

# News Release



8 June 2007

## **LEEDS' STREETS ARE NOT AN ASHTRAY**

With less than a month to go until all workplaces around the city go smoke-free Leeds City Council is urging smokers and business to do their bit to help prevent cigarette litter from taking over the city's streets.

When the new smoke-free legislation comes into force on 1 July more smokers will be taking their habit outdoors, which is likely to cause an influx of cigarette litter being dropped on the city's streets. To help combat this, Leeds City Council is giving away 20,000 portable ashtrays, called 'Stubbis', which smokers can use to put out their cigarettes and take with them to dispose of later.

**Councillor Steve Smith, executive member responsible for environmental enforcement said:**

"Cigarette litter is unsightly and difficult to clean up, so we are calling on all smokers to do their bit to help prevent our city's streets from becoming one big ashtray. Across the city smokers can use the litter bins fitted with stub-out panels to dispose of their butts. Alternatively pocket ashtrays like the ones we are giving away as part of this campaign, are a safe and clean way to transport cigarette butts when there are no suitable facilities nearby.

"A large proportion of the 16,000 fixed penalty notices for littering which Leeds City Council handed out last year were from cigarette litter, so we also want to remind people that if they drop any kind of litter they could receive a hefty £75 fixed penalty notice or more if it goes to court."

Portable, pocket-sized ash-trays are a safe, clean way to dispose of cigarette butts. Leeds City Council is giving away 20,000 'Stubbis' at all of the council's central buildings from 11

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**For more news and information from Leeds City Council visit [www.leeds.gov.uk](http://www.leeds.gov.uk)**



June – Civic Hall, Merrion House, Great George Street One Stop Centre, the Leonardo Building on Rossington Street and libraries across the city . They are being given away on a first come first serve basis, but alternative portable ash trays can be purchased from Tesco Stores nationwide or smokers might try using suitable containers they have at home to store their stubs in.

Smokers will be further reminded of their responsibilities through an advertising campaign being run by Keep Britain Tidy. Posters depicting a dropped cigarette butt with a camouflage design with the slogan *“however you disguise it, it’s still litter”* and a cigarette end sporting a fishnet stocking with the message *“however you tart it up, it’s still litter”* can be seen in bus shelters and on bill boards across Leeds. Leeds is one of only twelve councils across the country to be taking part in this campaign.

In addition to this Leeds City Council has also been working with shops, pubs, clubs restaurants and other businesses around the city to raise awareness of the anticipated problem and let them know how they can help.

**Councillor Smith added:**

“We also urge businesses to take responsibility too by providing a cigarette bin for their customers. Any premises that will be affected by the new ban needs to start making provisions for their employees and customers to dispose of their cigarette ends.”

Leeds City Council is also doing its bit to make sure its own staff and customers are aware of the implications of the new legislation by ensuring that all council buildings are displaying posters and leaflets, and have litter bins outside suitable for smoke related litter.

**Notes to editors**

**Keep Britain Tidy is the anti-litter campaign run by independent charity ENCAMS.**

Three-quarters of English streets are scattered with smoking related litter according to a recent survey by Keep Britain Tidy and the problem is set to get worse. An annual survey of England (LEQSE) monitored 12,000 sites and found over 79% of them strewn with cigarette butts and packets.

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Cigarette filters are composed of cellulose acetate, a plastic that can take anywhere between 18 months and 500 years to break down and be absorbed back into the environment. Deposition can also lead to toxins leaking into watercourses which pose a serious threat to our wildlife.

#### **Nationwide fact file**

- An estimated 122 tonnes of cigarette ends, matchsticks and other bits of smoking litter are dropped every day
- It can take between 18 months and 500 years for a stub to decompose
- 40% of litter plaguing our streets is smoking related
- Litterers of fag ends have, in the past, argued that they are not actually litter
- The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005, specifically listed littered cigarettes, cigars and smoking products as being litter
- Town and city centres suffer most from cigarette ends, second is local shopping and business areas (86%)
- In 2005, 47% of smokers who work said that there was an ashtray or cigarette bin provided in the smoking area
- 61% of people in the Republic of Ireland believe that a ban on smoking in pubs has led to a rise in cigarette rubbish (source: Stubbi)
- It is an offence to drop litter on public or private land under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (2005)

#### **ENDS**

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