

Meeting:	Cabinet	Date:	10th January 2018
Subject:	Litter Strategy		
Report Of:	Cabinet Member for Environment		
Wards Affected:	All		
Key Decision:	No	Budget/Policy Framework:	No
Contact Officer:	Meyrick Brentnall – City Improvement and Environment Manager		
	Email: meyrick.brentnall@gloucester.gov.uk	Tel: 396829	
Appendices:	None		

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To apprise Cabinet of the City Councils current and future response to managing litter in the City.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to **RESOLVE** that:

The report and its contents are noted as a means to provide a broad framework for the management of litter in Gloucester over coming months and years.

3.0 Background and Key Issues

- 3.1 Nationally it is estimated that street cleansing costs local government almost £1 billion a year. For Gloucester it will be in the region of £1 million. Not only is this costly; but litter looks unsightly, reduces the overall quality of life, discourages investment/visitors and can be a problem for the wider environment as plastics especially, become part of the ecosystem damaging species and ultimately us.
- 3.2 To address these problems the Government published its litter strategy back in April 2017, this was part of its overall environmental pledge to 'make ours the first generation to leave the natural environment of England in a better state than we found it'.
- 3.3 The strategy has a 3 pronged approach to tackling litter around the themes of
- Education/Awareness
 - Enforcement
 - Infrastructure

- 3.4 There were some new initiatives announced in the Strategy around marketing and packaging but it did place the onus on local authorities to deal with problem. There is no additional money and some think an opportunity has been missed for example levying a returnable deposit for plastic drink containers; although interestingly the current Secretary of State has suggested he is more amenable to this particular issue.
- 3.5 Gloucester City clearly has a significant role to play and currently dedicates a large resource to providing and emptying bins, clearing fly tips and picking up litter in general. There is lot more however, that could be done and this will be the basis for this report.

Implications for Gloucester

- 3.7 Litter is a big drain on Council resources, it looks unsightly will have an impact on inward investment/ tourism and can be a hazard for wildlife. We do recognise the problem and certainly given the correspondence we receive, we need to do more. Finance, however, will always be an issue and we need to be aware that we can not simply spend our way out of the problem. More can be done within existing budgets but ultimately there are aspects of litter prevention that are best left to Government for example running high profile anti litter campaigns..
- 3.8 When looking at our response to litter it is useful to look at it in context of the national strategy and group our responses into the 3 broad categories of; Education/Awareness, Enforcement and Infrastructure. .

Education/Awareness.

- 3.9 The National Litter Strategy does make clear that the Government intends to roll out an intensive campaign aimed at changing behaviour. This sort of work can be time consuming and expensive so in terms of direct marketing we will take a back seat and potentially piggy back on the national campaign. We will however endeavour to do the following:
- We will use our position as waste collection authority (with our partner Amey) to spread the message about the financial and environmental cost of litter. Social media will be a useful cost effective tool to help with this message.
 - We will support community clean ups, in particular the Great British Clean up held in the spring of each year and promote this to other groups and stakeholders
 - We will work with the BID and local business in general to get them involved with community clean ups and other initiatives to improve the environment in their locality.
 - We have recently submitted a bid to Government to trial a model based on Fairshares, where volunteers can claim 'credits' for work they do. Whether or not we are successful we will roll out a programme that delivers what is an innovative and we think unique scheme.
 - We will continue our work with voluntary groups and individuals enabling them to be actively involved in litter picking in their communities.
 - While we accept that it can be 'resource heavy' we would like to work with colleges to get the message across about littering. We already do some targeted work

around recycling with the University. Given the number of new students who will be studying in Gloucester that fit the 'littering demographic' then we would like to roll recycling and littering awareness into one and target young people who are studying in Gloucester.

- In the past done work with schools offering litter pickers and assistance. We will look again at this work as it is a good investment in the future.
- A regular problem concerns sports pitches and associated littering after matches. We will work with Amey to ensure that teams are aware of their responsibilities and potentially refuse clubs access to pitches if they are serial litterers. This may require a change in terms and conditions of hire/seasonal tenancy agreements.
- We have a good working relationship with Gloucester City Homes (GCH) and other housing associations working within the City. We would like to help them raise awareness of the problem and build on the good work they already do.
- We have in the past worked with schools to design anti littering and dog fouling posters. If resources allow we would like to re-enact this.
- The Community Protection Officers are now in place as well as a presence within the city centre BID area. They have a role to play with regard to education. We will talk to the BID to see how this role can be enhanced.
- We have already done some work to investigate the potential of bringing in a private operator to issue fixed penalty notices with regard to littering, dog fouling and other small scale environmental crime (see enforcement below). If this is implemented then we will require that any successful operator devotes a resource into education and awareness to try and deter littering in the first place.

Enforcement

3.10 Enforcement is often treated as the last resort. While ideally we would not have to enforce at all it is a useful tool especially when trying to change behaviour patterns of habitual litterers.

- We supported the BID with the employment of City Protection Officers. There is an option for them to be trained to issue Fixed Penalty Notices though we need to be aware of issues that may arise if we also employ a contractor to do this in the City
- We have begun discussions with a number of commercial organisations who will issue fixed penalty notices for small scale environmental crime in particular littering. It is proposed we run a trial for a period of one year sometime in the New Year.
- Fixed penalty notices are currently set at £75. There is an option to raise this to a new maximum of £150. It is proposed that report is taken to Cabinet in the spring of 2018 enabling this to happen.
- We will continue to pursue fly tipping through the use of cameras and investigative work. We will look to use the income from fixed penalty notices to cross subsidise further work in this area.
- We will continue to work with the Council's Private Sector Housing team to address the issue of over crowding in rental properties and the associated poor management of waste.
- We will continue to ensure that small scale take-a-ways and other food premises have waste agreements in place and pursue those that do not.
- We will continue to mount joint operations with the police and Environment Agency to clamp down on vehicles and skips carrying/holding waste that are not registered or non compliant. Some non-compliant operators do utilise practices that result in littering.

- We will be publishing a draft Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) covering the City Centre that will allow us to increase enforcement within the area.
- Take-a-ways near to schools can lead to poor diet as well as increased littering. It is proposed that policies are pursued through the City Plan that try and control the number of outlets near to schools

Infrastructure

3.11 Infrastructure can be something as simple as a new bin or as complex as a computer algorithm that predicts where and when litter will appear. Investment in technology and other infrastructure can improve service delivery and save money.

- Working with our partner Amey, we are introducing changes to our streetcare contract. This includes a revised round for hard to reach properties utilising gull proof sacks rather than bins and purple bags. This should in itself cut out on litter from spillage and the resulting reduction in street clutter will allow the use of mechanical sweepers making street cleaning more efficient.
- Changes in the streetcare contract will see a re-alignment of the street cleansing team. They will now work as small teams on dedicated rounds, coordinated to be the day after the waste collection which will help with the clearing of spillage and importantly allowing officers and the public to know where they are and when. It is also the intention to build up pride in the teams leading to greater motivation and productivity.
- We have in the region of 1100 litter bins. There is no information about their status and use. We need to work with Amey to geographically map and monitor all the bins. We then need to understand which ones are overused and focus activity and bin collection on those bins. Currently they are emptied on a set frequency irrespective of use. It is hoped that the end result is less bins but those that are left are more frequently emptied or larger thus reducing litter spill.
- There are a new generation of 'Smart Bins' that can compact waste and communicate with operatives informing them when full. These are currently expensive and would not at present be good value for money. However, as new players come on the market prices are expected to drop, as they do we will appraise the situation accordingly.
- We currently only have public recycling bins at limited locations. Recycling bins were trialled in the city centre a number of years ago; however it was not successful due to contamination. In recent years the public's understanding of recycling has grown and it has become much more common place than it may be worth trialling again.
- The My Gloucester app allows the public to quickly and efficiently pass on information around littering and fly tipping. We need to promote this more widely.
- Gum Zapper. We are working with the BID to purchase a machine that will clean gum from the gate streets. It is hoped that as litter declines due to other activities we can dedicate one of the City Centre team to working this machine.
- Assistance from Friends groups. This is always very welcome and yet sometimes the group can be short of the equipment to properly tackle the problem. We will ensure that Friends and other community groups are furnished with litter pickers, gloves and bags – and make sure that litter is picked up after they have completed their work.
- Mobile Cameras have dropped in price and they can be useful in tackling fly tipping. Although they are not the panacea they are sometimes made out to be, we will

extend our coverage of mobile cameras and so increase our potential to catch those responsible.

- Litter follows patterns both spatially and in time. Although not something we will do immediately we will want to look at technology that allows us to predict where and when litter appears allowing us to tackle it more efficiently. On a related issue some authorities have taken the steps of removing vegetation as it traps litter – this appears counter productive as if it is trapped it is focussed, and our contractor if they know about can remove it.

3.12 The list above is not exhaustive and there will be work we currently do, and will do in the future that will help us tackle the nuisance of litter. As technology moves on we should be able to focus our and our contractor's work to be smarter so litter can be tackled quicker and more efficiently. Also people who experience litter will be able to report and log it easier and in a manner that gets dealt with quickly.

4.0 Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) Considerations

4.1 Communities are well placed and often very eager to tackle the problem of litter. While there is plenty of good work the report makes clear that there is more that can be done from rolling out of the Fairshares process to empowering local groups to go on regular litter picks in their community.

4.2 Community involvement is key to Gloucester being litter free not only in mopping up the downstream end but ensuring that by working with young people and other groups that it is not dropped in the first place.

5.0 Alternative Options Considered

5.1 Do nothing. We could carry on as we are, however, this is clearly not delivering a City we can be proud of.

5.2 The traditional approach would be to employ more staff to pick litter. This would have an impact but would not reduce the problem at source, and of course would need long term funding.

6.0 Reasons for Recommendations

6.1 It is recognised that litter is a problem that not only impacts on amenity and wildlife but has economic impacts as individuals and business are less likely to invest in/visit the city. It is however, a national problem and the government's recognition of the problem is welcomed.

6.2 The proposals put forward vary from modest to quite ambitious, put together it is hoped they will make a real difference to how the city looks and feels by tackling litter at source, empowering communities to do their bit and ensuring that the recourse we spend is put to the best most efficient use. .

7.0 Future Work and Conclusions

- 7.1 It is clear that there will be legislative changes coming through from Government as well as support for measures that reduce littering and its impact. The City Council will need to be alive to any new initiatives and respond accordingly.
- 7.2 It is also clear that the area of litter management like many other aspects of local government work will be subject to technological change that will make our work more efficient. Again the City Council will need to be alive to these changes and move forward when appropriate.
- 7.3 It is concluded therefore that the proposals put forward are ambitious but appropriate and when taken as a whole should make a visible difference to littering in the City.

8.0 Financial Implications

- 8.1 All the proposals put forward can be achieved through existing budgets.

9.0 Legal Implications

- 9.1 The Council needs to ensure that they comply with EPA (Environmental Protection Act 1990) Section 89 (1) Duty to keep land and highways clear of litter etc.
- 9.2. Any surveillance undertaken must be in accordance with the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000

10.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

- 10.1 See table below

Risks	Opportunities
Third party contractor not interested in working in Gloucester	Flexibility of contract could allow third party to work in Gloucester and still be a viable business
New working practices for Amey staff unworkable	New staffing arrangements at Amey lead to increased motivation, staff retention and increased productivity
Fairshares bid fails	Fairshares becomes model for other authorities indeed other sectors of Local authority work
New technology proves to expensive/complicated to be worthwhile	New technology provides a platform for real efficiency savings

11.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA):

- 11.1 N/A at this stage

12.0 Other Corporate Implications

Community Safety

12.1 N/A

Sustainability

12.2 Reducing litter is an environmental imperative. Some of the proposals put forward will make energy savings increase recycling/waste minimisation. Litter reduction will benefit wildlife thus assisting long term sustainability.

Staffing & Trade Union

Background Documents: None