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## **REDUCING STREET CLUTTER**

We are writing to you to highlight our commitment to reducing street clutter, and to ask you, as a local leader, to make the same commitment. Streets and roads make up around three quarters of all public space. If they do not function properly or are unattractive they impact on people's quality of life. Unnecessary street furniture and signs not only make streets unattractive places, they increase costs for local authorities. Cluttered streets can also be confusing for drivers and pedestrians, affecting safety.

Street furniture, including traffic signs and railings, is often over-provided in the mistaken belief that it is a legal necessity. Whilst certain signs are required by law, the message throughout Government advice is that for signs to be most effective they should be kept to a minimum. Our technical advice assists authorities in the discharge of their duties. It needs to be interpreted to suit the local area. This will continue to be the message in the sequel to the Manual for Streets, due for publication in September.

Reducing street clutter is also a priority for our ongoing review of traffic signs policy and we expect to provide guidance for auditing and removing unnecessary traffic signs. This guidance will be available by the end of the year and will stress the benefits of local community involvement.

However, it is not just traffic related street furniture which adds to clutter. For example, advertising equipment and telephone boxes also have a significant impact on the street environment, if not placed carefully. Where authorities adopt clear design principles for their streets it is easier to persuade local partners, communities and businesses to play their part in making streets better places.

We know that clutter can build up over time affecting the character of your streets. Organisations like Living Streets and Civic Voice, through their 'Street Pride' campaign, provide the tools for communities to undertake street audits to help identify hotspots. We are sure this information will help you to work with your communities. This should not only help you to reduce your costs but is an excellent example of the Big Society in action.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eric Pickles".

**RT HON ERIC PICKLES MP**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Philip Hammond".

**RT HON PHILIP HAMMOND MP**