



DRAFT Press Release

STRICTLY EMBARGOED UNTIL 0.01am Monday, 15th October 2018

Survey shows litter levels worsening in disadvantaged city areas

- *Solution is to create real communities through more mixed housing*
- *Spend on enforcement delivering 'pitiful' return to tax payer, says IBAL*

While Ireland's towns and city centres are clean, disadvantaged areas of our cities are suffering increasing levels of litter. This is the finding of the latest survey by business group Irish Business Against Litter (IBAL). Fermoy in Cork was the cleanest of the 40 towns and cities surveyed, but pockets of Galway, Dublin and Cork city were more heavily littered than in previous surveys. IBAL sees more mixed housing as the long-term solution to our urban litter problem.

An Taisce assessed litter levels over the summer months on behalf of IBAL. 77% of towns and cities were found to be clean. None was deemed a litter blackspot, but five were 'littered' or 'seriously littered' and scored worse than last year.

"We have seen a worsening of litter levels in economically disadvantaged areas, which dominate the lower placings of our rankings," says Conor Horgan of IBAL. "What is often lacking in these areas is a sense of 'pride in place', which in turn reflects an absence of real community. In the frenzy to address our housing shortage, we must be mindful of the need to build communities along with houses. Mixed housing is the long-term solution to our urban litter problem."

While Dublin City Centre was clean, registering one of its best ever results, the North Inner City and Ballymun both deteriorated and were 'heavily littered'. Cork City's Northside and Mahon also showed higher levels of litter, as did Ballybane in Galway, which was bottom of the rankings.

The An Taisce report for Ballybane cited "pathways riddled with heavy levels of food related litter", "huge swathes of all manner of litter, as well as discarded bags of rubbish" and dumping near St Brigids Church. There were several blackspots in Ballymun, which suffered from widespread dumping, according to the report.

By contrast, An Taisce complimented Fermoy, stating "It is rare to visit a town with an almost complete absence of litter, not just in the town centre but in residential and other outlying areas surveyed." The report for Dublin City Centre noted that the shopping streets in the capital this summer "presented very well, not just with regard to litter but paving, planting and street furniture."

Navan showed the greatest improvement of any town, rising 20 places in the rankings.

"Our surveys have consistently revealed a disparity in cleanliness between our city centres on the one hand, and neglected city areas on the other," says Horgan. "This disparity has

never been more acute than this year – our city centres are cleaner, while disadvantaged urban areas are more littered.”

The An Taisce reports highlight the prevalence of “long lie” litter in sites as evidence of neglect over a long periods. “In most cases the litter we encounter doesn’t appear overnight, but has been present over a long period,” continues Horgan. “It is frustrating to see our surveyors highlighting the same sites year-on-year with no evidence of clean up. It also bears out our contention that our litter problem is concentrated in areas that are being neglected by local authorities. A concerted effort to clean up these areas would contribute greatly to a cleaner environment.”

The most recent statistics available on litter enforcement show the cost of litter wardens is 10 times greater than the revenue collected through litter fines. While the cost of the service has risen over the past 6 years, the revenues collected have halved from €1.7m to €0.84m. “By any measure, this represents a pitiful return on taxpayers’ money and should be addressed. These resources could be put to better use elsewhere.” says Horgan.

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Editors note:

Set up in 1996, Irish Business Against Litter is an alliance of companies sharing a belief that continued economic prosperity - notably in the areas of tourism, food and direct foreign investment - is contingent on a clean, litter-free environment.

As part of the IBAL Anti-Litter League, An Taisce monitors towns independently and in accordance with international grading standards.

Visit www.ibal.ie for further information.

IBAL ANTI-LITTER LEAGUE – SUMMER RESULT 2018

1	Fermoy	Cleaner than European Norms
2	Nenagh	Cleaner than European Norms
3	Ennis	Cleaner than European Norms
4	Dublin Airport Environs	Cleaner than European Norms
5	Longford	Cleaner than European Norms
6	Killarney	Cleaner than European Norms
7	Naas	Cleaner than European Norms
8	Sligo	Cleaner than European Norms
9	Monaghan	Cleaner than European Norms
10	Waterford City Centre	Cleaner than European Norms
11	Mullingar	Cleaner than European Norms
12	Athlone	Cleaner than European Norms
13	Limerick City South	Cleaner than European Norms
14	Navan	Clean to European Norms
15	Drogheda	Clean to European Norms
16	Kilkenny	Clean to European Norms
17	Limerick City Centre	Clean to European Norms
18	Cavan	Clean to European Norms

19	Letterkenny	Clean to European Norms
20	Castlebar	Clean to European Norms
21	Waterford City - Ballybeg	Clean to European Norms
22	Dundalk	Clean to European Norms
23	Ballinasloe	Clean to European Norms
24	Tallaght	Clean to European Norms
25	Cork City Centre	Clean to European Norms
26	Roscommon	Clean to European Norms
27	Gorey	Clean to European Norms
28	Bray	Clean to European Norms
29	Portlaoise	Clean to European Norms
30	Dublin City Centre	Clean to European Norms
31	Dun Laoghaire	Clean to European Norms
32	Maynooth	Moderately littered
33	Galway City Centre	Moderately littered
34	Tralee	Moderately littered
35	Carlow	Moderately littered
36	Cork City - Mahon	Littered
37	Cork City Northside	Littered
38	Ballymun	Littered
39	Dublin North Inner City	Seriously littered
40	Galway City - Ballybane	Seriously littered