

Cabinet Paper

Date of Meeting: 13 September 2016

Report of: Steph Cordon, Head of Communities

Subject/Title: Neighbourhood Action and Fly Tipping Action Plan for Crewe

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Paul Bates – Communities and Health

1. Report Summary

- 1.1 To set out a proposed Action Plan for Crewe, which addresses the issues identified by the Overview and Scrutiny, Fly Tipping Task and Finish Group. This is a 12 month action plan to facilitate change behaviour and address the needs identified as part of the Crewe Fly tipping pilot. It will be monitored and evaluated, so that lessons can be learnt and actions reviewed to inform longer terms plans and changes to the way services need to be delivered in the future.
- 1.2 In order to work, the project needs to engage with local residents and businesses to identify their issues and support them to implement solutions which meet their specific local needs. To engage effectively with residents, the proposal is to relaunch Neighbourhood Action in Crewe, bringing residents and partners together to develop community-led plans.
- 1.3 The Action Plan is split into 6 themes: Communication; Engagement; Education; Enforcement; Service Changes; and Review. It focuses on 6 zones within neighbourhoods, which were identified using evidence of hotspots from intelligence and reporting, and were agreed in March 2016, by the Scrutiny Task and Finish Group.
- 1.4 It has been recognised that there are a number of areas in Crewe that could be addressed, but in order to maximise impact, a selection of areas have been agreed and will be tackled on a regular basis during the 12 month period. Some of the actions below will involve communities outside of the pilot zones, and learning will be used to benefit the whole of Crewe from August 2017 onwards and services changed across Cheshire East where relevant.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. To seek support for the Neighbourhood Action Plan and commitment from all council services to work with residents to address their issues.

- 2.2. To approve the launch of Neighbourhood Action in Crewe and support Ward Members to engage in the programme, as part of their community leadership role.
- 2.3. To receive an update of work to date and how resources are being used to address issues.

3. Other Options Considered

- 3.1. Cabinet and Council agreed that Fly Tipping in Crewe needed to be addressed as a priority for 2016/17. The options in this report are based on resident feedback, meetings with Ward Members and recommendations from the Scrutiny and Overview, Task and Finish Group. To be successful the work needs to engage with these stakeholders, and respond to agreed joint actions.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1. As a Council that values putting Residents First this programme embraces resident feedback and insight into a multi-faceted behaviour change and enforcement delivery model that is appropriate to the community.

5. Background/Chronology

- 5.1. The issue of fly tipping, littering and dog fouling is not unique to Crewe or Cheshire East. Whilst we accept that this is a problem of concern which we continue to address we must acknowledge that in the main the majority of our residents are responsible and take pride and care to maintain a clean and healthy environment.
- 5.2. Cheshire East Council continues to see a rising level of reported fly tipping, littering and dog fouling incidents. Reports of Fly Tipping in the borough, increased from 2116 in 2014/15 to 2878 in 2015/16. Analysis of the data reveals that generally around 85% of all reported incidents are in the south of the borough and predominantly in Crewe.
- 5.3. As a result of increasing workload and community feedback the Council agreed funding to employ an additional 2 Community Enforcement Officers, for a 12 month period who have responsibility for fly tipping in Crewe. These Officers started their roles at the beginning of September 2016.
- 5.4. Residents across the borough continue to use a number of platforms to express their dissatisfaction and frustration about an apparent lack of action by Cheshire East on the issues in Crewe. This includes a Facebook page called "Crewe Residents Against Fly-Tipping and "Grot Spots", volunteer litter picking groups, letters and articles within local press and MP and Chief Executive correspondence. The Council is working with these groups and residents, and has made progress over recent months, but there is still a lot of work to be done, to address the root causes of the issues, and make the impact required.

- 5.5. In order to do this, we need to engage with local residents and businesses to identify their issues and support them to implement solutions which meet their specific local needs. It is also critical that we ensure all partners work together to deliver the changes required to improve neighbourhoods. To engage effectively with residents, the proposal is to relaunch Neighbourhood Action in Crewe, bringing residents together to develop community-led plans. Neighbourhood Action will involve officers organising regular meetings for residents to come together with agencies to raise issues and develop a local action plan, Ward Walks where Councillors, Officers and partners are out and about in neighbourhoods talking to residents about their issues, and developing small action groups to deliver the changes identified by the community.
- 5.6. The Council's approach to preventing environmental crime has, and will continue to be, to persuade people to change their attitudes and behaviour through education. However, the Council does have a responsibility to protect those members of our community who are affected by the irresponsible behaviour of a minority of individuals who, despite the efforts of the Council to encourage them to do otherwise, commit environmental crime offences. Therefore, our work focuses on engagement, education and enforcement.
- 5.7. The draft Neighbourhood Action Plan (Appendix 1), is split into 6 themes: Communication; Engagement; Education; Enforcement; Service Changes; and Review. It focuses on 6 zones within neighbourhoods (shown in the Action Plan), which were identified using evidence of hotspots from intelligence and reporting, and were agreed in March 2016, by the Scrutiny Task and Finish Group.
- 5.8. Key Actions in the draft Neighbourhood Action Plan include:
- 5.8.1. Communication
- Communicate clearly with all residents in different formats that ensure information is able to be read or received and understood by the individual or group for which it is intended.
 - Develop and run a behaviour change campaign to improve knowledge/raise awareness of fly-tipping and waste disposal in local communities.
 - Ensure everyone understands their Duty of Care responsibilities.
 - Ensure new residents have information on how to manage waste.
 - Ensure Businesses are aware of their responsibilities to dispose of waste appropriately.
- 5.8.2. Engagement
- Identify issues in each of the pilot zones and local views on ways to address.
 - Develop Community Pride in neighbourhoods.
 - Demonstrate how we value and support groups who are actively addressing issues in their neighbourhoods.

- To launch Neighbourhood Action, to engage residents in addressing local issues.
- Increase the number of people actively involved in addressing issues.
- Work with residents and businesses to look at ways to Design out Crime.
- Engage with Dog Owners and encourage responsible dog ownership.
- Increase the information received from Employees and Contractors regularly out in the hotspot areas.

5.8.3. Education

- Work with local schools to educate children and young people about recycling and waste management.
- Work with community groups to promote responsible waste management and recycling.
- Work with Letting Agencies and Landlords to promote effective Waste Management.
- Work with local businesses to improve waste management.

5.8.4. Enforcement

- Search all fly tipping and side waste to obtain evidence to issue Fixed Penalty Notices.
- Use ASB Tools and Powers to address local issues.
- Procure Enforcement Company to provide additional enforcement capacity.
- Ensure businesses have appropriate waste management arrangements.
- Ensure Waste Carrying vehicles have correct licences and are carrying out their duty of care responsibilities.
- Identify new ways to gather evidence which enables prosecutions for fly tipping.

5.8.5. Service Changes

- To use Neighbourhood Action Plans to co-ordinate activity on the ground.
- To ensure households have the correct bins and that they are identifiable.
- To reduce number of bins left on the street before/after collection day.
- To look at ways to enforce action against those contaminating recycle bins and ensure they are removed as quickly as possible.
- Review land ownership and management.
- To review adopted alleyways and use of alleygates based on resident engagement.
- Review current CEC policies and practice based on findings of the project.

5.8.6. Review

- To monitor and evaluate the project, learning from best practice, and making recommendations for future changes.

5.9 By adopting a strategic approach to improving neighbourhoods, which includes environmental enforcement, but tackles much wider multi-faceted issues, we can look to embed cultural behaviour change and offer assurance to our residents that we have listened and acted with them to address their concerns.

6. Wards Affected and Local Ward Members

6.1. Crewe Central – Irene Faysi. Crewe East – Suzanne Brookfield, Clair Chapman, David Newton. Crewe North – Mo Grant. Crewe South – Dorothy Flude, Steve Hogben.

7. Implications of Recommendation

7.1. Policy Implications

7.1.1. There are no policy implications from this report.

7.2. Legal Implications

7.2.1. The proposals seek to draw down on a wide range of statutory powers to provide a holistic approach to waste and litter management in the identified Action Plan area. These include powers that:-

- a) enable and regulate investigatory techniques
- b) require and regulate the use of waste receptacles
- c) enable the closure or gating of public rights of way
- d) enable the making of Orders to designate areas that will then be subject to further controls
- e) enable fixed penalty notices to be issued (and ultimately prosecutions to be taken) for fly tipping, littering and dog fouling offences

7.2.2. When it comes to utilising any of these powers the Council will need to ensure that officers (including any contractors) are properly authorised and that all enforcement action is undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the relevant legislation and with due regard for the Council's enforcement policies.

7.3. Financial Implications

7.3.1. The Council has committed £75k funding in 2016/17 for the recruitment of the 2 “fly tipping wardens” and the vehicles and resources needed for a 12 month fixed term.

7.3.2. The environmental enforcement service will be cost neutral to the Council in alignment with evidence from other local authorities.

7.3.3. To have the maximum impact, additional funding may be required e.g. for the proposed campaigns. Resources for this work can be funded through Partnerships and Communities budgets and reserves.

7.4. Equality Implications

7.4.1. The Council aims to be consistent and even-handed in all regards. Taking enforcement action to deal with environmental crime is not intended to have either a positive or negative impact upon equality and diversity or apply differently to any particular group.

7.5. Rural Community Implications

7.5.1. There are no rural implications at this stage as the pilot focuses on Crewe. The longer term recommendations will also address rural issues.

7.6. Human Resources Implications

7.6.1. The work requires additional officer support, which has been agreed and funded.

7.7. Public Health Implications

7.7.1. The work contributes to achieving public health outcomes as it addresses environmental crimes which affect residents’ health.

7.8. Other Implications (Please Specify)

7.8.1. None.

8. Risk Management

8.1. The Council has legislative powers available to deal with environmental crime. Failure to make best use of these powers to improve the local environment may lead to criticism of the Council thereby damaging its reputation.

9. Access to Information/Bibliography

Access

- 9.1. Access to more information can be made by contacting Kirstie Hercules, Principal Manager – Partnerships and Communities, (01270) 686632.

10. Contact Information

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