

# SCRUTINY REPORT

**MEETING:** SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**DATE:** 22 November 2017

**SUBJECT:** Environmental Quality and Fly Tipping Strategy

**REPORT FROM:** Neil S Long

**REPORT STATUS:** FOR PUBLICATION

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## 1.0 BACKGROUND

**1.1** The Environmental Quality and Fly tipping Task Group (a small cross departmental group of Council officers) is working to improve the Council's response to increasing levels of fly tipping in the borough. The group has also been allocated a one-off **£100k** budget to tackle such problems through a range of methods.

The group has identified a long list of known hotspots most of which are targeted on a sporadic basis. From that work a number of sites stand out as more regular where various types of fly tipping is occurring and where a range of interventions such as signage, enforcement, targeted community action and deployment of CCTV may assist with catching offenders and act as a deterrent. Every location is very unique. Merely seeing vehicles use particular routes or hot spot areas doesn't provide adequate evidence to pursue tippers. They virtually need to be caught in the act unless there is secondary corroborative evidence.

## 2.0 ISSUES

**The Environmental Quality Strategy Action Plan** is attached to this Scrutiny Report which provides details of investment, targeted community action, IT development, enforcement, CCTV, removal of fly tipping and signage together with details of where the one off £100k will be spent.

### 2.1 Environmental Quality £100k funding

**1. Common Management Information System £5,000** – for all waste management enforcement issues utilizing the 'Flare' computer system currently used by Environmental Health and to review the process for consistent recording of fly tipping.

**2. Targeted Neighbourhood Action £30,000** – local initiatives that support neighbourhood working and led through the HUB's with Councillors, system leads, operational services and local residents as part of wider campaigns for behaviour change.

**3. CCTV surveillance £15,000** – List of all known hot spots together with top 10 priorities for initial action. Individual bespoke designs required as each hot spot has unique issues and challenges in collecting evidence. Includes CCTV signage that will act as a deterrent.

**4. Replace damaged and missing bins £35,000** – It is much more efficient to empty a litter bin rather than manually litter pick. Many litter bins are now either missing or damaged in town centre and green space locations. Where possible bins will provide for combined litter and dog fouling although there will be locations where a bespoke dog bin is still appropriate. Existing bin designs will be reviewed as part of this action.

**5. Refresh Fly Tipping and Dog Fouling Signage £5,000** – Using eye catching signs that can act as a deterrent and well as warn offenders that enforcement action will be taken or that CCTV is in operation. Signs can also be used as part of local neighbourhood initiatives and in various sizes to suite location.

**6. Fly Tipping clearance in back streets and private land hot spots £10,000** – One off funding to kick start improving non Council owned sites where following an investigation by Environmental Health it is not possible to trace the perpetrator or in some case identify a land owner. To be used where possible in conjunction with wider environmental quality initiatives.

## **2.2 Environmental Health**

Environmental Health enforcement officers investigate incidents of fly tipping and other waste offences which blight the borough. Matters are resolved through an informal approach, issuing legal notices including fixed penalties, works in default, simple cautions or prosecution.

Demand management work has been carried out with the call centre, Bury Council web site and Bury Directory to try and ensure only actionable waste problems come to the enforcement officers with higher quality evidence.

Two Environmental Health Officers have been deployed to neighbourhood hubs serving the high demand areas of Radcliffe and Bury East to carry out generic Environmental Health work. Most of this is around environmental quality. Since summer 2017 Waste Management Enforcement officers and hub EHO's have been working more closely to increase capacity.

## **2.3 Enforcement Action**

In 2017 so far 4 prosecutions and 2 Simple Cautions have been taken for fly tipping and duty of care offences. The prosecutions have been publicised via social media and the press and provoke plentiful positive response from the public.

Cleaning unadopted back streets is not a statutory responsibility for Bury Council and in the last 12 months environmental enforcement officers have encouraged householders and businesses to keep their private back streets clean as they would their gardens. In some cases enforcement action has been taken and the streets have been cleaned in default by contractors and invoices sent to the relevant residents and businesses. This is part of an ongoing

behaviour change initiative but it is acknowledged that in some cases the unadopted streets suffer serious fly tipping from persons unknown so residents feel victimised if asked to pay for a cleanup.

## **2.4 Public Rights of Way**

Public rights of way form a substantial part of the highway network that is maintainable at public expense. Any route included in the Definitive Rights of Way Map is deemed to be the responsibility of the Highway Authority. This includes the duty to remove litter and fly tipping from these routes.

There are 310kms of public rights of way in Bury, made up of 650 individual paths. Some of these routes attract fly tippers as they are accessible by vehicles and are not in view of the local population. The erection of barriers preventing vehicular access is not always possible as many public rights of way are also access routes to properties for which the residents have a private right of access.

There have been 89 reports recorded of fly tipping on the public rights of way network in the current calendar year. The relevant items have been cleared by Cleansing Services, creating a significant demand on the service. "Hot spots" have been identified and considered for signage and CCTV coverage, although the remote locations of some of the fly tipped areas will make the use of cameras difficult due to the lack of a power supply and somewhere to attach the camera

## **2.5 Community Safety**

The Council's Community Safety team are working hard to assist enforcement officers to collect evidence through CCTV deployment and actual observations. Out of hours and when something is actually happening, the public can contact the Council's 24/7 Control Room on Tel 0161-253-6606. Resources permitting a quick response visit by one of the Council's Community Response Officers may be deployed and evidence shared with Environmental Health.

Currently the team are researching best value new generation smart CCTV, upgrading existing CCTV in hotspot areas.

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