm dates for when pavements and roads will be cleared.
- 11.2. During this period, the street sweeping schedule may be altered to allow for additional leaf clearance where required.

## **12. Weeds**

- 12.1. The Kent County Council Highways Team is responsible for spraying weeds growing at the roadside or on pavements.
- 12.2. Once the weeds are dead, Gravesham Borough Council is responsible for removing the weeds. We will target areas where weed growth is causing a hazard.

## **13. Rear Access Ways & Alleyways**

- 13.1. Council-owned rear access ways and alleyways will have fly-tipping cleared; vegetation cut back on a scheduled basis. Where alleyways are blocked, these can be reported to us for clearance.
- 13.2. Private access ways are not the responsibility of the Council; however, the Council may aid residents by removing collected waste generated by them clearing the alley. Residents should contact the waste management team to discuss before taking any action.

## **14. Response times**

- 14.1. The Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse states that, 'duty bodies are expected to set their cleansing schedules so that they meet the duty to keep their relevant land clear of litter and refuse, and highways clean.'
- 14.2. It also states that 'there are two most common features that will have an impact on the levels and frequency of attention that needs to be paid to an area to keep levels of litter and refuse to acceptable standards. These are: the intensity of activity in the area, from people and vehicles; and health and safety limitations.'

- 14.3. When the standard falls below Environmental Protection Act (1990) Grade A the Service shall adhere to the following **Zone 1 response times** as detailed below. The relevant zones are set out in Appendix B.

Fall in Standard	Response Time
Grade A to Grade B	Within 6 hours
Grade A to Grade C	Within 3 hours
Grade A to Grade D	Within 1 hour
Grade A to Grade B or below (16:00 to 07:00)	By 08:00 (following day)

- 14.4. On the **Zone 1** sites, all litter bins shall be emptied at the time of cleansing daily or when full, whichever is the sooner, and the rubbish removed including any spillage that shall be picked up at the time of emptying.
- 14.5. On the **Zone 1** sites, the Street Cleansing Team shall be responsible for keeping the location free from litter at the time of cleansing daily. All arisings shall be removed from site and taken to an approved disposal facility immediately.
- 14.6. Our Street Cleansing zoning and cleansing frequency is outlined in Appendix B.
- 14.7. Roads in **Zone 4**, rural kerbed roads will be swept once every eight weeks. Rural, un-kerbed roads will be cleared as required.
- 14.8. Areas with special circumstances (situations where issues of health and safety and reasonableness and practicability are dominant considerations when undertaking environmental maintenance work) shall be swept or cleansed as required or as practicable.

## **15. Street cleansing – unscheduled work**

- 15.1. The Street Cleansing Team shall be required, after any special event, to clear the highway of all litter within the time-period stipulated in any Code of Practice issued by the Secretary of State under the provisions of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 unless otherwise directed by the Waste Management Unit. Special events occur in the borough throughout the year that attract large numbers of people such as some examples listed below:
- Vaisakhi Parade
  - St George's Day Parade
  - The Riverside Festival
  - Bonfire Night
  - Remembrance Sunday
  - Christmas Lights "Switch On"
  - New Year's Eve Celebrations
  - Civic Functions.
- 15.2. The Street Cleansing Team will provide adequate resources to maintain parks & open spaces to the stipulated Grade as specified in the Litter Code of Practice during the higher footfall periods of the Spring and Summer months.
- 15.3. Other unscheduled work includes the clearance of dumped asbestos.
- 15.4. Third party contractors may be procured to undertake specialist or large-scale clearance work.

- 15.5. Gravesham Borough Council has a duty to cleanse the highways and grass verges of major high-speed road, such as the A289 and the A227. As required, traffic management shall be put in place to allow litter-picking to be undertaken safely, or contractors may be instructed to do this work on behalf of the Street Cleansing Team. In addition, cleansing rural roads and traffic islands may require traffic management to be organised.

## **16. Education**

- 16.1. The Council provides a wide range of information to inform residents and households of the arrangements for the upkeep of their Street Scene environment in a variety of formats.
- 16.2. The Council believe that education and awareness raising is vital to help residents understand their role in maintaining good standards of Street Scene to make their borough a more pleasant place to live, work and play.
- 16.3. The Council further recognises that, when education and awareness initiatives have not achieved their desired outcomes to encourage residents not to litter or fly-tip in our borough; in particular, where a residents' actions result in environmental despoilment or anti-social behaviour then the Council may undertake enforcement activities in accordance with the Council's 'Enforcement Policy' and as such, will follow the principles of a staged approach, in line with all necessary legislation.
- 16.4. We recognise that despite our efforts, people may continue to discard litter, dump their rubbish, or fail to clean up after their dog has fouled; hence, Street scene Enforcement Officers are employed to take appropriate enforcement action against offenders.
- 16.5. We also undertake numerous advertising campaigns and special promotions to educate people and raise awareness of the dangers associated with litter, dog fouling and fly-tipping. These initiatives include posters, signage, social media campaigns and articles in '*Your Borough*' magazine that is circulated to all households in the borough.

## **17. Enforcement**

- 17.1. When education and awareness initiatives have not achieved their desired outcomes to encourage residents not to litter or fly-tip in our borough; in particular, where a residents actions result in environmental despoilment or anti-social behaviour then the Council may as a last resort, undertake enforcement activities in accordance with the Council 'Enforcement Policy.'
- 17.2. Gravesham Borough Council have adopted various legislative powers to issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) to residents\households\businesses who despoil our borough through their actions, such as littering, dog fouling, fly-tipping, and graffiti.
- 17.3. All business proprietors and householders have a duty of care to dispose of their waste in a proper manner and the Council has powers to deal with offenders either by the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) or via the Courts.
- 17.4. If anyone is caught defacing any property with graffiti, they will automatically be issued a FPN, payable within 14 days. If this FPN is not paid, then the offender may be taken to court.

## **18. 'Street Champions' Initiative**

- 18.1. Gravesham's 'Street Champions' is a network of residents who have volunteered to improve the quality of the local environment. The Street Champions do this by litter



picking and reporting environmental crimes and other issues to help make Gravesham a cleaner, greener borough.

- 18.2. Our Street Champions are supplied with their own litter picker, a hoop to hold rubbish sacks open, a Hi-Viz jacket, orange waste sacks & clear recycling sacks.
- 18.3. Volunteers are free to litter pick as often as they like and usually, we ask that waste is left in our orange or clear sacks at pre-agreed locations so that they can be removed by our Street Cleansing Operatives as soon as possible - usually within two working days.
- 18.4. Our Street Champions are provided with the necessary equipment and personal protective equipment and are provided with a copy of our risk assessment document.
- 18.5. Volunteer litter pickers are prohibited from working on high-speed roads or roads without suitable pavements.
- 18.6. Volunteers are encouraged to report issues to the Street Cleansing Team so that they can be dealt with promptly by our Operatives.
- 18.7. Our volunteers communicate with Officers via a dedicated mailbox and report their monthly litter picking activities via an online reporting form.
- 18.8. [Find out more about street champions online](#) or email [street.champions@gravesham.gov.uk](mailto:street.champions@gravesham.gov.uk)

### Other Documents

- Litter & Dog Waste Bin Policy.
- Refuse & Recycling Policy; Code of Practice.
- The Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse (DEFRA).
- Waste Industry Safety & Health Forum.
- WISH Guidance - Safe Cleansing on the Highway.
- Safety at Street Works and Road Works: A Code of Practice.
- Chapter 8 - Traffic Signs Manual

## Appendix A: Glossary of Key Terms

Term	Meaning
<b>Public Highway</b>	The term 'public highway' means any carriageway, bridleway, footway, path, walkway, bridge, subway or other area over which the public have a right of way as a highway under the Highways Act 1980 or any other legislation and includes the whole width of the highway and the carriageway, footways, grass or planted verges, ditches, central reservations, islands, roundabouts, footbridges, subways, or any other area shown in the borough of Gravesham, forming part of the public highway. It does not include the A2, which is managed by National Highways.



Term	Meaning
<b>Offensive Graffiti</b>	Offensive graffiti that is abusive (insulting) and racial (derogatory in respect of someone's ethnological background) in nature.
<b>Path</b>	Where the term 'path' is used, it means a highway listed in the schedule as a path whether or not that highway is also used by vehicles.
<b>Road/Street</b>	Where the term 'road/street' is used, it means any highway listed in the schedules except a highway listed as a 'path' or 'subway.'
<b>Fly-Tipping</b>	Fly-tipping is the illegal disposal of household, industrial, commercial or other 'controlled' waste without a waste management licence. It is a criminal offence (Section 33 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990). It differs from littering in that, as a general guide, a single plastic sack of rubbish should usually be considered fly-tipping rather than litter <sup>1</sup> . The advice from Waste Data Flow is that waste should be counted as fly-tip rather than litter if the waste is too large to be removed by a normal hand-sweeping barrow. In simple terms, a single full bin bag upwards would constitute a fly-tip, similarly several carrier bags full of rubbish dumped together would also constitute a fly-tip. The National Fly-tipping Prevention Group consider that fly-tipping differs from littering in that it invariably involves the removal of waste from premises where it was produced with the deliberate aim of disposing of it unlawfully, or as a result of legitimate outlets not being available.
<b>Highway Cleansing</b>	Where the term cleanse or cleansing is used in relation to highways it means a thorough collection and removal from the highway of all litter and dirt including grit, loose chippings, dust, debris, incidental weeds, blossom, leaves, vegetation, animal and bird fouling, cans, glass, cartons, paper or any other matter whatsoever.
<b>Litter, Rubbish or Refuse</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detritus, debris, soil, loose chippings, salt, oil, twigs, dead animals, animal and human faeces, bird fouling, leaves and blossom, fruit, other unwanted horticultural arisings, including grass cuttings.</li> <li>• Paper and cardboard including containers and boxes. Plastic including containers, boxes, bags, and bottles. Glass and broken glass, including bottles and the results of breakages of vehicle glass. Wood including containers and boxes.</li> <li>• Scrap metal of all sorts.</li> <li>• Pallets and furniture.</li> <li>• Fabrics including clothing, rags, curtains, and carpets.</li> <li>• Rubble including sand, cement, plaster, bricks, blocks and other waste building materials, and any other discarded objects deposited on the highway or road.</li> <li>• "Small items" shall mean items of the size of cigarette ends, drink can ring pulls and similar size or smaller.</li> </ul>

Term	Meaning
<b>Litter Bin</b>	A receptacle either fixed, free-standing or post-mounted provided for the purpose of accepting/containing litter.
<b>Daily</b>	Work shall be carried out Monday to Sunday inclusive in the town centre, or Monday to Friday inclusive in the rest of the borough.
<b>Once per week</b>	Successive operations shall be carried out each week.
<b>Once every eight weeks</b>	Successive operations each eighth week.

## 19. Appendix B: Street Cleansing Zone Plan

1.	Continuous Attendance Areas (EPA 1990, Section 89)	Frequency
a.	Zone 1 (High intensity of use, such as busy public areas) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highways / roads in Gravesend town centre</li> <li>Shop fronts &amp; shopping parades</li> </ul>	Daily

2.	Outside Continuous Attendance Areas (EPA 1990, Section 89)	Frequency
a.	Zone 2 (Medium density of use) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High density urban roads</li> </ul>	Weekly / Bi-Weekly
b.	Zone 3 (Low intensity of use) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cleaning on urban roads outside the town centre.</li> </ul>	Once every eight weeks
c.	Zone 4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rural sweeping (kerbed roads).</li> </ul>	Once every eight weeks
d.	Areas with special circumstances (situations where issues of health and safety and reasonableness and practicability are dominant considerations when undertaking environmental maintenance work).	As required / as practicable