Roadside litter is illegal, a significant and highly visible problem, and costly and dangerous to remove. It also has a negative impact on Scotland’s economy, tourism industry, environmental quality and local communities.

In November 2016, Keep Scotland Beautiful launched a campaign to tackle roadside litter.

The campaign aims to address this issue on all fronts, working with key partners to reduce roadside litter through awareness raising and behaviour change, and improve the way that it is managed.

Local authorities tackling litter on Scotland’s roadsides

Working with Angus and South Ayrshire councils, the campaign has so far focused on two major Scottish roads, the A90 and the A77, during spring 2017.

In both areas, the campaign included the display and circulation of campaign collateral, local radio advertising and the implementation of a communications plan including web, social media and local press.

In addition, more targeted behaviour change interventions and monitoring were tested.

Salient bins
Our previous research has shown that improving bin visibility can have a positive impact in reducing litter (see our #Neatstreets and Wrigley campaigns at www.keepscotlandbeautiful.org). In this instance, vinyl wraps were designed to be applied to wheeled bins in laybys.

These wraps were installed on 27 bins along the A90.

Removing bins
There is anecdotal evidence in Scotland to suggest that removing bins from laybys is effective in reducing flytipping, which can lead to littering. A 2017 study by Keep Wales Tidy appeared to confirm this with 42% of local authorities reporting that bins in laybys have the effect of attracting additional refuse and litter, thus increasing roadside litter issues.

We tested this in 11 laybys on the A90 and 19 on the A77.

At 10 of the A77 sites, the impact of additional signage asking people to take litter home in the absence of bins was also tested.
Monitoring

A monitoring schedule was implemented, consisting of a four-week baseline monitoring period prior to interventions going in, followed by another four weeks' post-intervention carried out by local council staff.

In Angus, staff conducted weekly litter counts on each site (number of litter items), and recorded the amount of litter collected from each bin (bin fill proportion). In South Ayrshire, a weekly litter grade was recorded for each site in addition to the amount of litter collected during weekly cleaning operations (number of black bags).

Campaign launch and presence

Angus – A90
The Angus A90 campaign launched on 6 March 2017 with the support of local political leaders and the council’s waste and recycling team.

The launch was also supported by the McDonald’s restaurant on the A90 in Forfar, who hosted the launch event and installed a campaign photo board and lamp-post wraps.

In addition to radio adverts and interventions, Angus Council increased the visibility of the campaign locally by adding the campaign message to bus timetable information. Further roll-out of campaign collateral is planned over summer 2017.

South Ayrshire – A77
The South Ayrshire A77 campaign launched on 24 March 2017 with the support of Mike Newall, Head of Neighbourhood Services at South Ayrshire Council and the Waste and Recycling Services team.

Campaign posters were displayed in all public council buildings and a total of 15 campaign signs were displayed at key laybys along the A77 and adjoining A-roads.

Next steps

The campaign collateral and deployment plans developed as part of these pilots will be packaged and made available to other local authorities over 2017. The aim is to secure local authority support and increase campaign visibility and activity across the country.