

Information/Discussion Paper

Environment O&S - 11th May 2011

Street Scene Enforcement Review

This note contains the information to keep Members informed of matters relating to the work of the Committee, but where no decisions from Members are needed

1. Why has this come to scrutiny?

1.1 The report seeks to update members on the current position in relation to Street Scene Enforcement and provides an update on the Briefing Note produced in March of this year.

2. Summary of the Issue

2.1 The Street Scene team of 6 officers was created in June 2010 following an operational review of the Council's regulatory functions and an internal restructure merging Public Protection with the Operations Division. Clean, safe and attractive well managed streets are a fundamental part of quality of life in the District. Clean and well managed environments also have a significant impact upon the perceptions of local people and of the services provided by the Council. The functions covered by Street Scene Officers impact upon the lives of our Community and their perceptions towards crime and community safety.

2.2 Demand for the Service

The demand for the service has at times outstripped capacity. Between 1st June 2010 and 30th April 2011 the team received more than 2000 requests for service by members of the public. This is in addition to the reactive work undertaken by the team and the demand placed on them to assist other service providers and partners.

A range of joint working has taken place across service groups and teams and with partners including police Cheltenham Borough Homes. These include activities in relation to noise complaints, waste and street cleaning, planning, highway obstructions, flytipping and abandoned vehicles. Street Scene enforcement often requires close working relationships with other agencies.

3. Summary of evidence/information

- 3.1** There is a strong belief that enforcement works and that it is an essential, although by no means the only, factor in achieving environmental improvements in the town. Examples of successful enforcement activities have included the issuing of fixed penalty notices for litter and co-ordinated activity between the cleansing crews and street scene which has led to a significant reduction in litter in the town centre. Pro-active education and advice is also seen as being a crucial part of enforcement as it has been proved that it is better to educate people not to commit offences than to prosecute them when they did.

The most recent restructure within Public Protection (January 2011) merging street scene enforcement with community protection and licensing brought

together key services within a single management structure. This has further enhanced the partnership work already in existence with the police and as a result a commitment has been given to provide the section with the full support of Police Officers and PCSO's. These officers will be based within the Municipal offices from 1st June 2011. This will provide the service with the tools and community links needed to meet the diverse environmental crime challenges that we face within the Borough. The overall aim is to provide a citizen-focused service that responds to the needs of communities and individuals, and contributes to greater public confidence.

4. Next Steps

- 4.1** To undertake a further mapping exercise in order to ensure enforcement activities undertaken by the Council are co-ordinated. Street scene requires a whole partnership approach. Communication lines and linkages need to be strengthened both internally and externally.
- 4.2** To develop a "whole street" approach to co-ordinating and improving street scene services by getting it right first time.
- 4.3** To introduce a strong publicity campaign on environmental crime including publicising successful prosecutions.
- 4.4** To ensure that enforcement officers within the different service areas work more closely and collectively become the "eyes and ears" of the Council. The existing Street Scene Co-ordination Group will be extended to ensure all regulatory services are represented. Improvements will be achieved through a joint service delivery improvement plan.

- 4.5** To ensure the resources available to implement and enforce new legislation and existing and new powers are closely monitored in order to ensure the Council is using this range of powers to their full potential.
- 4.6** Street Scene Officers should expand their pro-active role. This area has however been hampered due to the long term absence of one of the officers.
- 4.7** To formalise the good working relationships which are already in place with partner agencies including the production of a memorandum of understanding.
- 4.8** To encourage and ensure our communities become partners of Street scene so that they can take pride in their neighbourhoods and help tackle environmental crime. This is vital for creating and maintaining appropriate and lasting environmental improvements.
- 4.9** To focus resources wherever possible on narrowing the gap in outcomes between the priority neighbourhoods identified and the rest of the Borough.
- 4.10** To provide greater opportunities for front line enforcement officers to network and share expertise and ,where appropriate, generic enforcement capacity be developed where service need requires.
- 4.11** To tackle illegal activities through a balanced and effective zero tolerance enforcement drive.
- 4.12** To provide a unified service and inspection regime across the Borough changing our culture and behaviours to develop a “one team” approach.

Background Papers

None

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Accountability	Cllr Klara Sudbury
Scrutiny Function	Environment Overview and Scrutiny