



Press Release -
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Litter survey reveals wide variations between Dublin suburbs

"Tourism, foreign investment and national self-esteem hugely dependent on a clean Capital"

A new litter survey has found Clontarf, Dalkey/Killiney and Howth to be the cleanest areas in Dublin, with Ballymun, Mulhuddart and Clondalkin the dirtiest. The study, by lobby group Irish Business Against Litter, revealed litter levels in the Capital to be 12% higher than for the country as a whole. IBAL hope the survey, which will be repeated over the course of the year, will force councils into tackling the many litter blackspots throughout the city.

"The contrast between Dublin's suburbs is clear from these results," commented Dr Tom Cavanagh. "We want to spur local authorities into doing more for the heavily littered suburbs, especially those regarded as disadvantaged. A cleaner environment would instil a sense of pride in these areas, which in turn will foster more community response and increased business activity. And as several towns have shown, a cleaner environment can be realised quickly and at relatively low cost."

The survey, which was carried out by An Taisce in accordance with international monitoring standards, revealed the average cleanliness levels for Dublin to be 67 out of 100, or 12% behind the national average. Worryingly, over 1/3 of the areas surveyed were 'litter blackspots' or 'seriously littered'. They include Dublin City Centre, Tallaght and Malahide. "We can't speak of Ireland being clean if our Capital City is dirty," explains Dr Cavanagh. "The nation's tourism, foreign investment and general self-esteem is hugely dependent on it." Dublin is a gateway for up to 70% of visitors to this country.

5 of the 20 Dublin areas were deemed 'litter-free', among them Swords, which had ranked as a 'litter blackspot' in past surveys. Finglas, also a litter blackspot last year, recovered strongly to a mid-ranking 'moderately littered' position. "Both of these towns have been the butt of criticism for their litter levels in recent times. They have responded with a concerted anti-litter effort, which has borne immediate fruit. They are a model for other areas to follow and an illustration of the impact IBAL wants from the League."

An analysis of the composition of litter in Dublin shows fast food wrappers, plastic bags and ATM receipts to be a bigger problem in the Capital than elsewhere in the country.

The study coincided with the launch of the 2006 Anti-Litter League, which is run with financial assistance from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. This year 53 areas nationwide will be surveyed for litter over the course of the year, with Leixlip and Greystones included for the first time. Trim is the 8/1 favourite with bookmaker Paddy Power to take the title of 'cleanest town' this year, ahead of Cavan, Fermoy and Killarney (10/1). Last year's winner, Carlow, is at 12/1, with Dublin City Centre a 100/1 outsider. Litter levels have improved by almost 30% since the League started in 2002. IBAL is hoping that the Dublin survey produces a similarly positive effect.

"IBAL recognises that Dublin's local authorities face a tougher task than their counterparts outside the Capital," concludes Dr Cavanagh. "Creating a clean environment in relatively loosely-knit communities, with large inflows of traffic, is challenging. Yet the fact is, many, including Swords and Finglas, are showing it is achievable."

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Editors note:

Set up in 1996, Irish Business Against Litter is an alliance encompassing more than 30 member companies, employing in excess of 70,000 staff. Members share 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, all towns of population 6,000 and over are monitored independently by An Taisce in accordance with international grading standards.

IBAL Dublin litter survey – baseline results

Ranking	Town / City	Description
1	Clontarf	'Litter Free Status'
2	Dalkey/Killiney	'Litter Free Status'
3	Howth	'Litter Free Status'
4	Leopardstown/Sandyford	'Litter Free Status'
5	Swords	'Litter Free Status'
6	Blackrock	Moderately Littered
7	Dun Laoghaire	Moderately Littered
8	Rathfarnham	Moderately Littered
9	Donnybrook	Moderately Littered
10	Ballyfermot	Moderately Littered
11	Blanchardstown	Moderately Littered
12	Finglas	Moderately Littered
13	Drumcondra	Serious Litter Problem
14	Lucan	Serious Litter Problem
15	Malahide	Serious Litter Problem
16	Tallaght	Serious Litter Problem
17	City Centre	Litter Blackspot
18	Clondalkin	Litter Blackspot
19	Mulhuddart	Litter Blackspot
20	Ballymun	Litter Blackspot