

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel **DATE:** 29th October 2014

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WARD(S): All

PORTFOLIO: Cllr Sohail Munawar, Commissioner for Social and Economic Inclusion
Cllr James Swindlehurst, Commissioner for Neighbourhoods and Renewal

PART I **KEY DECISION**

ENFORCEMENT OF LITTERING, FLY-TIPPING AND ENVIRO-CRIME

1 Purpose of Report

To provide the Panel with an overview of Neighbourhood Services activities in relation to tackling littering, dog fouling and other related enviro-crime and to explore new ways of working for improved outcomes, incorporating the new measures laid out in the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

2 Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

The Panel is requested to note and give support to the contents of the report.

The Panel is requested to give Neighbourhood Services its support to review and evaluate the use of private providers in future developments, and allow us to proceed with a 12 month pilot project guaranteed to be self-financing.

3 The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Corporate Plan

3a. Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities –

Priorities:

- **Regeneration and Environment** - Neighbourhood Services activities will improve environments across Slough where people live, work and play. These improvements will make areas more desirable for regeneration work and so improve the locality further.

- **Housing** – Neighbourhood Services approach will challenge and enforce against those in areas where housing conditions are poor, leading to improved living standards for Slough residents.
- **Safer Communities** – A clean, well managed street scene will have a positive impact on the crime levels locally and the associated fear of crime.
- **Health** - There is an established link between the feeling of wellbeing, mental health and the environment. It has been shown that a poorly maintained and littered local environment is a contributing factor to poor physical and mental health.
- **Economy and Skills** - Neighbourhood Services plans are designed to have a positive impact on local economic development, as any improvements to our local environment will make Slough a more attractive place for business.

Cross-Cutting themes:

Civic responsibility – Residents and local businesses have a clear role to play in tackling these issues, from reporting incidents, giving eye witness statements to engaging in community clear up events. Our communities need to be engaged with and empowered, making them part of the solution. We recognise this is an opportunity to work with our diverse community groups, including faith groups, and develop educational and communication campaigns with them.

Improving the image of the town – The work of Neighbourhood Services focuses on improving the physical appearance of Slough and its environments, and proactively works to maintain that appearance.

The **Slough JSNA** notes that, the health and wellbeing of Sloughs population is influenced by a wide range of factors including environmental influences. Inequalities in health status and access to health services can be caused by issues such as poor housing.

The 2010 Attitude Survey cited decent housing as a key concern in determining people’s satisfaction with the area in which they live. The council has ambitions to regenerate the town and neighbourhood centres for the benefit of the local communities.

Although all types of crime in Slough have fallen over recent years, the crime and safety profile of Slough continues to be an area of key concern for both the Wellbeing Board and the local community. Consultation with local residents regarding anti-social behaviour cited the following priorities that need to be addressed: teenagers hanging around on streets; litter; vandalism and fly tipping; drugs and prostitution.

3b. Corporate Plan 2013/14 –

The work of Neighbourhood Services actively contributes to the following priorities:

- Improve customer experience
- Deliver services and facilities that meet local needs
- Develop new ways of working
- Deliver local and national change and improvement
- Develop a skilled and capable workforce, and
- Achieve value for money.

4 Other Implications

It is anticipated that implementation of this project will be resourced from within existing budgets.

Longer term we are considering service offers that could income generate for Slough Borough Council, whilst providing an improved service for the community and a greater positive impact against our priorities.

(a) Risk Management

Risk	Mitigating action	Opportunities
Legal	Adaption of working practices to incorporate changes in the new ASB legislation	Greater emphasis on enforcement activity. Additional tools to address issues
Property	Visual improvements to areas, so improving community confidence	Greater community involvement and longer term engagement
Human Rights	The new ASB Act supports human rights	Greater transparency. Allows a more proportionate response in certain areas
Health and Safety	Risk assessments will be carried out for all activities	None
Employment Issues	None	None
Equalities Issues	None	None
Community Support	The new ASB Act puts victims at the heart of the response	Greater community involvement and longer term engagement
Communications	A communications plan will be developed for this area of work	Raise awareness of how Neighbourhood Services operate and tackle this issue Promote community responsibility and engaged enforcement
Community Safety	Project activity will assist with designing out crime and impact positively on the 'broken windows' theory, and so reduce the fear of crime	Increase the speed of response and resolution of litter concerns, including fly-tipping, graffiti removal and other safety hazards. Greater enforcement activity against perpetrators
Financial	It is anticipated that implementation of this work will be resourced from within existing budgets	Longer term we are considering service offers that could income generate for Slough Borough Council, whilst providing an improved service for the community and a greater positive

		impact against our priorities
Timetable for delivery	Short term focused activity	Defining and promoting our longer term working practices, both internally and externally, in consultation with key community groups and partners, so not presuming to set priorities without consultation
Project Capacity	A Project Team has been pulled together from Neighbourhood Services, Waste & Environment and Communications	Develop and improve working relationships and increased co-ordination of activities
Other	None	None

(b) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications - All of the legislation used gives due consideration to human rights in terms of reinforcing the councils duties and that of its partners to respect and support the rights of individuals to private and family life.

(c) Equalities Impact Assessment - Assessments will be completed for all amended and new policies that may result from this project work.

(d) Workforce - On a longer term basis, training will be required for officers using elements of the new ASB legislation to tackle their duties under this area of work. There will also be a need for officers to become more flexible with regards to their hours of work, so a 24/7 service can be developed effectively.

5 Neighbourhood Services – How we operate

5.1 Introduction

This report details how Neighbourhood Services tackles issues relating to Sloughs street scene and its associated low level crime and anti-social behaviour. It focuses on how we as a department problem solve issues, develop multi-agency responses and long-term sustainable solutions, with a particular focus upon actions that improve the physical appearance and local environment of Slough.

5.2 Service Model

Neighbourhood Services **operates hand in hand** with Nick Hanon's Waste & Environment team, and of course other council services, where the broad principles are that Neighbourhood Services leads and delivers on operational ASB services, in conjunction with others.

The team provides a **tenure blind** neighbourhood service, across 3 geographic areas co-terminus with the police. This approach allows staff to resolve issues without needing to be concerned whether the land is under public or private ownership. Staff carry out **educational and enforcement functions**. This approach

gives us the opportunity for efficiencies and enhanced quality of services within neighbourhoods, be these private or council properties.

Neighbourhood Services provides a key central function tackling issues related to anti-social behaviour and enviro-crime, becoming a single point of contact within the council for its customers and partner agencies, and so taking the **operational lead** for all matters relating to ASB.

The Neighbourhood Services concept is about developing new **flexible approaches** to work. The developing **fourth neighbourhood team** will tackle the most complex, difficult and long standing issues of crime, ASB and enviro-crime across the borough. **Persistent and resistant ASB** case review work will be identified through multi-agency tasking and those identified through VMAP and the Neighbourhood Services ASB cases. Links have already been made with the neighbourhood policing Inspectors and Sergeants.

The team will also lead on tackling the **traveller incursions**. A procedure working with the police has already been developed and a bailiff firm is on call to assist in removal from council land, as the need arises.

5.3 Partnership working

Within our model there is a strong partnership approach to tackle a wide range of issues within a neighbourhood. Poor environmental up keep takes many forms and can involve that within a dwelling, garden and street, so needing a multi-agency approach.

Often in addressing these matters Neighbourhood Services staff become aware of individuals who for a variety of reasons, may need extra support, assistance and are vulnerable. Staff are trained to tackle these issues appropriately, **signpost** clients to services and make **referrals** when necessary.

It is a recognised fact that low level crime, anti social behaviour, animal abuse and poor property and local environment upkeep, can be **indicators of other more serious issues**. For example animal abuse is directly linked as a pre-cursor to potential domestic and or child abuse in an escalating pattern of behaviour. Our staff therefore have a key opportunity to intervene at an early stage and engage other agencies. Since 2012, 90% of all animal welfare related complaints were legal intervention was taken, other issues of poverty, child protection, adult safeguarding, domestic violence, drug dealing and fraud were identified.

We have therefore developed close working relationships with the police, safeguarding, Street cleansing, Amey, Interserve etc. to ensure we can develop effective and sustainable solutions.

5.4 Community involvement

Neighbourhood Services approach enables a truly **community focused** and robust approach to street scene, tenancy and enviro-crime enforcement. Key to our service delivery success is the **engagement and involvement** of our local communities; our communities need to be part of our solutions and take ownership of actions if they are to be sustainable in the long-term.

Community members are key to providing us with information and eye witness accounts, witness statements, attending court and engaging with targeted community projects. This gives us an opportunity to nurture **civic responsibility** across the

borough and directly involve communities in tackling the issues that negatively impact on their lives, community and local environment.

6. Neighbourhood Services – What we have achieved to date:

6.1 Dogs and dog fouling

Neighbourhood Services has worked hard to address the spectrum of issues relating to dogs, from fouling, dog control to irresponsible dog ownership. A network of partners including veterinary practices, welfare charities, kennelling providers, rehoming charities and the specialist officers within the police, have been engaged with.

Since September 2012, the team has achieved:

- 5 Dog Control Orders for dog fouling
- 3 fixed penalty notices for failing to pick up dog fouling, of which 2 were paid
- Numerous initiatives engaging dog owners and walkers across the borough, highlighting the need to pick up after your dog fouls
- On-going joint initiative with the police tackling irresponsible dog owners who let their dog run out of control in public places, allow them to attack other dogs, cause noise and odour nuisances, puppy farm, carry out unlicensed trading and false advertising, illegal hunting, fighting and coursing and distress to the local community with the poor way they keep their animals. This has led to:
 - The seizure of a number of illegally kept banned breed dogs for destruction
 - The seizure of over 50 dogs on welfare grounds, and
 - The successful prosecution of 5 dog owners for these offences.
- Leafleting campaigns in hotspot areas
- Press campaigns
- Installation of bins in hotspot areas
- Targeted patrols in hotspot areas
- Responsible dog ownership events, including dog chipping and advice on dog health, behaviour and owners responsibilities

6.2 Littering

Local statistics show that street based litter in Slough is on the increase. This does not necessary indicate that there is an increase in people throwing litter onto the floor, as rubbish has many sources; however this would indicate and support the need for a renewed approach to tackling the issue. **Ref Appendix 3.**

Neighbourhood Services can tackle littering with **fixed penalty notices** set at £75. Since January 2011 the team has served 316 fixed penalty notices for street littering; 270 were paid in full giving a recovery rate of 86%, (National average 55%-65%) and 2 individuals were successfully prosecuted for non-payment.

A number of **advice, education and enforcement initiatives** across the borough have been carried out, to include:

- Areas identified as hotspots e.g. the High Street, major thoroughfares in the borough, parks, outside schools and colleges, businesses, bus and train stations
- Tackling litter thrown from cars

- Tackling heavily littered areas such as the Cinder Track, Slough High Street and nearby service roads and the Langley Memorial area, and
- Tackling businesses who generate street litter such as off licences and fast food outlets borough wide.

6.3 Enviro-crime

Enviro-Crime includes all other areas of crime related to waste and anti social behaviour to the detriment of the amenity or an area in general. It therefore includes fly tipping, abandoned vehicles and other related items including trailers and caravans, inappropriate disposal of commercial and domestic waste, accumulations of waste on public and private land, poor upkeep of public and private land, derelict sites and buildings and the unlawful storage, transport, transfer and treatment of waste. These issues cause serious and longstanding detriment to the local community, local environment and the image of a town. Listed in Appendix 5 is the legislation used in this area of work. **Ref Appendix 5.**

Neighbourhood Services has carried out a number of initiatives in these areas, using all the appropriate and necessary legal powers available to them. These operations resulted in:

- 3 vehicles used for fly tipping being seized and crushed
- 5 ASBOs both on conviction and stand alone
- 15 prosecutions for waste related offences other than littering
- the reclaiming of 26 sites that were squatted or semi derelict and in severe disrepair, forcing private owners to take responsibility
- The deportation of several individuals living in the UK without exercising their treaty rights.

Specific and targeted waste carrier operations are carried out quarterly, focussed around the Colnbrook M25 area, Farnham Road, Tuns Lane and Chalvey main roads. Partners are heavily involved including Court Bailiffs, the Home Office, Police and VOSA. This multi agency approach allows multiple offences to be dealt with simultaneously e.g. driving with no insurance, MOT, operators licence, tachograph offences, over loading, immigration offences and outstanding court fines. In the last operation over 50 vehicles were stopped and checked.

A number of private sites have also been cleared at the owners' expense, where accumulated waste has been found. Using appropriate legal powers, the owners have been forced to take responsibility and clear their land and maintain it .

7. Neighbourhood Services – Areas for development

7.1 Dogs and dog fouling

Develop a responsible dog ownership awareness campaign through the Local Environmental Awareness on Dogs (LEAD) initiative as used by the Metropolitan Police in Sutton, London. **Ref – Appendix 1 and 2**

Further improve our proactive approach to tackling dog ownership working with local vets to get dogs chipped for free, in conjunction with the Dogs Trust, as part of compliance with the Animal Welfare Act 2006 amendments in April 2016 for compulsory dog chipping of all dogs.

Tackle dog fouling in parks and other local green areas by running a well publicised campaign of – “NO BAG – NO WALKIES” – where people walking their dogs are asked if they are equipped to pick up after their dog and then are educated and advised accordingly as to their responsibility.

7.2 Littering

A preventative litter publicity campaign is currently being developed. The aim is to educate and to generate a feeling of civic pride and a general understanding throughout Slough’s diverse community of the negative impact of litter and the problems it causes; as it is apparent that people perceive litter differently. These are myths that need to be dispelled and the campaign will follow along the lines that you are clearly anti-social if you litter. **Ref Appendix 4.**

Continue intelligence led high profile operations to tackle thrown litter by individuals with the use of education, advice and enforcement action as appropriate.

Review and evaluate the use of contracted litter enforcement officers supplied by an external contractor. They will focus upon hotspot and key areas and specifically issue fixed penalty notices for the offence of littering. Payment for such work would be self-financing. The purpose of this approach would be to focus resources in key areas at peak times and to free up other officers to carry out works elsewhere in the borough. This is a similar approach used by Merton Council.

7.3 Enviro-crime

Continue to use pro-active operations to create a risk to those using vehicles to perpetrate their crimes and to tackle criminals who use vehicles to be mobile.

Take a more effective and targeted approach to the deployment and use of CCTV. Greater use of the media will be made to assist with the identification of offenders. This was recently done and the perpetrators of a recent fly-tipping incident were identified.

Continually evolve the service to include a specialist 4th team that works tenure blind and pro actively in responding to issues of Enviro-Crime and ASB, as the two are mutually linked. This will mean working outside of the normal office hours of nine to five, working more closely with victims and witnesses of these types of crime, working closely with partners and building stronger partnership arrangements to ensure a co-ordinated approach to tackling the more complex, resistant and long standing cases. This will by its very nature create new ways of working and new ways of tackling issues that blight communities. Part of these plans will include the further development of the 24 hour ASB Hotline service.

Be more robust with regards to waste accumulations on private land. Legal powers currently exist and new powers have recently become available to tackle these issues, which allow the council to carry out works for which they can charge for, as well as prosecuting offenders. This therefore opens up an area for income generation.

7.4 Partnership working

Neighbourhood Services will further develop our strong commitment and ethos of working across council teams and partners. We are working hand in hand with **Waste & Environment**, as we recognise the natural synergy’s between our areas and are building on this further with our plans to tackle tenure blind waste across the borough and our plans exploring the use of private contractors. We also have

the same relationship with **Communications** and are working with them to develop a communications plan focused on this area of work.

We are also developing **joint initiatives and days of action** with partner agencies such as the police. We are engaging with Sloughs Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) to ensure a co-ordinated and consistent approach is taken to tackle ASB and enviro-crime across Slough.

Central to our approach is the **engagement of Sloughs diverse communities**; communities need to be part of the solution, not just seen as the problem. We will work with local faith groups, NAG's, Senate, resident groups etc. engaging our tenants, leaseholders, owner occupiers and local businesses.

Neighbourhood Services will therefore function as the identified **single point of contact** for all operational ASB and enviro-crime matters, for both our internal and external customers.

8 Timeline for developments

Q3 (Oct-Dec)	- Consultation and evaluation phase for developments - Planning phase and development of all associated action plans, including educational campaigns, proactive initiatives, joint operations and service developments (weather dependent) - Engagement and involvement process with all key agencies, departments and community groups
Q4 (Jan – Mar)	- Implementation and delivery phase starts
Q1 (Apr – Jun)	- On-going delivery
Q2 (Jul – Sept)	- Evaluation phase

Our exploratory work has reviewed our hotspots and identified the following areas for our initial focus:

North: Farnham Road shop rears
Manor Park housing area

East: Goodman Park (predominately on private land, particularly garage areas and alleyways)
Rochfords Gardens
Stoke Road, rear of some of the shops
Trelawney Avenue shops
Langley Memorial

South: Spackmans Way, Brammas Close and Chalvey High Street
Burlington Avenue, Bronte Close, Tower and Ashbourne, Chalvey Gardens
Upton Park, Lacelles Park

9 Conclusion

Neighbourhood Services is already working towards changing the way services are being delivered to residents and communities within Slough. The service has already identified work that has been done and what needs to be done to tackle crime, ASB and enviro-crime. There has also been identified a need to change how services are

delivered in these areas, to be more flexible and adaptive to situations. With the development of a fourth Neighbourhood Team to focus specifically on these areas, this report is highlighting the need for scrutiny to approve and fully support this approach and course of action.

10 Appendices Attached

Appendix 1 – LEAD Dog Initiative Booklet

Appendix 2 – LEAD Law on Dogs Insert

Appendix 3 – Street Litter Collection Statistics for Slough 2009 onwards

Appendix 4 – Example Litter Campaign Poster “Love Where you Live”

Appendix 5 – Relevant Legislation

11 Background Papers

None