**McDonalds, KFC, Domino's Pizza help launch anti-litter drive in Chelmsford**

By[Essex Chronicle](http://www.essexchronicle.co.uk/people/Essex%20Chronicle/profile.html)|  Posted: June 05, 2014

By Peter Walker

FAST food giants and politicians have teamed up to launch the first countywide anti-littering crackdown.

McDonald's, KFC, Domino's Pizza and all 14 local Essex councils unveiled their Clean Essex campaign at Hylands House, Chelmsford, on Monday (June 2).

The project will roll out banners for bus stops and bins, and distribute badges and stickers, all adorning colourful messages including: "Littering. It's not cool."

It's estimated street cleansing costs taxpayers in Essex £17 million a year, an offence which warrants a £75 fine and, for the most stubborn litterer, a potential day in court.

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Braintree District Council cabinet member Wendy Schmitt said: "People are just not getting the message.

"They're paying for that person to pick it up. It's something that has happened to the psyche that's convinced people it's someone else's problem and it's not like this in other countries.

"But we can educate this county by informing them it's absolutely unacceptable to drop litter.

"I'm so passionate about this because I have lived on the continent and I know it's just Britain. Why are we so dirty? There is no excuse."

The latest project has been launched on the back of Braintree council's success with its Green Heart of Essex campaign championed from 2010, including its controversial ant-littering posters with the slogan "Don't Be A Tosser".

Since being rolled out, the council announced last year that fast food littering had dropped by 55 per cent and cigarette litter 48 per cent. The district's cleanliness satisfaction rating has also risen from 64 per cent to 88 per cent.

The new poster features a topless "cool character" ditching a bottle of water.

Cllr Schmitt believes the project, which has already cost at least £40,000 in advertising space but is part-funded by the restaurants, can be rolled out if other councils adopt Braintree's "political will".

The councillor, who says she got a driver fined after he dropped a cigarette butt in a Braintree bypass traffic jam last month, said: "I would be exceedingly disappointed if it didn't work.

"It is down to the will of the councils and the public."

McDonald's franchisee Cherry Lewis-Taylor said her four restaurants in Maldon, South Woodham Ferrers, Stansted and Braintree, will reward children who bin their litter with stickers.

Her stores already organise litter picks in the community too.

"It's our social responsibility," she said. "It's vital that everyone takes responsibility for tackling litter.

"From local businesses like mine to communities and the residents of Essex, we should all make a commitment to help protect our local environment and keep it clean."

The campaign started on Monday and will be reviewed after two months.

"I think this campaign could save us a lot of money," said Braintree District Council environmental protection enforcement officer Stuart Thompson.

"What we have already noticed in Braintree is that the amount of fixed penalty notices are going down."

Phil Barton, chief executive of Keep Britain Tidy, added: "The Clean Essex partnership, where local authorities, businesses and communities are working together to tackle the problem of litter, is setting a fantastic example."

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