

TOWN AREA COMMITTEE

18th JUNE 2017

REPORT OF HEAD OF REGULATORY SERVICES

DOG FOULING AND ENFORCEMENT- UPDATE

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To provide Members with an update of the decisions made at the meeting of 13th march 2017 regarding the above. The committee resolved that :

(1) the £7k projected underspend in the Town Area Committee budget be committed and carried forward to ensure a one off clean-up of the streets in the Special Expense areas affected by dog fouling, litter pick, placement of signs and delivery of educational/awareness material in the most problematic areas

(2) a business case and budget be developed, which would allow enforcement to be undertaken in a proactive way going forward and future issues be dealt with proactively, rather than reactively. All options be researched and presented to ensure the most efficient and effective strategy be implemented to support this

(3) an Environmental Champion be nominated by this Committee to oversee the implementation of an improvement plan to deal with the issues identified in the Special Expense areas in Melton Mowbray, with identified Officer support

(4) an educational approach be taken in the longer term and Officers develop a robust plan, in partnership with Melton Mowbray Town Estate, local residents' groups, Melton BID, MARS Pedigree Pet Foods and local schools/colleges. Such further report to be presented to this Committee and to the Rural, Economic and Environmental Affairs Committee.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) **Notes the steps taken and progress made as described in this report.**
- (ii) **Notes the intention to receive a further report, as agreed at the meeting of 13th March, containing a Plan for the educational and environmental work in relation to dog fouling.**

3.0 KEY ISSUES

3.1 The Committee appointed Cllr Pearson to be the Environmental Champion and he convened a meeting of interested Members of the public who had approached the Council and key officers on 29th March 2017. From this various actions have been taken by the Council and the residents involved:

- 'Dog Watch' (campaigning Facebook Forum closely linked to Neighbourhood Watch') has publicised the need for dog fouling to be reported to MBC in order to highlight its incidence, as well as arrange for its removal.
- Officers have inspected known 'hot spots' for the availability of bins in those areas, and where they have been found to be deficient, installed some additional bins.
- The group has compared its information on 'hot spots' based on the reports received. Dog Watch have identified a series of additional locations that were not identified because of complaints made to MBC and these will similarly be inspected for the incidence of bins, with more added where necessary.
- Posters have been produced to be applied to bins and other street furniture to:
 - (i) Increase awareness of the penalties for allowing dog fouling and ;
 - (ii) Raise awareness that bagged dogged fouling can be deposited in a regular bin and does not have to be a specialised disposal point.
- Dog Watch is in the process of seeking volunteers to 'patch walk' parts of the town and report fouling for cleansing and acquire information about regular perpetrators. To this end a public meeting was held on Saturday 6th May 2017 which was attended by Dog Watch and Neighbourhood Watch, a police representative, and representing the Council Cllrs Lumley, Freer and Faulkner and the head of Regulatory Services. One member of the public agreed to 'patch walk' his part of the town around his regular dog walking route and further publicity is to follow.
- A map has been provided in order that Dog Watch/Neighbourhood Watch can apportion parts of the town for 'patch walks' and also plot the incidences of fouling against the presence of bins, in order to identify any obvious gaps.
- Dog Watch have approached developers to ask if they would voluntarily provide bins as part of the development. This was well received by Westleigh who are developing at Leicester Rd ('Melton Fields'), but declined by Persimmon in respect of their developments off Scafford Rd ('Scholars Grange').
- Discussion has taken place about developing a planning policy (in the emerging Local Plan) making such provision a requirement of future developments.

3.2 A meeting was held on 1st June 2017 to share the progress made and discuss the next steps. This meeting included a representative of 'responsible dog ownership' group who had approached the Council having been made aware of the campaigning undertaken by Dog Watch in particular and wished to share some ideas regarding incentivising responsible dog ownership, to run alongside increased awareness of enforcement provisions

3.3 Arising from this meeting a number of further actions were agreed:

- To consider a 'take a bag – leave a bag' scheme whereby dispensers would be positioned in key locations allowing dog walker access to disposal bags, and allow them to donate their own to maintain supply. Various examples of dispensers were discussed and samples of these are to be acquired for selection alongside identification of key locations for their installation.
- To develop the suggestion of deploying Parking Enforcement Officers and

community volunteers to assist with enforcement. It has been identified that the former are a possibility at a cost of £24.50 per hour and their focussed employment could assist with enforcement and deterrent.

- Liaison with North West Leicestershire DC. They have operated a similar campaign (albeit with a wider remit) which has generated sufficient funds in fines to offset costs associated with staffing and surveillance equipment, including a vehicle deployed to 'hot spots'.
- A higher profile of the reporting route on the MBC website, and suggestion that less reliance is placed on forms as it will deter reporters.
- A dedicated telephone option alongside those currently present for call made to the Customer Services Team, to minimise waiting times.
- Try to develop closer liaison with Mars 'Pet Friendly Town' initiative, particularly with regard to the educational dimension as it is understood they have already forged strong linkages with schools.

3.4 One issue that arose at the meeting on 1st June was that residents were concerned with the general standard of the environment in the Town Area. The concerns were not limited to dog fouling, but extended also to general littering, fly tipping, poor environmental maintenance etc. The Group considered that many of the steps described above would be equally helpful for these wider issues and wished to describe itself as 'Melton Matters' to address this wider remit. However it is recognised that appropriate Governance arrangements and understanding capacity needs further consideration, as well as identifying how related groups i.e. MEAP (Melton Environmental Action Partnership) fit into these arrangements so we do not replicate activities..

3.5 **Next Steps**

The Council is able to consider a 'Public Space Protection Order' (PSPO) under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 against the possibility of reliance on Community Protection Notices for which the legislation is already in place. This is to be reported to a future meeting for REEA Committee to address the relative merits and resource implications.

3.6 The outstanding issue from the meeting of 19th March is to develop a longer term Plan to drive improvements in the future, including educational aspects and suggestions for enhanced enforcement/deterrent. This will be submitted to a future meeting of this Committee initially, with referral to others depending on the intentions agreed.

4.0 **POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The issue is considered to relate to both 'People' and 'Place' Corporate Priorities (in terms of creating an environment that meets people's needs and reducing crime respectively).

5.0 **FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The measures taken to date have resulted in an increase in use of resources in terms of;

- Installation and replacement of bins
- Purchase of 'warning' and informative stickers

- Increased incidences of reports of fouling and fly tipping.

5.2 At present these have been met from existing resources but the future steps may exceed those available and demand. The resource implications of additional measures will be included the report and plan referred to at para. 3.6 above.

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/POWERS

6.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report at present.

7.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY

7.1 There are not expected to be any significant community safety implications as a direct result of this report.

8.0 EQUALITIES

8.1 There are no direct equalities issues or implication that should result from this report.

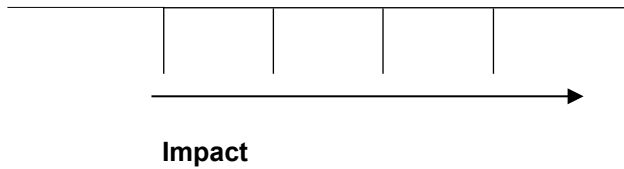
9.0 RISKS

9.1 Probability



Very High A				
High B				
Significant C		2		
Low D				
Very Low E				
Almost Impossible F				
	IV Neg- ligible	III Marg- inal	II Critical	I Catast- rophic

Risk No.	Description
2	Aspirations cannot be met from existing or available levels of resources



10.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE**

10.1 There are no climate change implications as a result of this report.

11.0 **CONSULTATION**

11.1 None at present.

12.0 **WARDS AFFECTED**

12.1 All wards in the town centre including the Country Park would be affected

Contact Officer J. Worley (Head of Regulatory Services)

Date: 9th June 2017

Appendices : None

Background Papers: None