

# Report

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Report to:	<b>Community Services Committee</b>
Date of Meeting:	<b>3 September 2013</b>
Report by:	<b>Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources)</b>

Subject:	<b>Litter and Dog Fouling Enforcement Improvements</b>
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## 1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ advise the Committee on proposals to improve the enforcement of legislation relating to litter and dog fouling

## 2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the National Clean Up Scotland campaign be supported.
- (2) that a more targeted approach to deal with dog fouling be approved.

## 3. Background

3.1 Clean sweep is the Council's current major initiative, launched in May 2008, to tackle low level crime, such as litter, dog fouling, small scale fly-tipping and graffiti.

3.2 In 2010, Environmental Services employed three environmental wardens with the aim of enforcing statutory provisions in respect of litter and dog fouling. Since that time regular patrols have been carried out in response to complaints from members of the public and at known problem areas.

3.3 The level of formal enforcement action has significantly increased since the introduction of a dedicated team to tackle litter enforcement. The number of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) issued for littering has almost doubled and, in relation to dog fouling, has increased by over 300%. Unfortunately, this enhanced enforcement has not brought about the intended behavioural change and complaints relating to litter and, in particular, to dog fouling are increasing significantly.

## 4. Current Position

4.1 To date, the Council has tackled litter and dog fouling through a combination of:-

- education and media awareness raising campaigns,
- the display of 'no dog fouling' signage at locations where problems are known to exist and,
- enforcement activity via planned patrols of problem areas and the issue of FPN fines when offenders are caught. Due to the legal requirements in Scotland relating to corroboration of evidence, it is only possible to carry out one planned patrol at a time.

- 4.2 Dog fouling is the environmental incivility that has seen the biggest increase in complaints over the past four years. The number of complaints received in 2009/2010 was 623 and this increased to 1,002 in 2012/2013.
- 4.3 In response to the complaints, officers from Environmental Services have undertaken dog fouling patrols. The number of patrols in 2010/2011 was 245, increasing to 858 in 2011/2012 and 1,281 in 2012/2013.

## **5. Proposals**

- 5.1 Keep Scotland Beautiful, the environmental charity, has announced that it will lead a nationwide mass-engagement campaign called Clean Up Scotland, which will get underway in 2013 and will run until the end of 2014. Clean Up Scotland aims to empower clean ups to clear Scotland of litter and mess in time for hosting major events such as the Commonwealth Games and the Ryder Cup in 2014, and to gradually encourage zero tolerance towards the dumping of litter and mess.
- 5.2 Clean up Scotland are offering support to local authorities and partners to help with campaign promotion and awareness-raising activity and, in return, local authorities can assist by agreeing to become a Campaign Supporter and integrating Clean Up Scotland into our marketing material and website.
- 5.3 It is proposed that three vacant posts should be filled to give Environmental Services the ability to deploy three planned patrols to tackle litter and dog fouling.
- 5.4 In addition to increasing the ability to carry out enforcement patrols, a larger team would provide the opportunity to introduce a new campaign based approach to target problematic areas for dog fouling. A number of local authorities have started to use a 'Wanted' style campaign in areas where there is a high incidence of dog fouling and have found this approach to be effective.
- 5.5 The 'Wanted' campaign comprises three stages; in the first stage signs are put up in an area encouraging members of the public to report dog fouling. The provision of information, particularly relating to when the dog fouling is occurring, will allow patrols to be conducted at the times when dog walkers are in the area. The second stage comprises patrolling the campaign area regularly for a few weeks to catch dog owners who do not clean up after their dog. The final stage is to replace the first signs with a 'Thank You' sign, thanking the public for their assistance in tackling dog fouling. These signs will remain on display for a few weeks and will then be removed. Examples of the signs are included in Appendix 1.
- 5.6 The aim of the 'Wanted' campaign is to have an enhanced and very visible presence in an area for a few weeks and to change the behaviour of irresponsible dog owners. During the enforcement stage of the campaign, Environmental Services would also support responsible dog owners by providing them with free bags. The 'Wanted' campaign would then move on to another area and be repeated there.
- 5.7 The 'Wanted' campaign would be introduced in addition to the current litter enforcement activity. The existing 'No Dog Fouling' signs would still be used and routine patrols would be carried out to deal with litter and dog fouling. By increasing the number of officers in the litter enforcement team, Environmental Services will be able to carry out these activities simultaneously.
- 5.8 This proposal will improve the litter enforcement capability of Environmental Services and provide additional resources to tackle an area of increasing workload.

## **6. Employee Implications**

- 6.1 It is therefore proposed to fill three vacant posts within the establishment of Environmental Services.

## **7. Financial Implications**

- 7.1 These posts will be funded from the existing revenue budget.
- 7.2 Clean Up Scotland will be seeking a contribution from each of the participating local authorities. The total contribution amongst all 32 authorities is expected to be in the region of £100k.
- 7.3 The supply of bags will be funded from existing revenue budgets.

## **8. Other Implications**

- 8.1. Risks relating to the activities referred to within this report are already assessed through the existing risk management arrangements.
- 8.2. Increased capacity to take enforcement action against environmental civilities will help address an issue which communities regularly comment on in surveys and consultations. It will also enable the service to strengthen its contribution to the Council's Sustainable Development Strategy and, in particular, the objective: 'The quality of local environments contributes to the wellbeing of local communities'.

## **9. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements**

- 9.1 This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy and, therefore, no impact assessment is required.
- 9.2 Consultation has been undertaken with the appropriate Trades Unions.

**Colin McDowall**

**Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources)**

5 August 2013

### **Link(s) to Council Objectives/Values**

- Council Value: Sustainable Development
- Council Priority Objective: Improve the Quality of the Physical Environment

### **Previous References**

None

### **List of Background Papers**

None

### **Contact for Further Information**

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

Shirley Clelland, Head of Fleet and Environmental Services

Ext: 4708 (Tel: 01698 454708)

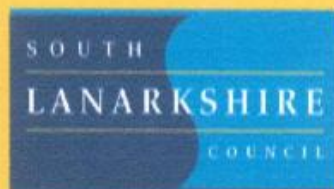
E-mail: Shirley.Clelland@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

# **Wanted!**

**Information leading to  
identification of the dog owner  
who is allowing a dog to foul  
this area and does not clean up.**

**Reward: clean feet!**

**Information in confidence to  
0845 740 6080**



**Thank you**  
**from South Lanarkshire Council**

# **Dog fouling**

**Due to information received from people  
in this area, a number of £40 fixed  
penalty notices have now been issued.**

**If you witness an irresponsible person  
allowing their dog to foul and not clean up,  
please report them in confidence on**

**0845 740 6080**

