

Litter affects us all. It blights our local communities. It looks hideous and often causes other problems such as a surge in rats and other vermin. It is also extremely expensive to clean up. Tonbridge & Malling spends over £1.3 million each year just to clear up the litter that people are basically too lazy to put in a bin. This is on top of the army of volunteers who do a brilliant job in their own time picking up litter from their neighbourhoods. You often see them selflessly working alongside busy roads with their pickers dropping crisp packets, cans and other wrappers (among other things) into bags.

Now the Government is joining in the fight and has published a litter strategy which includes stronger sanctions against those who drop litter. Those who are caught sullyng our environment with items that should be properly discarded in a bin could be fined £150. That's all very well but if like me you've been on a litter pick you often find yourself wondering why there is no bin in such a such a place (like a bus stop) and that it is therefore unsurprising that there is litter.

Thankfully the new strategy includes issuing new guidance for councils for updating the nation's 'binrastructure' through creative new designs and better distribution of public litter bins. The strategy also recommends that offenders on community sentences, including those caught fly-tipping, help councils clear up litter and fly-tipped waste, and educating the next generation to understand the damage that littering causes our natural environment as well as the anti-social behaviour aspects.

No-one likes walking, cycling, driving through our communities and seeing them caked in rubbish. I genuinely don't understand why someone would drop litter but clearly people think they can. This strategy aims to punish offenders, clean up and educate children. It is what our local environment has been crying out for and I warmly welcome it.