

Subject:	Pilot Scheme – Environmental Crime Enforcement	Status:	For Publication
Report to:	Cabinet	Date:	17 th September 2025
Report of:	Public Protection Manger	Lead Member:	Environment & Corporate Services
Key Decision:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	General Exception <input type="checkbox"/>	Special Urgency <input type="checkbox"/>
Equality Impact Assessment:	Required:	No	Attached: No
Biodiversity Impact Assessment:	Required:	No	Attached: No
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1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 That Cabinet approves the 12-month pilot of a third-party company to provide on street environmental crime enforcement.
- 1.2 That Cabinet authorises the Head of Operations in consultation with the Lead Members to procure and appoint a contractor in the event that the pilot is successful and it is determined that this is the most appropriate way to deliver the service.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Rossendale continues to face ongoing issues with littering, dog fouling and dog control which have environmental impacts and are a frequent source of public complaint.
- The Council's Public Protection Unit has limited capacity to carry out consistent on-street enforcement for these offences.
- A pilot scheme is proposed with a private enforcement provider to increase enforcement activity at no cost to the Council, with the provider recouping costs through the issuing of fixed penalty notices.
- The scheme would deliver a 5-day service, full administration support, and enhanced enforcement coverage across the borough, with reduced financial risk to the Council.
- In the event of a successful pilot, officers will procure a longer-term solution in line with legislation and the Council's Constitution.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 This report will use the following acronyms and abbreviations:
 - FPN – Fixed Penalty Notice
 - PPU – Public Protection Unit
 - PSPO – Public Spaces Protection Order
- 3.2 Like all other local authorities, Rossendale is affected by environmental crime which includes littering, dog fouling and other dog control issues. Litter includes items such as cigarette butts, chewing gum, food packaging and other items which when deposited inappropriately can cause harm to the environment and can be hazardous to wildlife.
- 3.3 Keep Britain Tidy reports that there are over 8 million dogs in the UK producing more than 1,000 tonnes of faeces daily, even a small minority of non-compliant owners can create widespread nuisance and health risks.

- 3.4 Dog fouling generates disproportionate public concern compared to other little types.

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- 3.5 Public perception surveys consistently identify dog fouling as the most offensive form of litter, often rated more unacceptable than discarded cigarette butts or packing.
- 3.6 Dog fouling and dog control issues are often perceived to be significant problems in the district and to this end, relevant public spaces protection orders have been created and renewed where necessary to control these issues.
- 3.7 Variation and extension of the Dog Control Orders at the May 2025 Cabinet included consultation responses to the PSPO and the consultation responses highlighted a widespread frustration over dog fouling, particularly in parks, paths and urban areas. Responses to that consultation requested more dog waste bins, better dog waste collections and stricter enforcement of the PSPOs. Many comments and common themes arising from that consultation highlighted that dog fouling and enforcement remain a key concern for residents.
- 3.8 The Council has also adopted the use of FPNs covering a range of offences, which offer an individual the opportunity to discharge their liability for the offence by making payment of a fixed penalty notice thereby avoiding prosecution.
- 3.9 When an individual chooses not to discharge their liability through payment of an FPN, the matter can be pursued in the Courts.
- 3.10 The Council had previously entered into contract with a service provider for the enforcement of environmental crime. The contract was not viable and enforcement activity ceased in March 2023.

4. DETAILS

- 4.1 The capacity of the PPU to deal with on street enforcement of littering and dog control issues is currently limited and the appointment of a third-party company to provide this will greatly increase the Council's capacity to deal with these issues.
- 4.2 The proposal to enter into a pilot scheme with a private sector enforcement provider will enable a marked increase in enforcement activity in relation to these matters.
- 4.3 Save for some officer time for contract management, this option will be at zero cost to the authority with the service provider covering costs through income achieved from issuing the FPNs.
- 4.4 The proposal will allow a 5-day service to ensure that full coverage is given to all of our towns and open spaces and to provide the most effective service possible.
- 4.5 The service provider covers all of the enforcement and administrative support required to ensure successful issue of FPNs including all of the mobile technology requirements and access to identify verification information, in accordance with statutory requirements.
- 4.6 A third-party provider will provide all admin and back-office support, thus reducing the financial risk to the council whilst increasing capacity. This will include the preparation of relevant prosecution packs for non-payment of fines.
- 4.7 The option to enter into a trial with the identified provider is based on the ability to provide a service model which fits the profile of Rossendale and to provide a standalone 7-day service.

- 4.8 Alternative models have been considered in order to inform the decision to move to a further pilot for example, employing officers or working with other local authorities in a shared service model. Recruiting directly would require significant staffing costs and investment into suitable systems for the handling of tickets and payments and this isn't viable within current budget constraints. Local Government Reorganisation will be better understood by the time the pilot is due to come to an end so this will be reviewed as part of the ongoing provision of environmental crime enforcement.
- 4.9 If Cabinet is minded to approve the pilot, the third-party service provider will recruit officers to undertake the enforcement activity across the Borough. Officers will closely monitor the contract and will take learning from the pilot in order to understand what does and does not work in order to inform any future procurement activity.
- 4.10 At the start of the pilot scheme, the unit will engage with the communications team to publicise the enforcement of the PSPO which will involve the use of the Council's social media pages and enforcement officers will engage directly with residents whilst out and about patrolling.
- 4.11 The following table outlines the environmental crime activity and responsible parties:

Abandoned Vehicles	PPU
Duty of Care (All types)	PPU
Dog Control (All types)	PPU
Fly-posting	PPU
Graffiti	PPU
Nuisance Vehicles	PPU
Waste Accumulation	PPU
Breach of PSPO - Alcohol	PPU
Litter	Pilot Scheme
Breach of PSPO – Dog Control	Pilot Scheme

5. RISK

- 5.1 The risk associated with carrying out any enforcement work is the effect on the reputational image of the Council, either by over or under enforcing. Either way, care needs to be taken to ensure fairness and a balance needs to be maintained. The educational element and proportionate approach taken by the third-party provider will mitigate this risk.

6. FINANCE

- 6.1 Financial implications are noted within the report. The service will be provided at zero cost to the Council.
- 6.2 Although the pilot scheme is at zero direct cost to the Council, monthly monitoring of the number of fines issued and payment rates will be reviewed to ensure transparency of the service.
- 6.3 The Council will not receive income from FPNs during the pilot but may explore this in future arrangements if successful.

7. LEGAL

- 7.1 This pilot will allow the Council to benchmark the service and formulate the specification for any potential tender to be advertised in accordance with the Procurement Act and the Council's Constitution. All legal agreements will need to be completed with the third-party provider based on the Council's terms and conditions and at nil cost to the Council.

8. POLICY AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The recommendations of this report have no particular impact on any of the protected Equalities groups. It does not introduce a new service or policy requiring an accompanying EIA.

9. REASON FOR DECISION

- 9.1 Approving the trial of a third-party service provider will enable the Council to significantly enhance its capacity to tackle environmental crime through a cost-neutral pilot scheme and will improve the cleanliness and safety of its public spaces whilst maintaining financial and operational oversight.

Background Papers	
Document	Place of Inspection
Cabinet Report – 14 th May 2025 – Dog Control PSPO	www.rossendale.gov.uk