



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT

Title: Update on action taken to improve local environmental quality across Wales

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By: Jane Davidson , Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing

As Members are aware, a commitment was made in One Wales to establish an initiative to support local authorities and voluntary action to improve the quality of their local environment. Tidy Towns was launched in April 2008 as a direct result of that commitment. The aim of Tidy Towns is to empower the people of Wales to take responsibility for the quality of their own local environment so they can contribute towards a clean, safe and tidy Wales.

In the three years since Tidy Towns was established £12 million of funding has been provided to Keep Wales Tidy and local authorities to deliver projects and initiatives to actively improve the local environmental quality of communities throughout Wales. I am pleased that Tidy Towns has been shown through independent evaluation to be making a real difference to these communities.

The evaluation report which is available on the Welsh Assembly Government website highlights not only the improvements made to the local environment, but wider benefits for those involved. These include boosting the sense of community pride and identity; raised awareness of issues relating to local environmental quality; and most importantly, behavioural change.

As of the end of February 2011, the provision of funding to Keep Wales Tidy to undertake the community engagement aspects of Tidy Towns has enabled them to work with 158,722 volunteers who have dedicated 453,149 hours of their time and resources to help make Wales a cleaner nation. In addition 14,975 clean ups have been undertaken in conjunction with Keep Wales Tidy

and Keep Wales Tidy have assisted groups in adopting 880 areas across Wales including parks, rivers, beaches and urban areas.

I am especially delighted to announce that between April 2009 and the end of February 2011, Keep Wales Tidy has completed 1,054 allotment projects. These projects have included the creation of brand new allotments, the transformation of neglected allotment areas, improving accessibility and planting across all parts of Wales. As Minister for the Environment, Sustainability and Housing, I have actively campaigned for the provision of allotments across Wales for personal and community use and I find this figure extremely encouraging.

I am pleased that improving local environmental quality remains high on the Welsh Assembly Government's agenda with the provision of over £10 million over the next three years to secure the future of Tidy Towns. Evidence suggests that the investment so far has had a significant impact on the quality of local environments across Wales. Independent monitoring of the cleanliness of streets, carried out by Keep Wales Tidy, demonstrates that since 2007-08 the average Cleanliness Index figure has risen year on year. This is reflected in the Citizens View Report, published on 15 March 2011, which shows that in 2009-10 78% of those surveyed were satisfied with their street cleaning services compared with 68% in 2007-08. Combined, these figures show that the streets of Wales are becoming cleaner and I am positive that Tidy Towns has played a significant role in these improvements.

I am sure that Tidy Towns will continue to transform the local environment and change people's behaviour across Wales as a whole.