

Cllr Dr Robert Clegg
**Cabinet Member for Environmental
Services, Climate Action and Nature
Recovery**
Abbey House, Abbey Close, Abingdon,
OXON, OX14 3JE

Our reference: Litter Collection on
Major 'A' Roads

Rt Hon Heidi Alexander MP
Secretary of State for Transport

heidi.alexander.mp@parliament.uk

9th June 2026

Dear Heidi,

At a recent Full Council meeting, I was made aware that residents living near the A34 in Oxfordshire, which is in our district council area, frequently raise concerns about the amount of litter which accumulates along the dual carriageway and ask for the council's support in addressing this issue.

Litter not only looks untidy but can also have a negative impact on people's mental health, wildlife, and the local economy.

National Highways are responsible for clearing litter on England's motorways. However, litter picking along the A34 (and other National Highways owned major A roads) is the responsibility of the district councils like ours, through which the road passes.

District councils must be granted access to these major A roads by National Highways in order to collect litter. Permission is only given when the A34 is closed for maintenance works, as it is not safe for council staff or our waste contractor's staff to work on the carriageway while it is open to traffic.

Although Vale of White Horse District Council and our contractors work hard to coordinate litter clearance on the A34, this is time consuming, costly and depends on multiple organisations coordinating staff availability during road closures, which often occur overnight and at short notice. Plans for maintenance can also change at short notice, meaning that not every opportunity to conduct litter picking can be seized.

This coordination must be being repeated in every council area through which each National Highways major A road passes through, and other principal litter authorities along the A34 will therefore face a similar challenge, which is far from efficient. If National Highways were responsible for this element of cleansing, then they could co-ordinate much more efficiently and effectively, which would likely achieve better results at lower cost to the taxpayer than at current.

I therefore write to request for a change to the 1990 Environmental Protections Act, so the responsibility for litter clearance on all National Highways major assets where it limits access to street cleansing crews is transferred from local councils to National Highways.

Yours sincerely

R. Clegg

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Cabinet Member for Environmental Services, Climate Action and Nature Recovery
Vale of White Horse District Council