

# WIRRAL COUNCIL

## CABINET

10 APRIL 2014

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>CAMPAIGNS TO IMPROVE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY</b>
<b>WARD/S AFFECTED:</b>	<b>ALL</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>KEVIN ADDERLEY, STRATEGIC DIRECTOR REGENERATION &amp; ENVIRONMENT</b>
<b>RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:</b>	<b>COUNCILLOR BRIAN KENNY (ENVIRONMENT &amp; SUSTAINABILITY)</b>
<b>KEY DECISION?</b>	<b>NO</b>

### 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Low level environmental crime costs the council over £3.5 million pounds each year to clean up, and consistently placed as a top improvement priority for Wirral residents. This report seeks approval for the implementation of two campaigns, with associated expenditure aimed at improve local environmental quality through increased campaign efforts in relation to alleyway dumping and dog fouling. In addition, approval to extend the very successful “Love Wirral” grants funding to assist communities make their own positive contributions is sought.
- 1.2 It is widely recognised that good environmental quality can have a positive impact on people’s health and well-being<sup>1</sup>. The recommendations made within this report therefore support the Council’s strategic priorities “Protecting vulnerable people and communities” and “Narrowing the gap in inequalities”.
- 1.3 In addition to adopting the nationally recognised 3E’s model of Engagement, Education and Enforcement<sup>2</sup>, these balanced campaigns will also carry out extensive consultation and engagement in order to better understand the route causes of alleyway dumping and dog fouling.
- 1.4 On 25 February 2014 Council resolved (Minute 76 refers) to return to 4 weekly cleansing of alleyways for a period of two years and to re-double enforcement efforts. This report outlines proposals for how the £400K contribution from the Waste Development Fund will be used over a two year campaign period to drive pro-environmental behaviours and maximise recycling of household waste in terraced housing areas.

## **2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES**

### **2.1 Tackling Alleyway Dumping**

Council have approved the temporary re-instatement of a four weekly cleanse in all alleyways for a period of two years. It is essential that this service change supplemented with enhanced education and enforcement activity in order to discourage residents from using the alleyways as an easy alternative to using legitimate waste disposal routes. Steps must also be taken to clamp down on private landlords and companies carrying out refurbishment works who break the law by fly tipping waste in the alleyways.

It is also important to recognise that the waste collection systems operating in terraced housing areas may themselves be barriers to effective household waste management. Between 2006 and 2009, all terraced households were provided with the same waste collection system as semi-detached and detached housing stock. Over the years it has proven to be increasingly difficult to manage reports of non-compliance, especially as wheeled bins often become abandoned, damaged or stolen, or simply left out on the public highway. The quantity and quality of recycling recovered from these areas is much lower than in other areas. Part of the intended project will carry out extensive consultation in two terraced areas, differing in physical and demographical characteristics to determine if a more effective waste collection system could be implemented.

The project outlined in Appendix 1 seeks to tackle alleyway dumping from all possible angles. Officers from Waste and Environmental Services will work closely with other divisions and departments of the Council, as well as a range of external agencies, in order to maximise the opportunities for meaningful engagement with residents and private landlords. In particular, the Constituency Teams for Birkenhead and Wallasey will be fully involved in the project, and assist with consultation of residents.

The £400K 2-year budget allocated to the alleyway dumping project is funded through the Waste Development Fund. As such, a primary outcome of the project is to divert waste from landfill. The Variation Order signed by the Council and Biffa on 1<sup>st</sup> April to return to a four weekly cleanse in alleyways for two years also makes provision for additional segregation of bulky waste items collected in alleyways that are suitable for recycling or re-use. In addition, increased recycling is likely to be experienced through enhanced enforcement and education initiatives.

### **2.2 Dog Fouling**

Wirral Council are one of 12 local authorities involved in assessing the effectiveness of a new anti-dog fouling campaign message designed by Keep Britain Tidy. The outcome of the research is imminent, but not known at the time of writing.

Once the best “campaign message” has been identified, officers will work with constituency managers and the Dog Fouling Patrol Officers to identify hot spot locations. Up to five locations per constituency will be identified at any one time. The locations will support a high profile poster campaign and benefit from enhanced patrols, based on intelligence gathered from residents, businesses and/or site users living, working or visiting the areas targeted. The Campaign will run initially for a period of 6 months, targeting up to 120 dog fouling “hot spots” across the borough. If caught failing to clean up after their dog, perpetrators will be issued a fixed penalty notice. It is the

intention of officers to set up an online “rogues gallery” to name and shame any offender who fails to pay the penalty and is subsequently found guilty of the offence in the magistrates court.

### **2.3 “Love Wirral” Grant**

The ‘Love Wirral Grant’ encourages individuals, groups, schools & businesses to improve and maintain their local area which in turn encourages people to take pride and responsibility in keeping their part of Wirral clean.

In 2013/14, a £40k budget was allocated for Love Wirral grants, split equally across the 4 constituency areas. Each applicant could apply for up to £500. 104 successful applications were received and following public voting 80 projects were awarded ‘Love Wirral Grant’ funding.

8,536 people voted as part of the process generating 33,769 votes for projects. This grant scheme was open to all and encouraged existing and new groups to get involved and Love Wirral. The efforts of many residents and community groups are shared on the “Love Wirral” Facebook page.

The popularity of the grant funding and the added value the projects brings to Wirral, through joining communities and cleaning up the local environment indicates this funding should be continued into 2014/15.

### **3.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

3.1 Should the project be approved, a risk register will be developed as an important element of the project management toolkit.

### **4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

4.1 None

### **5.0 CONSULTATION**

5.1 The following stakeholders have been informed about the proposals:

- Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service
- Merseyside Police
- Biffa Waste Services
- Lairdsid e Communities Together
- Trading Standards
- Environmental Health
- PR and Marketing (WMBC)
- Troubled Families Team
- Neighbourhood Constituency Teams
- Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority

Further stakeholders will be consulted as part of the pilot projects, including residents, constituency committees, private/social landlords, estate/letting agents, community

groups and other community based asset managers servicing residents in the pilot areas.

## 5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

5.1 In order to fulfil the aims of this project, it is a requirement to actively seek and engage voluntary, community and faith groups in the three pilot areas. Local re-use organisations and social enterprises will be approached in order to explore the possibilities of setting up a low cost wheeled bin-refurbishment service. There is also an opportunity for further support to be commissioned from community based organisations to carry out enhanced engagement work.

## 6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

6.1 All communications and PR costs arising from this project can be contained within existing budget provisions and staffing resources. The following costs are associated with the project. No additional new monies are being requested.

Activity	Quantity	Total Cost	Funding Source
Alleyway dumping communications campaign information	30,000 households	£16K	Existing waste provisions (14/15)
Waste Investigation Unit	1 x cage tipper; 2 x operatives plus equipment and branding	£150K (over 2 years)	Waste Development Fund
Reinstatement of 4 weekly entry cleanse	1 x cage tipper, 3 operatives	£186K (over 2 years)	Waste Development Fund
Alleyway Patrol Officers*	2 x FTE	Up to £64K (over 2 years)	Waste Development fund
Alleyway cleansing contingency	Overtime	£20K	Existing waste provisions - Biffa Provisional Sums (14/15)
Free replacement of damaged/ missing wheeled bins as part of assessment of impact of wheeled bin charging policy (pilot areas only)	Approx 1000 240 litre wheeled bins	£25K	Existing Wheeled bin reserve
6-month dog fouling campaign	120 locations	£20K	Existing Waste Provisions (comms budget/ street cleansing provisional sums) 14/15
“Love Wirral” Grants	80 x £500 grants	£40K	2014/15 budget option (new money)
<b>Total projected expenditure</b>	<b>Existing waste provisions Waste Development Fund (£400K available) Budget Option 2014/15</b>		<b>£81K (14/15) £400K (£200K 14/15; £200K 15/16) £40K</b>

*\* Subject to need to be established by 31<sup>st</sup> May 2014. Alternative commissioning models for patrol officer requirements are to be explored in order to reduce these costs.*

Should an “incentive scheme” be trailed as part of Phase 2 of the project (in the pilot areas) it is proposed that sponsorship or alternative funding is secured externally with help from communities involved in the pilot projects. This is primarily due to the fact that the pilot projects must be replicable in other areas. Unfortunately, the Council’s current financial position inhibits such levels of “none discretionary” expenditure.

An initial door stepping exercise to all households in the two pilot areas will be carried out. The costs associated with this will be minimal, as it is proposed that a number of Council departments and partner agencies will work together to within existing staffing resources to carry out this work. However, it is possible that local organisations may be commissioned to assist up with this work. Any costs arising from this will be contained within existing budget provisions.

## **8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

## **9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

(a) Yes and impact review is attached

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-april-2014/eias-regeneration-envir>

## **10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 This project seeks to improve the local environmental quality of residents living in around 30,000 households. Additional segregation of bulky and construction waste collected from alleyways is intended, meaning that up to 25% of this waste will be diverted from landfill.

## **11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 There are no planning or community safety implications arising from this report.

## **12.0 RECOMMENDATION/S**

12.1 Cabinet are requested to:

- (i) Endorse the proposal to tackle alleyway dumping outlined in Appendix 1 of this report including the allocation of £400K Waste development Fund over a two year period to reinstate a four weekly cleansing schedule to aid the recovery of recyclable materials.

- (ii) Endorse the 6-month Dog Fouling pilot campaign outlined in section 2.2 of this report.
- (iii) Endorse the continuation of the “Love Wirral” grants programme into 2014/15 at a cost of £40K.

### 13.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION

13.1 This project will enable important consultative and investigative work to be carried out in order to reduce the amount of alleyway dumping experience in terraced housing areas and to provide support to residents struggling to comply with their waste collection scheme. It is possible that findings from this important project could fundamentally change the way household waste is presented for collection in terraced housing areas.

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### APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Alleyway Dumping Project Outline

### REFERENCE MATERIAL

1. When it comes to litter which side of the fence are you? (2013) Keep Britain Tidy
2. The Effectiveness of Enforcement on Behaviour Change (2011) Keep Britain Tidy
3. Broken Windows (1982), Kelling and Wilson
4. The Spreading of Disorder (2008), Keizer, Lindenberg & Steg.
5. How can Wirral Council optimise pro-recycling behaviour of its population? (2012), Tara Dumas, MBA research dissertation (un-published).

### SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Budget Council	25/02/14

## APPENDIX 1

### Alleyway Dumping Project Outline

The project will consist of two elements. The first element will cover all terraced housing stock that have alleyways (approximately 30,000 households) and will encourage compliance with the Council's waste collection service through a multi-level awareness campaign. Phase 2 of the project will examine three problematic locations in detail. Residents and community organisations in the pilot areas will be encouraged to take ownership of the waste problems in their area and help develop sustainable solutions to reduce alleyway dumping.

#### Phase 1: The Good Neighbour Campaign (All terraced households)

##### 1a. Introductory Leaflet

All terraced households will receive a hand delivered leaflet making them aware of the reduced alleyway cleansing frequencies and providing advice on how they can help reduce the levels of alleyway dumping.

##### 1b. Good Neighbour Pack

Residents can request a "Good Neighbour Pack" from the Council. The pack provides more detailed advice around managing waste, instructions and advice around the reporting of fly tipping offences as well as the following:

- I. A "Love Wirral - Keep our Street Tidy" Window Sticker
- II. An A4 "Good Neighbour" weather proof notice to be placed on their back yard wall or gate supporting a pledge to manage their waste responsibly and asking others to do the same.
- III. 8 x Good Neighbour postcards. Residents can send these postcards anonymously to neighbours that share their alleyway, to encourage people to act responsibly.

All residents that request the pack will be asked to provide feedback to the Council on the level of effectiveness of the Good Neighbour approach. Packs will also be marketed directly to all residents that live in terraced areas that have reported alleyway dumping, or paid for a bulky waste collection in the last 12 months and through "neighbourhood watch" groups. They will also be offered during the door stepping exercises carried out in the two pilot areas.

##### 1c. Investigation Unit

The project will be supported by a temporary Council funded "Waste Investigation Unit". This crew have been deployed throughout the two year period until March 31<sup>st</sup> 2016 and funded through the waste development fund. This specialist waste removal team will continue to be deployed to areas where it is necessary to clear alleyways in between the schedule cleanse. They will work closely with the environmental enforcement team to gather evidence for the prosecution of fly tipping offences in order to deter private landlords and contractors from illegal waste disposal. They will also notify all residents each time they are requested to return to an alleyway, to raise awareness of the enhanced enforcement activity that is being carried out.

1d. Amendments to the Councils Household Waste Collection Policy

It is the intention of officers to review the Council's current Policy once the legislation governing this area has been reviewed in Parliament in April.

1e. Dedicated Alleyway Patrol Officers

It is proposed that "patrol officer" are deployed into terraced housing areas to deal with all referrals arising from the public and Waste Investigation Unit. The scale of the problem we currently face means that there may not be sufficient resources within the existing team structure to ensure that an effective balance of education and enforcement activity can be deployed, and to effectively investigate the referrals levels we currently receive. The decision to implement this resource will be deferred until 31<sup>st</sup> May, once referral rates are known and the impact on existing workforce has been measured.

1f. Return to a four weekly cleansing schedule

The entry cleansing schedule will return to 4-weekly from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014, for a minimum period of two years. This requires the deployment of a third entry cleansing crew which officers propose is funded through the £400K waste development fund allocated through Labour's 14/15 budget resolution. Officers have carried out initial feasibility work around the opportunities for bulky household waste items dumped in alleyways to be recycled. Waste composition analysis carried out in January/March from alleyways cleared by the waste investigation unit has identified that around 25% of alleyway dumping could be recycled if the crews segregate items such as rubble, wood and some furniture items. Initial discussions are in place with Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority to commence a pilot as early as April 2014. The additional segregation and documentation the three entry cleansing crews would be required to carry out could mean they struggle to stay on schedule initially, until the Good Neighbour Campaign and enhance enforcement activity begins to impact positively on pro-environmental behaviours. Therefore officers propose to set aside a £20K contingency in 14/15 from existing waste provisions in the event Biffa require occasional overtime to complete scheduled work.

## **Phase 2: Pilot Studies**

2a. Selection of Pilot Areas

Officers have analysed data from six of the most problematic areas for alleyway dumping, referred to the Council by the Waste and Environmental Services Contractor.

Two areas have been selected for inclusion in the pilot study due to the high number of waste related referrals and tonnage of dumped waste per household. The two areas within each constituency of Wallasey and Birkenhead most affected by alleyway dumping have been identified by officers as the Harrowby Road area in Birkenhead Ward and the Naples Road area in Seacombe.



In the selection process, officers have also considered the geographical and demographic make up and selected two distinct areas, enabling a range of engagement strategies and alternative waste solutions to be tested. Officers also recognised the benefits of delivering the project in two constituency areas in order to help different neighbourhood approaches to evolve. Selection criteria included parameters such as tonnage of waste dumped per household, number of enforcement referrals/complaints and levels of other anti social behaviours reported.

## 2b. Aims of the pilot projects

The direction of the pilot projects will be heavily influenced by the initial consultation undertaken with the residents living in the two pilot areas. However, the initial aims of this project are:

- To reduce alley way dumping through the normalising of compliant behaviour.
- To review the waste collection system in each pilot area and identify more effective alternatives.
- To explore the local appetite for and effectiveness of community based incentives on pro-waste management behaviours.
- To engage with stakeholders, including private/social landlords and letting/estate agents in order to put in place systems and procedures that promote good household waste management.
- To use an asset based community development (ABCD) approach to identify resources in the communities to support the required change.
- To gain a greater understanding of the barriers to good household waste management and pro-environmental behaviour specific to the communities residing in the pilot areas and to develop a range of cost effective solutions to overcome these barriers that may be replicated on a larger scale.

## 2c. Added Value

It is recognised that enviro-crime can be linked to other anti-social behaviour<sup>3, 4</sup>. Poor household waste management, especially in larger households can also be a symptom where households are struggling with other life challenges so do not consider waste and recycling to be a priority<sup>5</sup>. A multi agency approach including Merseyside Fire and Rescue, Trading Standards, Environmental Health, Housing Associations and the Troubled Families Project will be adopted in order to help tackle some of the wider problems that families and vulnerable people face. For example, through the consultation exercise, Trading Standards will consider the benefits of designating the pilot areas as cold calling exclusion zones, making it an offence for companies or individuals to make unsolicited visits to households where the householder has indicated they do not welcome such calls. A second example involves the Waste and Environmental Services Team working closely with the “Troubled Families Team”, to put in place a referral process so that these families are offered additional support to help them comply with the Council’s waste collection service. The Waste and Environmental Services team will also be seeking to engage with local re-use organisations and social enterprises to set up a low cost bin-refurbishment service so that low income households have access to replacement wheeled bins at a more affordable rate, than if they were to purchase a new bin. An existing £25K wheelie bin reserve has been earmarked to help low income households within the two pilot areas replace damaged or missing wheeled bins. The evidence gathered as part of this project will also help officers to fully review the

impact of the current bin charging policy on alleyway dumping, and identify effective measures reduce the risk of theft or destruction of wheeled bins which appears to be on the rise.

Further details will be reported to the relevant constituency committees by the constituency managers.