

**Subject:** A27 - The cleaning of Highways England's trunk roads  
**Date:** Wednesday, 29 April 2020 at 16:35:25 British Summer Time  
**From:** Peter Silverman - Clean Highways  
**To:** Bernadette Kelly - Permanent Secretary DfT  
**CC:** Neil Kerridge, Janet Prendiville  
**Category:** DfT, APTRs, A27

For the attention of Bernadette Kelly, Permanent Secretary at the DfT

Dear Ms Kelly,

I am writing about the persistently littered state of those trunk roads on the Highways England Network where each Local Authority has to clean its section even though these roads serve a national rather than a local purpose.

Please refer to:

[Your colleague's Andrew Appiah's letter of 29<sup>th</sup> April](#) to Neil Kerridge and Janet Prendiville of the A27 Clean Up Campaign.

My YouTube video [Highways England's Littered Trunk Roads](#).

Mr Appiah's letter was essentially about "improving communication and collaborative working..." between Highways England and the various local authorities who have to clean sections of the A27.

I want to point out that this has been on the agenda for some time as demonstrated here:

[Marcus Jones, Minister for Local Government April 2016](#) :

The government company Highways England (formerly the Highways Agency) is currently pursuing a policy of collaborative working with local authorities and is identifying best practice to roll out across the country. .... Highways England's Midlands region signed a partnership agreement with a number of local authorities in December 2015 which formalised a collaborative approach to working to clear litter. This is already delivering results from widespread sharing of equipment and resources.

[In their April 2017 Litter Strategy for England](#) the government wrote on page 57:

"As set out in its [2016-17 Delivery Plan](#), Highways England is to launch a Litter Collaboration Pack which will help formalise working relationships and facilitate better co-ordination of litter clearing operations.

[DEFRA Minister, Therese Coffey July 2018](#) :

"Highways England has also been working to improve collaboration between its contractors and local authorities, including by enabling local authority litter pickers to access roads for which they are responsible while Highways England has closed them for routine maintenance, which makes it easier to clean high-speed roads. I am sure Members will agree that is a sensible move".

[Highways England, October 2018](#)

".... we also recognise we need to do more to help facilitate better coordination of operations between Local Authorities and ourselves and a briefing note was produced to help partnership working. More recently we've produced a similar note to be issued directly to all Local Authorities with litter clearing responsibilities on trunk roads".

Sean Lawson of Rugby Borough Council said in the video in reference to dealing with the Highways

Agency “We find it a nightmare .... They produce a wonderful glossy strategy document that says how they will work with local authorities, but we get very little engagement”.

Elon Musk has said that the best way to optimise the design of a component is to do away with it altogether.

The best way to solve the co-ordination issue between Highways England and local authorities is to eliminate the need for it in the first place. **The responsibility for cleaning these roads should be transferred to Highways England.**

The same contractor can then pick up the litter before he cuts the verge and 196 councils can awake from the “nightmare” of having to collaborate with Highways England.

This was recommended to the Highways Agency in 2009 by the consultants WS Atkins and to the government by the [Communities & Local Government Select Committee in 2015](#).

I think it’s now time for you to advise your Secretary of State to adopt this approach.

Kind regards

Peter Silverman

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