

**28<sup>th</sup> March 2013,**

**Tackling Environmental Crime**

- a. Litter Action Plan and actions taken to tackle Environmental Crime.
- b. Annual Report into actions taken to combat Environmental Crime.

**Ward(s)** All

**Portfolios:** Cllr Zahid Ali Communities and Partnerships  
Cllr Tom Ansell Transport and Environment

**Executive Summary:**

Regulatory Services and Streetpride are aware of the significance elected members give to keeping Walsall clean and also to making those responsible for polluting the Borough accountable for their actions through enforcement.

Appendix A is the Litter Action Plan that was taken to Cabinet on the 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2013 in response to the recommendations of the Community Services and Environment Scrutiny and Performance Panel on this subject. It has been updated with the actions taken to date.

Appendix B is an annual report on the work of the enforcement teams within Environmental Health and aims to show the positive steps that have been taken in the respect of enforcement. It also highlights how both service areas have worked together and with partners to tackle these priority issues over the last year but also what more we will strive to achieve going forward.

Environmental crimes such as litter, fly tipping and dog fouling are a high priority for Walsall residents as they not only affect their health but can lead to a downward spiral of conditions in the local environment often referred to as 'broken window syndrome' that can lead to escalating anti social behaviour and crime.

As well as the social and health implications of these crimes cleansing services in Walsall which are undertaken by Streetpride cost in the region of £1.75m a year. Any reduction in the amount of environmental crime can only help in terms of the cosy to the Authority for continually cleansing the boroughs streets.

Regulatory staff cannot rely on any one method to resolve the many hundreds of requests they receive and have to choose from a range of negotiation and enforcement skills to ensure that these cases are dealt with appropriately. In the same way Streetpride are continually developing their practices and techniques to ensure the best possible value for money in terms of the cost of cleansing operations.

**Reason for scrutiny:**

The Environmental Scrutiny and Performance Panel established a working group to consider littering during the 2011/12. This was subsequently re-established by the Community Services and Environmental Scrutiny Performance Panel in 2012/13 to allow it to complete its investigations.

The Panel considered littering an important issue impacting upon the daily lives of residents and requiring considerable resource to ensure that streets, parks and town centres were well maintained and clean.

Close liaison and cooperation between Streetpride and Regulatory Services particularly guided by the priorities and hot spots identified by Area Partnerships is fundamental to improving the environmental health of the Borough.

**Recommendations:**

**Subject to any comments members may wish to make that the report be noted.**

**Environmental impact:**

Litter, waste, dog fouling all blight and pollute the local environment damaging natural resources but also making the built environment less attractive. Any reduction in the amount of litter and other such waste can only lead to an overall improvement in the environment.

**Performance management:**

The report emphasises the commitment made to tackling environmental crimes and the level of resource and management being implemented to ensure it remains a high priority.

**Equality Implications:**

Environmental crime is an issue that affects all areas of the Borough and all sectors of society.

**Consultation:**

None

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**Appendix A**  
**Annual Litter Action Plan**  
**(Response and Action Plan to the Community Services and Environment Scrutiny and Performance Panel Report on the Littering Working Group)**

Recommendations	Who	Comments	Timeframe
<p>1. That a report be submitted to a meeting of the Community Services and Environment Services Scrutiny and Performance Panel detailing:-</p> <p><b>a)</b> The feasibility of designating litter control areas. This should include evidence gathered from authorities who have used this power, the effectiveness and costs involved in doing so and the possibility of using one of the District Town Centres as a pilot with the possibility of extending it to the entire Borough;</p> <p><b>b)</b> The feasibility of introducing Street Control Notices.</p>	<p>Regulatory Services</p>	<p>It is not feasible to designate a new litter control area because the enabling legislation has now been repealed</p> <p>Environmental Health will adopt and assess the effectiveness of a procedure January 2013 to control street litter over a 3 month period. The trial will employ DEFRA's voluntary Code of Practice and the issue of Street Litter Control Notices where enforcement criteria are met.</p> <p><i>Issues of street litter have been resolved which have involved the threatened use of Street Litter Control Notices. However, the trial has not yet encountered scenarios where the full criteria</i></p>	<p>Not applicable</p> <p>January to March 2013</p>

		<i>have been met to allow the service of Street Litter Control Notices. It is proposed to extend the trial for a further 3 months to enable an assessment of their effectiveness.</i>	
<b>2.</b> Officers investigate the feasibility of training all Environmental Operatives with powers to issue Fixed Penalty Notices;	Street Pride	Street Pride are currently going through a re structure to integrate Green Space activities into the service area, this is scheduled to be complete by April 2013 It is considered that it would not be appropriate to train all Environmental Operatives in enforcement activities but the re structure will create a reduced number of Team Leaders who have greater responsibility which will include some Enforcement Powers Appropriate training will be sourced when the re structure is complete and delivered in 2013/14  <i>Will commence in April 2013</i>	April 2013 to March 2014
<b>3.</b> All Park Rangers undertake training to enable them to issue Fixed Penalty Notices;	Street Pride	The proposed Street Pride re structure will reduce the number of Park Rangers from 23 to 10 from April 2013. Currently all 23 Rangers are trained in enforcement activities but only 10 actively pursue enforcement actions The training of Environmental Team Leaders as detailed above will supplement the existing Park Rangers trained in Enforcement Action  <i>Will commence in April 2013</i>	April 2013 to March 2014
<b>4.</b> Further high visibility patrols be undertaken to deter people from dropping litter;	Regulatory Services  Street Pride	Enforcement Officers in Environmental Health continue programmed monthly litter patrols across the borough in 2012/13 and 2013/14. Patrols will also be targeted at identified hot spots. Measures will be implemented to improve intelligence about litter including the use of a text messaging reporting service and the promotion of the reporting of litter hot spots by Street Champions.  <i>A programme of targeted monthly litter patrols is on-going and will continue.</i>	At monthly intervals during January 2013 to March 2014

		<p><i>A text messaging service to report incidents of littering has been introduced and is advertised on the Council's web site.. Incidents can be reported via a Text. Start the message with the words 'Walsall litter' followed by the message and sent to 60003.</i></p> <p>The proposed Street Pride re structure will put more people on more parks on a continuous basis Monday to Friday A reduced resource over the weekends will maintain some visual presence.</p> <p><i>The re structure is on schedule to be completed in April 2013</i></p>	
<p>5. Officers explore the crossover between the anti-social behaviour unit and enforcement in general to improve targeting and cross departmental working;</p>	<p>John Beavon and John Leech</p>	<p><b>It is unclear from the original Report to Cabinet what this recommendation relates to.</b></p> <p><i>Officers from Community Safety and Environmental Health are preparing a report for the Safer Walsall Partnership Board in June 2013. The report examines more effective litter enforcement by increasing capacity to serve Fixed Penalty through a multi-agency approach.</i></p>	<p>Further action not yet determined.</p>
<p>6. The costs of procuring headcams for all officers with appropriate training and authority to issue Fixed Penalty Notices be investigated as this would provide evidence of offences and encourage the public to comply with providing details in the knowledge that they were being filmed.</p>	<p>Regulatory Services</p>	<p>The cost of procuring head and body cams for 16 Officers authorised to issue Fixed Penalty Notices has been investigated. Procurement costs are estimated to be £2366 for head cams and £2982 for body cams. The investigation identified practical difficulties in the use of head cams.</p> <p><i>A company that supplies security cameras has demonstrated the use of different body cameras to Enforcement Officers. A free trial of a camera has been arranged with this supplier to enable the use of cameras to be evaluated during litter patrols.</i></p>	
<p>7. The feasibility of introducing a quick payment reduction for Fixed Penalty Notices be investigated.</p>	<p>Regulatory Services  Street Pride</p>	<p>It has been established that it is legally feasible to introduce early payment reduction scheme for litter Fixed Penalties issued by Environmental Health. However, Green Spaces has set its litter Fixed Penalty at the legal minimum of £50 making it unfeasible</p>	<p>Review of level of Fixed Penalties to be undertaken in</p>

		<p>for it to introduce a reduction scheme</p> <p>Fixed penalties have not been set at the same level by Green Spaces and Environmental Health and should be aligned to secure consistency.</p> <p><i>This matter has been deferred until Restructure in Street Pride has been completed. Will commence in April 2013.</i></p>	<p>December 2012 and January 2013</p>
<p><b>8.</b> The following be explored further to start a campaign with a small budget including:-</p> <p>a) Making online posters available for residents to print and display, as seen at Sandwell Council.</p> <p>b) Using Youth Offenders or Community Payback to undertake promotional activities about preventing litter;</p> <p>c) Rewarding and/or recognising those who picked up other people's litter.</p>	<p>Regulatory Services</p>	<p>Environmental Health has developed posters relating to the deposition of litter, food waste and pigeons. It is proposed to upgrade these posters and make them available online for residents to print in January to March 2013. The possibility of linking these posters to educational and enforcement activities will also be explored concurrently.</p> <p><i>New Litter Web Page has been created which include the facility for residents to view and print posters for display. The site can be accessed via the following link:</i></p> <p><a href="http://cms.walsall.gov.uk/index/environment/envirocrime/litter.htm">http://cms.walsall.gov.uk/index/environment/envirocrime/litter.htm</a></p> <p>The feasibility of using Youth Offenders or Community Payback to undertake promotional activities about preventing litter will be explored.</p> <p><i>At this stage it has not been possible to determine the feasibility of using Youth Offenders or Community Payback for the above. This matter will be considered from April 2013 in conjunction with ongoing activities.</i></p>	<p>Ongoing actions during from January 2013 to March 2013</p> <p>To be explored in December 2012 and January 2013.</p> <p>Ongoing actions from January 2013 coinciding with</p>

		<p>From January 2013 it is proposed to develop further ways of acknowledging/rewarding those who demonstrate good practice in relation to litter including handing out stickers to children. This can also include press releases and Council web site articles which coincide with litter patrols and Environmental Awareness events to be organised by cross service team.</p> <p><i>During Greenrock Estate Clean Up in February 2013 Enforcement Officers, Walsall Housing Group, Street Pride, the Police, Reassurance Officers and the Litter Hit Squad worked in partnership. Waste was cleared from the estate, pavements and roads were swept and the contents of 11 'contaminated' waste bins disposed of. Literature was distributed to residents who were advised about waste collection, fly tipping and littering. Further skip days have been organised for 25<sup>th</sup> March 2013 and 25<sup>th</sup> April 2013 in Bloxwich and Birchills.</i></p>	litter patrols and Environmental Awareness events.
<p><b>9.</b> Consideration be given to attaching additional ash trays/chewing gum bins to lamp posts, particularly within the town and district centres, to encourage people to dispose of cigarette ends properly;</p>	Regulatory Services	<p>A review of potential and available "Ash Trays" and "Cigarette Trays" will take place including costs and a review of potential locations will be carried out Nov 2012 – March 2013 Installation will be carried out April to June subject to funds being available</p> <p><i>This action has incorrectly been allocated to Regulatory Services. Street Pride will commence this action in April 2013</i></p>	November 2012 to June 2013
<p><b>10.</b> The Council approach local businesses such as pubs which have exits/entrances onto the public footway to encourage them to erect wall ash trays to help prevent the accumulation of cigarette ends around entrance/exits to these premises;</p>	John Beavon	<p>EHOs approach local businesses and encourage them to erect wall ash trays when investigating complaints about customers dropping cigarette ends outside exits/entrances and during routine Food Safety and Health and Safety inspections.</p> <p><i>In progress.</i></p> <p>Town Centre Management is currently seeking to progress a</p>	Ongoing actions from November 2012 coinciding with inspection programmes.



		<p>“Front Door Policy Scheme” in Walsall town centre which promotes businesses keeping their frontages tidy and which could be used to encourage businesses to erect wall ash trays</p> <p><i>New Conservation Officer to be approached to assess appropriate cigarette bins for properties in a conservation area. Bulk purchase of cigarette bins between businesses from the NTE to be considered when bin type agreed.</i></p> <p><i>Buy-in from businesses to implement ‘Front Door Policy’ to be discussed at next Town Centre meeting in April.</i></p>	
<p><b>11.</b> The feasibility of purchasing ‘Butt Pouches’ for smokers to store their cigarette butts in until they are able to dispose of them be explored and if possible a publicity event be held in the town centre to raise awareness of the impacts and costs of littering and distribute free butt pouches.</p>	<p>Regulatory Services</p> <p>Street Pride</p>	<p>On 1<sup>st</sup> November 2012 a cross service team held an Environmental Education Day in Walsall town centre. During the event 657 people were advised about litter and 150 “Butt Pouches” for smokers were issued. It is proposed to hold similar events from January 2013 and beyond..</p> <p><i>Cigarette Butt Pouches have been distributed during litter patrols in 2013 in conjunction with educational activities.</i></p>	<p>3 litter events annually commencing in January 2013</p>