1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the report of the Dog Fouling Task and Finish Group in March 2012 and subsequently adopted the seven recommendations for submission to Cabinet. In addition, a further recommendation was agreed by the Committee and included in the proposals to Cabinet.

1.2 Cabinet received the report and eight recommendations at its meeting on 5 April and this report now sets out the Cabinet’s response to each of these.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Cabinet is asked to RESOLVE that the response to the Dog Fouling Task and Finish Group recommendations, as set out in paragraph 3.5 below be adopted.

3.0 Background and Key Issues

3.1 Dog Fouling is an issue that can impact on all residents across the City. The best method of dealing with offenders is through education so as to encourage responsible dog ownership. The Council carries out a number of activities across the City throughout the year, working with dog owners to ensure that they clean up after their dog.

3.2 Sadly, not all dog owners are responsible dog owners and we then have to deal with the problems of dog faeces being left on pavements, parks and open spaces, and on sports pitches.
3.3 Cabinet therefore welcomes the work of the Dog Fouling Task and Finish Group as this has highlighted the work we are already doing to improve the enjoyment of our public open spaces for all. Particular campaigns have been carried out by Neighbourhood Management and Environmental Protection, often in partnership with the Police and resident groups. Campaigns have included a high visible presence with officers talking to dog owners and handing out “poo bags” and regular visits to known hotspots. Surveys completed at the time have shown that residents have appreciated this work.

3.4 The report highlights that Gloucester is served by a high number of officers from the City Council and the Police / PCSOs who have received the necessary training to issue Fixed Penalty Notices. Whilst the number of notices issued may appear to be relatively low, this is just another tool we can use where education does not work.

3.5 Responding to the recommendations in turn –

i) **To consider means and methods for the public to report incidents of fouling whilst maintaining the emphasis on encouraging the reporting of repeat offenders.**

Response:

All incidents of Dog Fouling should be reported through the Council’s Contact Centre, by telephone (396396), Email ([heretohelp@gloucester.gov.uk](mailto:heretohelp@gloucester.gov.uk)) or by the “Report it” button on the Homepage of the Council’s Website.

We are looking at ways of reporting issues by mobile technology, ie using GIS.

New signs are being placed on bins and dog bins that have all of the necessary contact information. The signs will also include “QR Codes” that allow instant access to the Council’s Website from a smart phone.

All reported incidents are recorded and these are monitored on a monthly basis as part of the Corporate Plan Performance Monitoring. Officers have recently set up an Enviro-crime group that will, amongst other things, analyse the monthly figures and use this to develop future campaigns.

ii) **To investigate the feasibility of using micro-chip readers to identify offending dogs and their owners.**

Response:

Enterprise staff operate a micro-chip reader as part of the Stray Dog service. The reader can be used by staff as part of the campaigns we will run throughout the year. In addition, we would encourage all dog owners to ensure that their dog has a collar and tag so that the owner can be identified, as required by law.

iii) **To notify Members of the Council of joint initiative visits to hotspots within their Wards and invite them to join.**

Response:
As detailed in (i) above, officers will be working up various campaigns throughout the year and Members will be (a) advised of the timings of such events in their Ward and (b) encouraged to participate in the events so as to meet with dog owners to discuss their use and enjoyment of the Parks and Open Spaces as responsible owners.

iv) To examine signage in hot spot areas.

Response:

Neighbourhood Management regularly place new signs in known hot spot areas and have responded to particular requests from Members. We would also like to experiment with spray painted signs on the pavements in the coming months as this has been used with affect in other areas. Following the success of a campaign carried out in Holmleigh Park, we are now placing signs in particular areas both prior to and following campaigns in the area, so as to highlight the educational / enforcement work being carried out. In addition improved signage in all play areas that includes clear instructions around the control of dogs and dog fouling will be put up across the City in the coming weeks.

v) To invite selected local schools and community groups to join in the campaign by providing promotional material and free bags.

Response:

We always welcome the involvement of local schools and community groups in both supporting our campaigns and working with residents in their local area.

Safer Gloucester recently ran a hugely successful “Paws on Patrol” event in Gloucester Park and they want to build on this success with further campaigns and events. Safer Gloucester have produced lots of really useful literature and want to work with more schools and community groups.

We welcome this work and will support it wherever possible.

vi) To investigate the feasibility of sending text messages via blue tooth technology to all devices in hot spot areas.

Response:

Linked to the work of Paws on Patrol (see (v) above), we have established that the Police have the technology to send messages via blue-tooth. Working with them, we will therefore look to use this when we are undertaking campaigns in particular areas.

The technology works by sending a message to any blue-tooth enabled phone within a specified area telling them about the work being carried out in that area.
vii) To consider redeploying under-used bins and notify Ward Members of such plans for their wards.

Response:

Enterprise and Neighbourhood Management have carried out a full review of the use of dog bins across the City by mapping their locations and weighing the contents. Based on this we have been able to identify a number of bins that can be relocated or removed, together with a number of places where additional bins can be moved to.

Waste bins can also be used for depositing dog poo bags and we will look to use new signs on these bins to encourage residents to use them.

We will advise Members of any changes to be made within their Wards.

viii) To give consideration to including the removal of dog waste from public open space within the Enterprise contract

Response:

As part of the Council’s agreed Three Year Money Plan, we have reviewed the Enterprise contract and already made savings in excess of £200,000. Due to the current financial constraints, we are unable to consider adding additional resources to the contract at the present time.

4.0 Alternative Options Considered

4.1 The report of the Dog Fouling Task and Finish Group set out a number of recommendations. The report sets out the Cabinet’s response to each of these recommendations and so has not considered any alternative options.

5.0 Reasons for Recommendations

5.1 Following a review of issues relating to Dog Fouling, the Task and Finish Group have now proposed a series of recommendations. The report therefore responds to these recommendations. The report is not seeking any changes to existing services.

6.0 Future Work and Conclusions

6.1 Cabinet welcomes the work of the Dog fouling Task and Finish Group and thanks the Members of the Group for both highlighting the work the City Council is already doing to improve our public open spaces and the need for dog owners to help all of us by being responsible owners and clearing up after their dog.

7.0 Financial Implications

7.1 There are no additional financial implications contained within this report. If Cabinet were to consider including a request for Enterprise to remove dog waste from public open spaces then further financial considerations would be required.
8.0 Legal Implications

8.1 The law in respect of Dog Fouling is set out in the report of the Dog Fouling Task and Finish Group. This report does not consider any additional implications.

9.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

9.1 The health risks from dog faeces is clearly set out in the Task and Finish Group report.

10.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA):

10.1 The report responds to the recommendations of the Dog Fouling Task and Finish Group and as such a People Impact Assessment is not required.

11.0 Other Corporate Implications

11.1 None

Background Documents: Report of the Dog Fouling Task and Finish Group (Overview and Scrutiny Committee – March 2012)