



REPORT OF: Environment Portfolio: Executive Member Councillor Faryad Hussain.

REPORT TO: Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

ON: 21st November 2012.

RE: Review of Recommendations for Reduction in Street Cleaning

Review of Recommendations for Reduction in Street Cleaning

- 1) That the Committee acknowledges the difficulties faced by the Executive Member for Environment in achieving the required savings set by the Council.

The Executive Member appreciates the recognition of the difficulties.

- 2) That the Committee supports the work undertaken to make the Environment Department/Staff as flexible and responsive as possible in light of balancing a budget and maintaining a service.

This work is an ongoing task, as services need to flex at short notice for a number of variables e.g. flooding recovery, events, marches etc.

- 3) That the Executive Member consider the balance of resources deployed between preventing littering occurring and dealing with litter after the event, as the presences of litter generates more littering, and prevention is better than a cure.

Availability of funding for environmental education is limited, although work within the Your Call campaign to engage and engender community pride in local areas is helping with the education process. Additionally, there are some 30 schools a year that we visit to highlight environment related issues, such as littering, dog fouling, flytipping and recycling, with some schools working with us on specific local issues e.g. in St Pauls C of E in Hoddlesden regarding dog fouling.

- 4) That ward Members be provided with information concerning waste dumping and littering 'hot spots' in their ward to facilitate monitoring.

Information systems are not capable of highlighting specific hot spots, but we do now provide regular updates on flytipping statistics down to wards and also maps were provided as part of one of the monthly environmental sessions. It is hoped that ICT systems will be developed in the future to provide this information.

- 5) That consideration be given to identifying effective methods of educating and encouraging against littering, particularly 'hot spot' areas.

This idea has been taken up. An example of which is that we have trialled targeting areas with leaflets to ask residents if they know who has dumped waste in a specific location. This has seen positive results from the trial and the initiative is being more widely used. Additionally, all Members receive the updates of any court action taken for enviro-crimes.

- 6) That Lancashire Police be asked to encourage their Officers in Blackburn with Darwen to use their powers to issue Fixed Penalty Notices in respect of littering more vigorously.

Meetings have been held with senior Police officers about this matter. We have since met with PCSOs across the borough to highlight to them the need to take enforcement action as powers have been vested with the Police for littering and dog fouling. Cases are beginning to come through from the PCSOs.

- 7) That the Environment Portfolio makes regular and consistent use of the shuttle and the Council's website to promote anti-littering and advertise related campaigns.

The Shuttle has a number of pages focussed on Your Call which includes regular updates on environmental based events and also prosecutions.

- 8) That future and similar local campaigns be rejuvenated and co-ordinated to encourage more voluntary litter picking to improve the local environment.

The Your Call campaign has seen the number of community related litter picks and clean ups increase. From April 2012 to September 2012, we have held 56 coordinated community clean up events which have attracted some 1,543 volunteers.

- 9) That the Executive Member ensure where possible that all initiatives to promote clean streets link in with current and future Council campaigns to help the portfolio:

- Promote clean streets

- Engage with the public
- Educate people

Leaflets have been distributed in recently identifying when back street areas have been cleaned, but little feedback or positive impact on the cleanliness of the neighbourhood has arisen, in some instances it is seen as an opportunity to get the council to remove rubbish for free, although we do endeavour to identify culprits who dump waste. The use of the new leaflet with a photo of the particular dumped waste is having a positive impact.

- 10) That the Executive Member looks to reintroduce a school educator in some capacity as a proactive method to reduce future risk and costs to the Council from dumping of litter and waste.

Competing priorities for funding do not allow for this to happen at this stage, however as described in 3 above, work in schools is ongoing.

- 11) That the Council look to empower all Councillors to be litter champions for the Borough and to actively spread the Council's street cleaning message in Schools, Mosques, Churches and ward surgeries.

The Your Call initiative provides for Councillors to get involved and champion environmental clean ups and a number have done so. Additionally, the Councillor workshops on environmental matters held monthly has provided for further information on this matter.

- 12) That the Executive Member try to and make use of Partner organisations/outside bodies/agencies, to provide education in schools where possible, and that the Portfolio looks at other opportunities to encourage and engage schools and children.

Coordination with the work of the Lancashire Wildlife Trust and Groundwork is ongoing, to ensure that corporate messages are taken forward, not just in isolation, but as part of the wider Local Strategic Partnership prioritisation programme, as littering is one of the priorities.

- 13) That the Portfolio ensures that all Community Pride/engagement projects are appropriately supported to ensure maximum publicity, that the projects are effective and that they meet the Council's objectives.

Funding for the continuation of the Your Call community clean up events has continued.

- 14) That the proposed Environment Portfolio Dashboard reports be given to Members along with a map of fly tipping hot spots.

Given the number of environmental measures being addressed, more detailed specific information is provided on a regular basis, such as

flytipping numbers, enforcement cases, grass cutting frequencies and updates etc., as opposed to a single dashboard.

- 15) That regular use of 'The Shuttle' is used to highlight resident's reasonability to help keep the Boroughs streets clean as well as services that are available to residents in order to achieve this.

This is being achieved via the Your Call campaign, with events highlighted and also the Ward Solutions teams working closely with existing and potential community groups to develop a desire for cleaner streets.

**Executive Member Councillor
Faryad Hussain.**