

WIRRAL COUNCIL

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

17 NOVEMBER 2010

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF LAW, HR AND ASSET MANAGEMENT

DOG FOULING AND LITTER ENFORCEMENT TEAM

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Members in respect of the work of the Dog Fouling managed by Wirral Community Patrol Service.

1.0 Background

1.1 Following the successful "Give a Dog a Bad Name " dog fouling campaign during the summer of 2009, the budget resolution for 2010/2011 provided a further £40,000, "to be used to build on the current successful scheme with funding being used in conjunction with Jobs For The Future funding in order to employ two or three trainees who will be trained in patrolling and enforcement and add to the strength of the team giving greater coverage over longer periods of time than is possible at the moment."

In pursuance of the resolution a team comprising 6 Dog Fouling Enforcement Officers and 1 administration assistant has been appointed using Future Jobs Fund trainees. The Future Jobs Fund is a fund to support the creation of training opportunities for long term unemployed young people and others who face significant disadvantage in the labour market.

Six Officers are being employed in each of two phases, extending the life of the programme from July 2010 to September 2011. Their hours of duty are between, 07.00- 20.00, Monday to Friday.

All of the Dog Fouling enforcement team have so far received training in:
Dog fouling enforcement
Litter enforcement
Managing conflict and aggression
Customer care
Basic health and safety

The Dog Fouling enforcement officers use cycles and public transport to travel around the borough. Complimentary passes have been generously given to the team by Merseyrail and Arriva Buses and a quad bike is available to patrol parks and beaches.

Whilst their primary purpose is prevention and enforcement of dog fouling, the team also report other issues in relation to the streetscene. Between the end of June 2010 and the end of September 2010 the dog fouling enforcement officers have identified whilst on patrol, 5934 incidents requiring action e.g. Safety issues, exposed wires on lampposts, uneven pavements, fly tipping, graffiti, criminal damage. Instances of graffiti and littering are also referred to Technical Services Department for action. Since the team was created they have reported over 382 instances of graffiti of which 119 were offensive and therefore removed the same day they are reported

The Dog Fouling enforcement officers have also reported 73 instances of fly tipping to Technical services for their attention

The team monitors the weekly incidence of illegal dog fouling and in two hotspot locations they have noted significant reductions.

Seacombe Promenade	53% reduction in incidence.
Poulton Road	99% reduction in incidence.

ENFORCEMENT

All officers taking part in the campaign were instructed that any dog walker observed not picking up were to receive a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) or to be prosecuted. Due to the highly visual nature of the officer attendance however the dog walkers monitored during the campaign did pick up after their dogs. A number of patrols out of uniform have also been carried out. To determine if the responsible attitude observed was simply a result of uniformed officer presence however a number of officers also patrolled at different times out of uniform. Again the majority of dog walkers observed were seen to be carrying poop scoop bags and picking up after their dogs. Since June 2010, there has been 1 fixed penalty notice for dog fouling issued, and the team have reported 4 people for littering offences. Where members of the public were spoken during the campaign officers reported that the initiative was met with enthusiasm and support.

AWARENESS RAISING ACTIVITY

In addition to enforcement the team engage in the education of dog owners through attendance at public events or whilst on patrol providing advice to dog walkers

Events and Activities

The Dog Fouling enforcement officers have participated at a number of events throughout the summer of 2010. The team provided advice regarding dog fouling and issued out bio-degradable dog bags to dog walkers and members of the public.

July	Port Sunlight show
July	Tate Triangle community day
July	Higher Tranmere community show
August	PDSA event in Birkenhead park
September	Festival of Transport (Birkenhead Park)

MULTI FUNCTIONAL CAMPAIGN QUAD VEHICLE

The quad bike incorporates a built on street cleaning vacuum unit which is designed to pick up a range of litter from the highway. The Wirral version of the machine has been purposely designed to allow the street cleaning unit to be detachable. In the detached mode the vehicle is used for monitoring and enforcement purposes giving Wardens increased and speedier mobility along promenades and around country parks. The vehicle has been a popular and well received campaign vehicle and has been regularly deployed in both modes to promote responsible ownership and to monitor for offences as appropriate. The vehicle has proved a popular backdrop for engagement with the public and for photo opportunities to promote the no fouling message.

LINK TO THE CRIME REDUCTION PARTNERSHIP

The Dog Fouling enforcement officers work in liaison with partners from Wirral's Community Safety Partnership and Joint Community Safety Team. Dog fouling is seen as unacceptable anti-social behaviour and the team responds to intelligence received through the partnership

2.0 Risk Assessment

2.1 The key risk is that the initiative will come to an end in March 2011, with the ending of the budget provision,

3.0 Financial Implications

3.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report. However members may consider maintenance of the programme post September 2011 and end of Future Jobs Fund.

4.0 Staffing Implications

4.1 The Dog Fouling enforcement team initiative employs 7 members of staff on fixed term contracts.

4.2 All Dog Fouling Enforcement Officers are employed by the Future Jobs Fund on fixed term contracts.

Enforcement Officers are employed in two groups.

Group1- July 2010 – December 2010

Group 2- March 2011 – September 2011.

5.0 Equal Opportunities Implications

5.1 None arising from this report.

6.0 Community Safety Implications

6.1 Since June 2010 the team have reported in excess of 5934 incidents. These include Graffiti, Fly-posting, litter, fly-tipping, trip hazards, overhanging bushes, safety hazards. (Appendix 1). Once the team ceases these reports will not continue to inform Streetscene of hazards which may impact on litigation claims.

Enforcement Officers are reducing the chances of humans catching the infection, Toxocariasis, especially within children where it is most common. Our enforcement Officers are reducing that risk because, their presence alone makes people pick up, even if the dog walker doesn't have any bags, our Officers carry specific bags around with them for Dog Fouling.

7.0 Local Agenda 21 Implications

7.1 The team operate on foot, cycle and public transport to get around the borough. This has proved very effective and intelligence has been gathered due to their availability to members of the public.

7.2 Support from Merseyrail and Arriva bus both companies have provided the team with complimentary travel passes.

8.0 Planning Implications

8.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

9.0 Anti-poverty Implications

9.1 There are none arising directly from this report

10.0 Social Inclusion Implications

10.1 There are none arising directly from this report

11.0 Local Member Support Implications

11.1 The team operate in all wards of the borough.

12.0 Background Papers

12.1 There are none arising directly from this report

13.0 Recommendations

13.1 Members note the content of this report.

Reports generated by the team since 21st June to 30th October 2010.

Report	Number of Reports	Including
Complaints of Service	1974	Complaints received by Call centre regarding dog fouling. Complaints received by the team from members of the public directly including complaints about dog fouling, litter, lack of signs etc
Criminal Damage	120	Generally damage to street furniture in particular street name signs
Safety Issues	2061	Tripping Hazards Life saving equipment missing/damaged Lamppost cover missing exposed wiring Drain blocked causing localised flooding Asbestos dumped in public area
Graffiti reports	712	Offensive -53 Non-Offensive – 278
Bushes blocking pavements	979	Overgrown bushes cause members of public to move closer or even on to the road to get past
Unauthorised activity	88	Fly tipping, fly posting, vehicles driving on promenade etc.