

Report of:	Meeting	Date
Councillor Simon Bridge, Street Scene, Parks and Open Spaces Portfolio Holder and Mark Billington, Corporate Director Environment	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	4 September 2023

To review the implementation of the District Enforcement Task Group recommendations

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To review the implementation of the District Enforcement Task Group recommendations as agreed by the Cabinet and report back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on progress to date.

2. Corporate priorities

- 2.1 A cleaner, greener, and more sustainable environment.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the contents of this report and the existing measures to maximise opportunities to interact, inform and educate all Wyre residents and visitors, including young people, on the harmful impact of littering and irresponsible dog ownership.

4. Background

- 4.1 A task group was commissioned by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at their meeting held on Monday 22 July 2019, to review the environmental enforcement pilot scheme with District Enforcement.
- 4.2 Following the review carried out over seven meetings between October 2019 and December 2021, Councillor Tom Ingham, Chairman of the Task Group, reported the recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny

Committee at their meeting held on Monday 17 January 2022, which were as follows:

- I. That the current agreement with District Enforcement is extended for a further two years, for example from March 2022 to March 2024, with the intention for an additional Overview and Scrutiny review of the service within this two-year period.
- II. That there is the provision for District Enforcement to issue an official warning system, in addition to fines, for the following offences:- Failing to have the means to pick-up dog fouling - Dogs entering an exclusion zone - Dogs not on leads in Public Places To facilitate this, the group recommends that an update to the IT system be implemented to allow warnings to be lodged electronically.
- III. That Wyre should strongly consider taking action against under 18-year-olds and that officers could explore the options for penalties. However, the task group would recommend looking at options such as letters sent to parents and/or verbal, unofficial warnings.
- IV. That the council continue to support and endorse their current programme for educating young people of the borough on the harmful impact of littering.
- V. That Wyre Council's communications team should send out more messages to residents regarding the reporting of dog fouling incidents.

4.3 The recommendations of the District Enforcement Pilot Task Group were subsequently reported to the Cabinet at their meeting held on 23 March 2022. Speaking on behalf of Cabinet, Councillor Bridge confirmed that, in respect of Recommendation I, the suggested extension of the current agreement with District Enforcement had already been approved and implemented*.

4.4 In response to Recommendation II, Councillor Bridge asserted that all offences should be dealt with consistently and without any additional provision to issue warnings for certain offences.

4.5 With regard to Recommendation III, he said that Cabinet considered that the suggested enforcement action against under 18-year-olds would be disproportionate and could compromise officers.

4.6 Cabinet agreed that:

- the current programme for educating the young people of the borough on the harmful impact of littering be supported and endorsed (Recommendation IV) and that one of the advantages of having

District Enforcement was that it enabled the council to go into schools to do this.

- it was a priority of the council's new Communications Plan to continue to interact, inform and educate the residents of Wyre (Recommendation V).

4.7 *District Enforcement gave notice that they wished to end the enforcement arrangements on 31 March 2023, providing an opportunity for the council to test the market for alternative service provision. At the meeting of the Cabinet held on 22 March 2023, Members approved a two-year environmental enforcement agreement with Waste Investigations Support & Enforcement Ltd ('WISE'), on a nil cost basis, with no financial risk to the council.

5. Key issues and proposals

5.1 Measures to educate the young people of the borough on the harmful impact of littering:

5.1.1 Waste Recycling and Environmental Enforcement Team

A key purpose of this team is to manage and promote the Council's cleaner greener priorities to support long term behaviour change, which includes tackling issues such as litter and dog fouling. Officers deliver recycling and littering talks to schools and community groups and engagement with the community to support activities proven to reduce waste and littering, while creating a healthier, more attractive environment.

5.1.2 In the past 12 months, support has been provided to scout groups in Fleetwood, Great Eccleston, Poulton and Preesall, and to schools across the borough, to conduct local litter picks. Proactive engagement has taken place with older children frequenting sweet shops near schools to encourage the responsible disposal of sweet wrappers and pop cans.

5.1.3 The EEOs liaise with local schools where issues of litter/dog fouling have been highlighted, engaging with parents at school drop off/pick up, conducting proactive patrols and erecting appropriate signage such as the 'we are watching you' eye signage – this approach has proved very successful in recent engagement with schools in Poulton and Hambleton, with a reduction seen in litter and dog fouling in the vicinity of both schools.

5.1.4 Activity Development Officer

The Activity Development Officer funded through the Heritage Lottery Grant for the restoration of The Mount co-ordinates litter picking on site; this was extended to include Memorial Park during Love Parks Week.

The aim of the litter picks is to foster a spirit of community pride in local green space and reduce the likelihood for littering to occur. A program of environmental education events is scheduled over the school holidays, in conjunction with the climate change team, where children will participate in different activities and be asked to make a pledge on what steps they can take to protect their local environment.

5.1.5 Coast and Countryside Team

The Coast and Countryside Team engage with young people, schools, and adult community groups around litter issues through coordinated beach cleans at Rossall Point Tower, Cleveleys Beach Care, Rossall Beach Community Beach Clean, Knott End Beach Clean Up, Fleetwood Beach Care, and Harbour Village Clean Up. These established events are well supported. Local schools and visiting employee groups regularly take part in the Rossall Point Tower and Rossall Beach clean ups which are often combined with a tour of Rossall Point Tower where they learn about the importance of keeping beaches free from pollution and litter (especially plastics) and the impacts of contaminants routinely disposed of down sinks and toilets; coastal safety and the protection of local wildlife is also promoted at these events.

5.1.6 Waste Investigations Support & Enforcement Ltd ('WISE')

Our current Environmental Enforcement Contractor, WISE, employs a dedicated Social Value Manager to work with local schools and community groups, promoting litter picks and community engagement initiatives. Although the first few months of the new contract has focussed on mobilisation and training of the new team to enforce against the existing litter and dog control measures across the borough, plans are being developed to deliver a program of environmental education initiatives and presentations once the schools return in September.

5.1.7 The proposal is to deliver environmental awareness sessions (two per month across Wyre schools), highlighting the environmental impact of littering and dog fouling on the local area and demonstrating how students can make positive contributions for the benefit of their society. A poster competition will be run across participating schools, giving children the opportunity to design an anti-litter or dog fouling poster. The communications team would then promote the winning design to promote responsible waste disposal. WISE will also sponsor prizes for the winning posters. This will complement the work of the Waste Recycling and Environmental Enforcement Team and release some council resource to focus on other priorities.

5.2 Measures to maximise the Communications Plan to continue to interact, inform and educate the residents of Wyre:

5.2.1 Overview

Wyre's Waste, Recycling and Environmental Protection communication campaigns work towards the Corporate Objective of 'a cleaner, greener and more sustainable environment.' The main aims are to engage, inform and educate residents on responsible dog ownership, promote responsible household waste management, drive increased rates of recycling and inspire pride in the local area by encouraging people to respect the environment and the world around them - all helping to reduce instances of environmental crimes and dog offences.

5.2.2 Channels

The Communications team utilise many different channels to maximise the reach of all communications with Wyre residents. Effective channels include:

- PR
- Social Media
- Website
- Outdoor Media
- eNews
- Print
- Advertising.

5.2.3 Audiences and Evaluation

Digital and social media remain some of the most agile and effective channels offering instant communication with residents, the ability to target particular areas and audiences across the borough and the opportunity to inspire conversation and drive engagement.

5.2.4 Wyre boasts over 3,000 dedicated eNews subscribers who receive monthly updates across all communications and over 47,000 followers on social media across Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn and NextDoor; the team are able to amplify that reach by following local Facebook chat groups such as Fleetwood Chat, Poulton Chat, Your Garstang, Thornton-Cleveleys Chat, Dog-Friendly Wyre among others.

5.2.5 Since March 2022, the team have driven significant growth, engagement, and interactions on social media, with some of the environmental messaging among Wyre's top performing posts on Facebook:

- **Facebook Reach** 1 March 2023 - 10 August 2023 vs 1 Sept 2020 - 28 Feb 2022 = 519,669, a 123% increase in reach.

- **Facebook Followers** 1 March 2023 - 10 August 2023 vs 1 Sept 2020 - 28 Feb 2022 = 1,164, a 196% increase in number of new followers.

5.2.6 Objectives

Environmental campaigns work to directly target offenders and also encourage residents to take action; the key objectives are:

- Remind offenders they are being watched and judged and will be fined.
- Remind residents to report any dog fouling, fly-tipping, littering etc.
- Alleviate residents' misunderstanding of powers to enforce, remind them of the general restrictions on environmental crimes, general offences and the dog control orders and the resulting FPNs incurred if these are ignored.
- Alter the misconception that Wyre suffers from a disproportionately high level of dog fouling (thereby increasing its perceived acceptability) by publicising successful enforcement action to highlight the proactive approach being taken and consequences of being caught.
- Encourage residents and visitors to enjoy our great outdoors take responsibility for themselves, their litter, and their dogs and to remind residents and visitors to be appreciative and respectful of the remarkable great outdoors across Wyre
- Utilise all channels to maximise the reach and awareness among residents and visitors, of our dog restrictions and other general littering offences.

5.2.7 Key Projects/Campaigns

Campaigns are designed to engage, inform, and educate Wyre residents, ultimately helping to reduce the level of environmental crimes and dog offences. Examples of social media messaging relating to these campaigns and an overview of reach and engagement from the public are included within the appendix of this report.

5.2.8 Responsible Dog Ownership

All Environmental communications are designed to complement and reinforce each other where appropriate. However the key campaigns relating to responsible dog ownership are the Seasonal Dog Ban and Dog Waste campaigns. Any messages on the Seasonal Dog Ban include a strong dog waste message within the copy of the post or as part of the graphic design. They include PR, Social Media, Website, Outdoor Media, eNews, Print and Advertising.

5.2.9 Dog Waste Key Messages

- We're watching you... And so is everyone else. Restrictions and Public Space Protection orders are in place to keep Wyre clean, green and beautiful. Pick up after your dog, any bin will do.
- FINED! Our officers have the power to enforce, and you have the legal responsibility to comply!
- Restrictions and Public Space Protection orders are in place to keep Wyre clean, green and beautiful. You can incur a FNP of £100 if you disregard these!
- Walk your dog away from a fine! You can incur an FPN of £100 if you disregard our dog control orders!
- Dog fouling is disgusting and dangerous. 9 out of 10 dog owners pick up after their dog – are you one of the ones who doesn't?
- Dog fouling is disgusting and dangerous. Only 1 in 10 dog owners choose to foul our beautiful borough, DO NOT be one of them!
- Don't disrespect our great outdoors! Restrictions and Public Space Protection orders are in place to keep Wyre clean, green and beautiful. You can incur a FNP of £100 if you disregard these!

5.2.10 Future plans for 2023/24

Different options will be explored, with dog waste messages as a common theme running through other environmental campaigns.

The team are exploring more intuitive techniques to drive the key messages through for the last quarter of 2023 and into 2024. This will include video content in a point of view (POV) format of regular dog walks owners take in our towns, such as the daily school run, highlighting the scale of the issue to offenders to evoke a strong response.

Residents will be encouraged to post their own 'good girl' and 'good boy' dog messages, highlighting local examples of responsible dog owners, and framing the subject in a more engaging way.

6. Alternative options considered and rejected

6.1 N/A for the purposes of this report

Financial, Legal and Climate Change implications	
Finance	There are no direct financial implications arising out of this report.
Legal	There are no direct legal implications arising out of this report.
Climate Change	There are no direct climate change implications arising out of this report.

Other risks/implications: checklist

If there are significant implications arising from this report on any issues marked with a ✓ below, the report author will have consulted with the appropriate specialist officers on those implications and addressed them in the body of the report. There are no significant implications arising directly from this report, for those issues marked with a x.

risks/implications	✓ / x
community safety	x
equality and diversity	x
health and safety	x

risks/implications	✓ / x
asset management	x
ICT	x
data protection	x

Processing Personal Data

In addition to considering data protection along with the other risks/ implications, the report author will need to decide if a 'privacy impact assessment (PIA)' is also required. If the decision(s) recommended in this report will result in the collection and processing of personal data for the first time (i.e. purchase of a new system, a new working arrangement with a third party) a PIA will need to have been completed and signed off by Data Protection Officer before the decision is taken in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

report author	telephone no.	email	date
Kathy Winstanley	01253 887376	Kathy.winstanley@wyre.gov.uk	10 August 2023

List of background papers:		
name of document	date	where available for inspection
N/A		

List of appendices

Appendix A - examples of litter and dog fouling signage used by the EEOs to warn offenders

Appendix B - Coast and Countryside beach clean flyer

Appendix C - example of WISE presentation to be adapted for Wyre schools

Appendix D - WISE litter picking poster competition flyer

Appendix E - examples of recent social media posts