



Cabinet (Resources) Panel

9 December 2014

Report title	Operation Spring Clean Environmental Developments	
Decision designation	AMBER	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor John Reynolds City Services	
Key decision	No	
In forward plan	No	
Wards affected	All	
Accountable director	Keith Ireland, Delivery	
Originating service	Public Realm, City Services	
Accountable employee(s)	Chris Huddart	Head of Commercial Services
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Report to be/has been considered by

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Cabinet (Resources) Panel is recommended to:

endorse the allocation of £200,000 to provide:

- i. additional resources to provide extended hours for cleaning the city centre and arterial routes
- ii. campaign banners fixed to the side of council vehicles
- iii. support to community volunteers to assist in a deep clean of specific areas.
- iv. in collaboration with Public Health, resources to extend the Healthy Walking Programmes to include litter picking that will improve the participant's local environment.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The Delivery directorate has responsibility for aspects of quality of the local environment which has an impact on economic, social and health benefits of the city. A review of current operational arrangements has been undertaken and the purpose of this report is to summarise details of a number of initiatives aimed at developing long-term behavioural changes and increasing pride in the city.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Council's investment in Public Realm Services includes resources for programmed cleansing of the city and a nominal amount for initiatives to prevent littering. There is a major challenge for the Council in changing the behaviour of some of residents to encourage them to be more responsible for their litter. It is through education, awareness and enforcement programmes run by the Council that we must endeavour to enhance residents understanding of their social responsibility to the environment.
- 2.2 Local environmental quality issues include litter, fly tipping nuisance and abandoned vehicles, graffiti, fly posting and dog fouling. Research has established that cigarettes are the most frequently dropped items of litter and the most commonly dropped items are confectionary wrappers, small bits of paper and pieces of fruit. The highest priorities for the public is dog fouling and litter (Keep Britain Tidy – The Word on our Street). The most frequently littered items by 13 to 16 year olds are food, drink and cigarette related (Keep Britain Tidy – I'm just a Teenage Dirt Bag, baby!) Around 2.25 million pieces of litter are dropped every day in the UK and when offenders drop litter everyone pays to have it cleaned up. Litter is a blight which can have a negative impact on neighbourhoods, trade and community pride
- 2.3 National research of attitudes to litter and littering found that people were most concerned by litter in their own neighbourhood; and that improving local environmental quality would help address this which, in turn, could lead to a positive impact on well-being, quality of life and community cohesion. In addition, this research indicates that low levels of litter and quality green spaces were associated with reduced obesity and greater satisfaction with an area.
- 2.4 The council spends approximately £8.681 million a year on Public Realm services, a considerable proportion of that is spent clearing up litter. Whilst exact figures are difficult to extrapolate, there is no doubt that responsible behaviour by individuals could save the council thousands of pounds annually. It is also clear that cuts in public spending could have a significant and negative impact on local environments. This is a concern because improving local environmental quality brings environmental, economic, social and health benefits which are consistent with the Corporate Plan. The council has a Regeneration Compliance and Regulatory Policy to tackle nuisance activities such as littering, fly-tipping and abandoned vehicles
- 2.5 Public Realm Services are responsible for street cleaning, grounds maintenance, pest control, street lighting, highway maintenance and winter gritting. The service was recently

awarded Customer Service Excellence status which involved a rigorous assessment with a focus on what matters most to customers - including timeliness, information, professionalism and staff attitude. The assessor was particularly impressed by the development of the free "Wolverhampton Report It" mobile app which has made it easier than ever for the public to report environmental problems with just a few clicks of their mobile phone. It is available to download from the Apple, Android, Blackberry and Windows app stores.

- 2.6 In May 2012, the council introduced "Operation Spring Clean", a new initiative aimed at improving the cleanliness of the city. The scheme was delivered in partnership with the Express and Star and involved cleaning every public street and highway in the city area during the month of May. The scheme raised awareness of the problems of littering within the city through local news such as the 1.5 tonnes of rubbish collected from the city centre over a 12 hour period, of which a quarter was made up of litter. It was such a success it was been repeated in spring 2013 and 2014. It is proposed to deliver the scheme again in 2015 supported by a more intense engagement programme to sustain community involvement over the longer term.

3 Example Council Campaigns to Address Street Cleanliness

- 3.1 Councils nationwide have adopted different approaches to address littering and engender lifelong behavioural changes to residents to dispose of their waste in a responsible manner.
- 3.2 Summarised below are some examples of campaigns undertaken by councils to address street cleanliness:
- 3.3 **You are Your City - Birmingham City Council:** A year-long campaign in response to residents' concerns about litter, dog fouling and graffiti in an effort to restore a sense of civic pride in the city. The city council campaign targeted 11 rubbish 'hotspots' - one in each constituency – which also involved local businesses taking more responsibility for their local area. A new rapid response team was charged with clearing up areas so that people could see a real difference in their local areas. Businesses sponsored a van and driver who toured areas daily to carry out minor repairs, touch up paintwork on railings, repair fences, trim overgrown verges and perform other small jobs to improve the local environment. The scheme is to run alongside efforts to curb litter louts with £50 spot fines.
- 3.4 **Take Pride In Your Street - Derby City Council:** Started in 2012, has seen roads in the city being given a deep clean. People living on the streets also had the chance to take advantage of a free bulky waste collection service where larger items are taken away. The campaign reflects the council's commitment to improving local neighbourhoods.
- 3.5 **Street Pride – Lancaster Council:** The aim of the project is to give communities an initial boost to smarten up their neighbourhood, and put pride back into their community. Services provided include: street cleaning, gully emptying, minor highway repairs, weeding and tree pruning, and in some cases the planting of shrubs. Street Pride events don't replace the council's normal programme of street cleansing, but complements it in areas that otherwise may not be able to be tackled. To nominate a

street to take part in the scheme residents contact their local councillor. As roads taking part are closed for the duration of the works those on a bus route cannot be nominated.

4. Proposed Street Cleansing Initiatives

4.1 The examples of good practice summarised in section three of this report demonstrate, how some councils have risen to the challenge in order to meet their responsibilities in keeping their neighbourhoods litter free. However, evidence suggests the problem stems from something less tangible – a lack of pride and responsibility. Outlined below are a series of proposed initiatives that will be delivered over a six month period, aimed at encouraging communities to become proud of keeping their streets clean and being ashamed of unsightly mess.

4.2 Reconfigure Cleansing Regimes for the City Centre and Arterial Routes: Additional resources to provide extended hours for cleaning the city centre and arterial routes to make the city attractive to shoppers and people visiting cultural venues.

Estimated Cost: £125,000 includes disposal costs (period November 2014 – May 2015 inclusive.)

4.3 Area Response Teams: The two existing teams operating across the city will focus on responding to rubbish hot spot areas. This will include street cleaning, removal of small items of fly-tipped waste, weeding and overhanging vegetation causing a hazard along adopted highway/obscuring signage. This new arrangement can be met within the existing budget envelope for environmental maintenance.

Estimated Cost: No additional cost

4.4 Spring Clean Campaign: cleaning every public street and highway in the city area during the month of May. The campaign will be supported by a schools poetry/art competition to encourage children and parents to take pride in their city. Winning entry will be displayed on the side of waste collection vehicles operating across the city and used to raise awareness of the “Spring Clean” campaign.

Estimated Cost: £50,000

4.5 In addition to 4.1.3, respective ward councillors to nominate a rubbish hot spot and a “Community Cleansing Champion” to lead a team of community volunteers to assist in a deep clean of a specific area. It is proposed that each team of community volunteers will nominate a registered charity, which will receive a donation based on the weight of rubbish that has been collected by the teams during the clean-up period. This approach will act as a catalyst for people to come together to transform their neighbourhood inspiring people to make real and lasting changes and come together to work on other initiatives to improve their local environment.

Estimated Cost: £ 20,000

4.6 Introduce an incentive scheme sponsored by the Express and Star and local businesses within the city centre, to encourage people to use the litter bins, stop stubbing out cigarettes on the floor and spitting chewing gum onto the floor. People to be issued with a raffle ticket by street cleansing operatives when they dispose of their waste in a litter bin. Prize draws donated by local business (voucher to sum of a fixed penalty notice - £75) to take place monthly and the winners get publicised in the Express and Star as a litter champion.

Estimated Cost: No additional cost to the council. Sponsorship to be secured to award vouchers.

- 4.7 Healthy Walking/Litter Picking: In collaboration with Public Health, extend the Healthy Walking Programmes to include litter picking that will improve the participant's local environment which has proven health benefits.

Estimated Costs: £5,000

5.0 Financial implications

- 5.1 The funding of this scheme will be absorbed with existing approved budgets within Environmental Services in the Delivery Directorate [CH/27112014/D]

6.0 Legal implications

- 6.1 Section 19 of the Clean Neighbourhoods And Environment Act 2005 permits the use of fixed penalty notices Fixed Penalty Notices which can provide enforcement agencies such as the Council with an effective, visible and expedient way of responding to low-level environmental crimes. Wolverhampton City Council has utilised Fixed Penalty Notices for such purposes since the 2006 implementation of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act
[Legal Code: TS/28112014/R]

7.0 Equalities implications

- 7.1 The developments outlined in the report have been subject to an equality analysis to ensure that the core equality commitments are met by the service going forward.

8.0 Environmental implications

- 8.1 The combination of additional resources to combat littering in combination with community development schemes to change people's behaviour will have a positive impact on the local environment.

9.0 Human resources implications

- 9.1 There are no human resource implications contained within this report.

9.0 Corporate landlord implications

- 9.1 There are no corporate landlord implications contained within this report.

10.0 Schedule of background papers

- 10.1 None