

<b>Subject:</b>	Dog Fouling Task and Finish Group Update	<b>Status:</b>	For Publication
<b>Report to:</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	<b>Date:</b>	16 <sup>th</sup> October 2017
<b>Report of:</b>	Head of Operations	<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Operations
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>General Exception</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Special Urgency</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Equality Impact Assessment:</b>	Required:	No	Attached: No
<b>Biodiversity Impact Assessment</b>	Required:	No	Attached: No
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Paul McHenry	<b>Telephone:</b>	01706 252519
<b>Email:</b>	paulmchenry@rossendalebc.gov.uk		

<b>1.</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATION(S)</b>
1.1	That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes this further response to the recommendations within the 2016 Dog Fouling Task and Finish Group Report.
1.2	That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee monitors progress on dog fouling in 12 months' time.

**2. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

2.1 That Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider the Cabinet's updated response to the recommendations of the 2016 Dog Fouling Task and Finish Group.

**3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

3.1 The matters discussed in this report impact directly on the following corporate priorities:

- **A clean and green Rossendale:** our priority is to keep Rossendale clean and green for all of Rossendale's residents and visitors, and to take available opportunities to recycle and use energy from renewable sources more efficiently.
- **A proud, healthy and vibrant Rossendale:** our priority is to ensure that we are creating and maintaining a healthy and vibrant place for people to live and visit

**4. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no specific risk issues for members to consider arising from this report.

**5. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS**

5.1 Following a presentation in 2015 to Overview and Scrutiny by an Officer of the Council on the level of service and enforcement activities around dog fouling in Rossendale, it was agreed that a review of the service was needed.

5.2 The task and finish group met 5 times between October 2015 and February 2016 and it was agreed that it would be best to look at what the group wanted to achieve and consider any background information provided in order to define the terms of reference.

5.3 The Phase One report (attached as Appendix One) was presented to Cabinet Briefing in June 2016

5.4 Following the Phase One report a further report (Cabinet Response to the Findings of the Dog Fouling Task and Finish Group – Phase 1) was presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on September 5<sup>th</sup> 2016 – please see Appendix Two for a copy of that report.

- 5.5 In recent months officers and members have been discussing improved joint working within the Council, bringing together the various departments involved in enforcement duties. One of the potential benefits of this proposal is that it would add enforcement capacity to the authority and share capacity and skills. Such enforcement activity would include dog fouling issues.
- 5.6 Further to 5.5 above, the potential to move from Dog Control Orders to Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPO's) has been discussed with Portfolio Holders (Operations, Regulatory Services and Health and Housing) together with the Director of Communities and the Head of Operations in October 2017. Moving to PSPO's provides the authority with an opportunity to replace our existing Dog Control Orders with more detailed PSPO's that can encompass other forms of anti-social behaviour, such as littering. A detailed report on the potential of Public Spaces Protection Orders will be prepared and presented to Overview and Scrutiny in the next few months.
- 5.7 In light of the information in 5.5 and 5.6 above the recommendations from the previous report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Appendix 2) have been updated (in italics) as below:

**Recommendation 1:**

**That signs be erected in the Town Centres to reinforce the fact that dogs should be kept on a lead.**

This recommendation has already been supported and signs have, and are still, being erected around the Borough. *If the authority agrees to move to Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPO's) and following community consultation, the Council may choose to erect new replacement signage to promote PSPO's, informing residents of the boundary areas of the new orders.*

**Recommendation 2:**

**That education plays a key role in ensuring people pick up after their dogs and therefore work should be undertaken with schools as highlighted in the report at 5a.**

The appointment of a new Environmental Enforcement Officer within the Operations division of the Business Directorate will allow greater capacity to provide for environmental education issues, including dog fouling. The appointment to the new role will also allow capacity to co-join our efforts with national and local programmes and campaigns.

*The Enforcement Officer began work with the authority in September 2016 and has improved our ability to monitor, manage, educate and enforce environmental issues, including dog fouling. If the Public Protection Unit is agreed the authority will have a greater resource to enforce environmental issues.*

**Recommendation 3:**

**That procedures and contact details of Officers are identifiable when reporting dog fouling related issues.**

Procedures for reporting incidents of dog fouling will be reinforced via the Council web site together with the contact details of appropriate officers based within Operations.

*The new website has been operational since August 2017 and a dog fouling form is available for those who wish to report issues. Procedures used to enforce legislation on littering and*

*dog fouling have been reviewed with the assistance of our legal officers. Work on PSPO's has not yet commenced, however if the use of PSPO's is agreed by Council further work to update enforcement procedures may be required.*

**Recommendation 4:**

**That the Council's website be looked at to ensure the information provided is clear and up to date with current legislation and contact details are correct**

*Officers will review information provided on the Council web site and will amend the information where required to reflect current legislation. Further updates and amendments to the new web-site are made regularly. If the use of PSPO's is agreed by Council further work to update enforcement procedures and website information may be required.*

**Recommendation 5:**

**That the Council should encourage professional dog walkers to adhere to the guidelines of the code of conduct provided by the Professional Dog Walking Association.**

*As stated in Recommendation 2 above, the appointment of a new Environmental Enforcement Officer within the Operations division of the Business Directorate will allow greater capacity to co-join our efforts with national and local programmes and campaigns, including working with local professional dog walking groups or individuals to adhere to the code of conduct. The Environmental Enforcement officer has not yet worked with local and national groups on issues relating to guidelines contained within the code of conduct. However, such groups will be broached during consultation for the introduction of PSPO's, once their introduction has been discussed and agreed by the Council.*

**Recommendation 6**

**That members should be encouraged to contact the Operations Team to inform them of hot spot areas so that the stencil can be used and/or signs erected**

The Head of Operations will write to all members to remind them of the opportunity to make contact to have hot spots stencilled and/or signage erected.

*The Head of Operations has received contact from many members on signage and stencilling issues. Further permanent signage has been erected and stencilling has also taken place in areas where issues of concern have been raised. Civic Pride also possesses a stencilling kit and is using that at their discretion across the borough.*

**Recommendation 7**

**Due to Managerial changes within the Operations Team, it was unclear at this stage what the new Head of Operations would want to propose, if anything, for this service. It was therefore agreed that before any further work is undertaken by the task and finish group, a period of 3 months should be given. Work would recommence in July 2016.**

*Changes are outlined in this report above.*

**COMMENTS FROM STATUTORY OFFICERS:**

**6. SECTION 151 OFFICER**

6.1 The recommendations will be contained within existing budget resources.

**7. MONITORING OFFICER**

7.1 The update does not have any legal implications but Legal Services will continue to be involved when dealing with potential PSPOs and the wider enforcement activities.

**8. POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT**

8.1 The Cabinet Report dated 5<sup>th</sup> September 2016 noted that consultation had been carried out by Members of the Task and Finish Group, members of public, other organisations and various officers of Rossendale Borough Council in 2015.

8.2 Any policy changes or the introduction of PSPOs would require an Equality Impact Assessment, further consultation and communication with residents before the implementation of any changes.

**9. CONCLUSION**

9.1 Dog fouling and all other environmental enforcement issues have a higher profile since the introduction of the new Environmental Enforcement officer last year. The potential changes outlined in 5.5 and 5.6 above may lead to a larger officer enforcement presence in the borough and to the creation of new PSPO's, which will include measures relating to dog fouling.

No background papers