

Our ref: CEO 156-12 & 13284783
Your ref: CCID 11404 – M32

Andrew Edgington
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Dear Mr Edgington

Thank you for your email of 22 March to the Secretary of State for Transport, Justine Greening, making a complaint about the accumulation of litter on the M32 at Junction 1. I am replying as Chief Executive of the Highways Agency.

I recognise that keeping our roads free of litter is an important part of operating a safe strategic network. Roadside litter is unsightly, a threat to the environment and can compromise the safety of both our road users and workers. Items, including litter, falling from vehicles, particularly lorries, are always a potential hazard to other road users and I would encourage you to report sightings of these to the company of the vehicle concerned, if you are able to identify it, or the Police.

I am aware that you have been in correspondence with our managing agents Balfour Beatty Mott MacDonald (BBMM) since August and they have sent you the Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse published by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). The Code of Practice puts litter into categories A to D in order of severity; A is free of litter with D a severe litter problem. It also provides for litter to be removed within a set timescale wherever practicable. Our aim is to maintain the entire network at A or B.

Litter picking along a fast moving carriageway is a dangerous environment to work in and appropriate traffic management has to be in place to protect the workforce. It is not always possible or an efficient use of resources to clear litter immediately. I understand that as well as the daily litter picking by standby crews, BBMM also put in bi-monthly traffic management along sections of the M32 to enable various maintenance activities to be carried out including litter and debris collection.

It is estimated that we remove nearly a quarter of a million sacks of litter from our network every year. This costs approximately £40-50 per sack and puts road workers at risk. I realise that simply picking up litter is not a very effective long-term solution. You may be interested to know that we are currently running a publicity campaign, using the electronic message signs on our network, calling on road users to help us tackle

roadside litter. A similar campaign held in the North West and East Midlands last summer, reminding drivers to dispose of their litter responsibly, saw a decrease in the amount of litter collected. We are also planning to repeat and extend our "Bag it and Bin it" campaign during the build up to the Olympics games. Here we encourage road users to keep a bag for rubbish in their vehicles that can be safely disposed of in a bin at their final destination.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Graham Dalton', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Graham Dalton
Chief Executive