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Hammersmith & Fulham pilot campaign to change smokers' behaviour and bring cleaner streets to the Borough – first results positive

The first results from Hammersmith & Fulham Council's cigarette litter reduction campaign, launched 25 January 2010, show that the amount of cigarette butts has been reduced by 30% and that there's been a reduction in over 60% of the sites surveyed.

Charlie Hamshaw-Thomas, Principal of CSR Solutions said: 'Although these are still very early results it's good to see that levels of cigarette litter have been reduced. It's important now that we build on this and ensure there's continuing public education and messaging – that butts are litter and they must be disposed of responsibly.'

Hammersmith & Fulham Council are working on the pilot in partnership with corporate and social responsibility consultants **CSR Solutions** and **Keep Britain Tidy**. With the support of local retailers and businesses, the aim is to ensure widespread availability of ButtsOut personal ashtrays throughout the Borough, so that smokers can take responsibility for their own cigarette litter and make the streets cleaner for everyone.

As part of the campaign:

- H&F Council are working with local retailers and licensed premises to ensure widespread availability of personal ashtrays;
- campaign posters and phone-kiosk wrappings are being set up in high footfall areas, such as transport hubs, parks, busy streets, Council offices;
- dedicated Council public area plasma screens are showing Keep Britain Tidy's recent cigarette litter advert – see www.keepbritaintidy.org/News/bigcig.aspx
- pubs and clubs are being issued with campaign beer mats; and
- street cleaners' barrows are being specially laminated with campaign branding.

H&F Council really is leading the way in London with this pilot, and it is envisaged that other London Boroughs will follow this initiative subsequently. This is especially timely, as the capital seeks cleaner streets in preparation for the 2012 Olympic Games, when the world comes to London.



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Support for the pilot

Cllr Greg Smith, H&F Council's Cabinet Member with responsibility for Street Scene:



"We firmly believe that those who drop cigarette butts on the street should pay their fair share – we cannot allow the streets to be treated as a giant ashtray.

"There is no reason why smokers should not purchase a ButtsOut box. I would like to thank those retailers who are selling these personal ashtrays and hope others will also play their part in the initiative by stocking the product too."

Charlie Hamshaw-Thomas, Founder of CSR Solutions, which provides ButtsOut:



"We believe that everyone has a part to play in changing consumers' behaviour and bringing cleaner streets to Hammersmith & Fulham: the Council, Keep Britain Tidy, tobacco companies and retailers, local pubs, clubs and other local businesses all need to promote the responsible disposal of cigarette butts.

"The aim is that personal ashtrays are widely available where cigarettes are bought or where smokers light up which will enable smokers to assume personal responsibility. The central theme really is that together we can make a difference, and Hammersmith & Fulham really is leading the way with this pilot in demonstrating this."

Phil Barton, Chief Executive of Keep Britain Tidy:



"The sheer size and scale of the cigarette litter problem is of real concern. Clearly many smokers have yet to be convinced that their cigarette stubs are litter: once dropped they are very difficult to clean up, and they blight the majority of the streets and roads we all live in and use.

"Therefore we fully endorse initiatives such as these, which enable smokers to act more responsibly and ultimately reduce litter on our streets."

Greg Hands MP, Hammersmith & Fulham:



"Since the smoking ban of 2007, the amount of cigarette litter on Hammersmith & Fulham's streets has obviously increased. Encouraging smokers to be responsible for their cigarette butts is a great idea, and should ensure the bill for cleaning our streets goes down, benefiting everyone.

"I fully support this pilot, and it's great to see Hammersmith & Fulham leading the way with innovations like this".

Kit Malthouse GLA, member for West Central:



"As the London Assembly Member for West Central – which includes Hammersmith & Fulham – I'm delighted that this Borough is taking a lead in promoting personal ashtray use.

"If smokers use these whenever they are outside, they can drastically reduce the number of cigarette butts on the streets, making them a nicer and healthier place to be. I hope other boroughs will think about conducting similar campaigns."

Justine Greening MP, Shadow Minister for London:



"This pilot can help lead the way in improving our street environment in London. No one wants to see large amounts of cigarette butts outside pubs and clubs and on the streets.

"With the Olympics coming to London in just two years – and with the eyes of the world on us during the 2012 Games– we need to start thinking of ways to help improve the capital now, and the cleaner streets campaign is an important step forward."

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Notes to editors

1. Photographs of the ButtsOut personal ashtray product are available upon request.
2. For more information on ButtsOut and its availability in Hammersmith & Fulham, please see www.buttsout.biz/where_to_buy.php. ButtsOut is now available to all UK retailers.
3. Officers from the council, in partnership with the Police's Safer Neighbourhood Teams regularly challenge persistent litter-dropping offenders, and have the power issuing Fixed Penalty Notices of £75 for the misdemeanour under the Environmental Protection Act 1990. If litterbugs refuse to pay the fine they can even end up with a criminal record.
4. While the council urges smokers to buy a ButtsOut personal ashtray, it is continuing to proactively seek out persistent butt droppers and litter louts. Highly visible proactive 'beats' are inspecting every street in the Borough – at least once every ten working days – and key routes are checked daily, meaning there is an increased chance that litter bugs who do not get the message will be penalised.
5. Cigarette litter in the UK
 - approximately 21.5 billion butts are littered every year in the UK – if placed end to end these would cover 430,000 kilometres and circle the earth 10.75 times
 - over 122 tonnes are dropped daily
 - levels have doubled in England since the smoking ban introduced in July 2007
 - 98 per cent of town centres cite cigarette litter as a major issue
 - 42 per cent of smokers think it's acceptable to drop butts as litter
6. Cigarette butts harm the environment
 - it can take between 18 months and 500 years for a stub to decompose
 - cigarette filters are made of cellulose acetate, a form of plastic which does not quickly degrade and persists in the environment
 - cigarette butts are carried by storm water and dumped into our waterways, where chemicals such as cadmium and lead leach out, impacting water quality
 - cigarette butts have been found in the stomachs of birds, fish and other marine animals and wildlife

Contacts

Hammersmith & Fulham Council

- Cllr Greg Smith, (Hammersmith & Fulham Council, Cabinet Member for Crime & Street Scene), mob 07712 896628, email greg.smith@lbhf.gov.uk

CSR Solutions

- Charlie Hamshaw-Thomas (CSR Solutions Founder), tel 01225 731355, mob 07723 031358, email charles@csrsolutions.co.uk

Keep Britain Tidy

- Fiona Ashurst (KBT Press Office), tel 01942 612617, press office mobile (24-hrs) 0776 8880016, email fiona.ashurst@keepbritaintidy.org