

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>13 November 2024</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Graffiti Action Plan</b>		
<b>Report Of:</b>	<b>Cabinet Member for Environment</b>		
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Budget/Policy Framework:</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Gupti Gosine, Community Wellbeing Manager</b>		
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<b>Appendices:</b>	<b>1. Graffiti Action Plan</b>		

## FOR GENERAL RELEASE

### 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To review the processes currently used to tackle unauthorised graffiti within the City and develop an action plan for improving the service.

### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1. Cabinet is asked to resolve that the Graffiti Action Plan (Appendix 1) be noted.

### 3. Background and Key Issues

#### 3.1. Council Motion

- 3.1.1. *This council notes the increase in graffiti that is appearing on private and public buildings across the city.*
- 3.1.2. *This council recognises the negative impact that graffiti has on a particular area that is suffering from this antisocial crime.*
- 3.1.3. *This council agrees to review its current policy on dealing with the removal of graffiti form both public and private buildings.*
- 3.1.4. *This council agrees that it must strengthen its arrangements with key stakeholders to ensure more is done to catch and prosecute the perpetrators in a timely manner.*

### **3.2. Key Issues**

3.2.1 Tackling unauthorised or unwelcome graffiti is a challenge for local authorities nationally. Offences are often carried out under the cover of darkness making catching the offenders' very difficult and time intensive.

### **3.3. The Councils current response to reports of graffiti is as follows:**

3.3.1. Reports of graffiti on public land are prioritised if the graffiti causes offence by being racially offensive, using offensive language, religiously insulting, or inciting religious hatred, any hate statements or graphically explicit images which are sexual or violent in nature.

3.3.2. If reported by 1pm the Council aims to have offensive graffiti removed by the end of that day.

3.3.3. For non-offensive graffiti on public land, this will be removed as quickly as possible depending on the availability of trained operatives.

3.3.4. For graffiti on private land the council encourages residents to report it directly to the owner of the property if known (ie BT, bus company etc) and gives some contact details on the Council website to enable residents to do this easily.

3.3.5. For offensive graffiti on private land, we will investigate and try to get it removed as soon as possible, ideally by working with the landowner.

## **4. Types of Graffiti and the Removal Process**

4.1. Materials commonly used to create graffiti include pens and spray paints, while etching involves scratching into glass, plastic or paint using sharp implements or using chemicals to burn or dissolve a surface.

4.2. The use of aerosol spray cans can emit volatile organic compounds which can exacerbate the impact of persons suffering from respiratory illnesses.

4.3. Removing graffiti presents several challenges:

- Painting over the graffiti can be the simplest solution but can take many coats if the graffiti has been applied in dark or bright colours.
- Paint removal often involves using harsh chemicals. Thinners can just spread the graffiti which makes the problem look worse or can react with plastic leaving a cloudy appearance which cannot be rectified.

- Unpainted porous surfaces tend to absorb solvent-based spray paints meaning that they often require pressure washing.
- Cleaning graffiti from brickwork is particularly difficult and time consuming. Surfaces such as pointing or mortar can be damaged during the process, which leads to further problems needing repair.
- When the graffiti is engrained into the surface, sandblasting may be required.

## **5. Proposed New Arrangements**

- 5.1. The Council has set up a Graffiti task force which includes Officers from, City Centre Management, Enviro-crime, Street Cleansing, and ASB Teams.
- 5.2. The council has identified a number of improvements to tackle the prevalence of graffiti in the city and reduce the impact on our communities.
- 5.3. The following improvements have been identified and have been included in the action plan, found in appendix 1, which will be implemented as part of the work of the Graffiti Task Force:
  - Improved reporting systems using Fix My Street.
  - Improved protocols for using CCTV for identification of offenders and liaising with the police.
  - The use of anti-graffiti paints in public areas.
  - Improved lighting to improve vision of passers-by and CCTV.
  - Improved online reporting options and information.
  - Consideration of a paid for service for private landowners- provided by Ubico or another partner, which makes it easier for landowners to get graffiti removed.
  - Development of a waiver process to protect the council when removing graffiti on private land.
  - Establishment of a budget for development of the work of the Graffiti Task Force.
  - Working with friends' groups to enable them to remove some graffiti.
  - Each instance of unauthorised or unwelcome graffiti is costly to remove and has a financial implication for the authority, businesses, and residents.

## **6. Social Value Considerations**

- 6.1. None

## **7. Environmental Implications**

- 7.1. Materials used for graffiti can have a negative impact on the environment.
- 7.2. Spray cans can often be disposed of by way of littering, further impacting on the environment.

## **8. Alternative Options Considered**

- 8.1. To continue with the service as currently offered, this would not progress towards improving service delivery and does not respond to the motion agreed at council January 2024.

## **9. Reasons for Recommendations**

- 9.1. Graffiti has a negative impact on the community and the environment and on the sense of pride residents have on their community.
- 9.2. The City Council has noted in a motion; an increase of graffiti in the city which has triggered this review and action plan.

## **10. Future Work and Conclusions**

- 10.1. The Graffiti Task Force will work to implement the improvements identified and develop the practice, learning from other local authorities.
- 10.2. Where there is a cost to the council for action or resourcing, the taskforce will review the feasibility of implementing the associated actions and offset the cost with the benefits.

## **11. Financial Implications**

- 11.1. Any additional costs arising from any proposed actions or new activities from the adoption of this Graffiti Action Plan would need to be fully identified and funding sources identified prior to their implementation.
- 11.2. Finance has been consulted in the preparation of this report.

## **12. Legal Implications**

- 12.1. The Council could review legislative tools and powers as part of this work to support the reduction in impact on the community.
- 12.2. Legal has been consulted on this report.

### **13. Risk & Opportunity Management Implications**

- 13.1. Tackling graffiti on private land can create a risk to the Council should the landowner claim there is additional damage resulting from the removal technique.
- 13.2. Interpretation of what is art can differ and landowners may not want the graffiti on their property removed.

### **14. People Impact Assessment (PIA) and Safeguarding:**

- 14.1. A PIA screening has been completed and a full PIA is not required at this stage.

### **15. Community Safety Implications**

- 15.1. Graffiti is criminal damage and impacts our communities. It has the potential to affect the overall image of the city and can make people feel unsafe.

### **16. Staffing & Trade Union Implications**

- 16.1. None

### **17. Documents:**

- 17.1. Appendix 1