

East Lothian Council

EIR Ref: 2018/535595

I would really appreciate it if you could please provide me with information on your beach litter management strategies. Specifically, I am looking for information on:

- a) When litter is removed from your beaches; and how many times a day, a week or a month litter is removed from beaches?*
- b) Does this strategy change between on and off-peak seasons? Or is the same strategy applied all year round?*
- c) Is the same strategy applied to all beaches? Or is more effort applied to specific beaches; for example, those with awards?*

If you are able to provide any other information that you think would be helpful, I would be grateful.

The Council has responsibility for the management of a number of urban and rural stretches of coastline and carries with that a responsibility to manage litter on those sites. We do not currently have a formal documented litter strategy for beaches but, in line with the recent review of COPLAR (Code of Practice for Litter and Refuse), are developing a Litter Action Plan that, while focussed on prevention, will also document our strategy towards reducing and managing litter in rural and coastal areas. Unfortunately that plan is only in draft at present and will not be available for publication until such time as it is adopted by the Council.

For now we operate on a proactive litter removal programme during the months of May to September as required by the Environmental Protection Act. Each area of coastline receives something between 3 times per week visits down to fortnightly visits according to historically established need. Those programmed visits are supplemented from time to time in response to high visitor numbers or an influx of tidal debris. In all cases activity centres around removal of non-natural materials and dead marine fauna. The Council does not undertake any mechanical cleaning of beaches to remove natural flotsam except in cases where a large deposit of kelp exists and is unlikely to be removed by subsequent tides. However this is particularly challenging to resource and is heavily dependent on there being a suitable (non-landfill) option to forward the material.

Beach cleaning is also supplemented by regular volunteer visits across a number of sites and these are particularly valuable in cleaning sites up for the summer season and monitoring and recording the types of refuse that are accumulating on our coastline.

In summary and in direct response to the questions posed:

- Formal litter removal operations occur between May and September.
- According to historical need, beaches receive either 3 visits per week down to fortnightly visits.
- Even within urban areas our litter picking activities focus more on the heavily used sections and promote conservation of wildlife habitat towards the extremities of town beaches.
- No formal proactive litter picking occurs during the winter but we will react where a heavy deposit of litter is experienced and when resources or volunteers are available.
- No allowance is taken in the frequency for award beaches, frequency is based on historical need.