

Gloucester City Council

Graffiti Action Plan 2024

The Purpose of this Action plan is:

- **to set out the processes and responsibilities for removing graffiti**
- **identify improvements to the current process which can be explored and implemented, as indicated in the measures table later in the plan.**
- **to examine and outline how unauthorised or unwelcome graffiti will be removed and suggest other possible remedies.**
- **to identify timescales for the removal of offensive graffiti based on the assessment of each site.**
- **outline how we will work with partners.**
- **identify preventative measures.**

Tackling Graffiti

Unauthorised Graffiti is a form of vandalism that damages property, causes public safety issues, and can result in liability. It negatively impacts local neighbourhoods by making public spaces appear unsafe. Often, graffiti is also used as a means to mark territories.

Defining Graffiti can be challenging in today's ever changing media environment, but it is typically words or drawings, humorous, rude, or political, on walls, doors, etc. in public places, which can be categorised into:

- (a) Authorised Graffiti such as street art or any other form of art involving graffiti that is either, or both, officially authorised or undertaken with lawful permission from property owner(s); or
- (b) Unauthorised Graffiti such as any informal or illegal marks, drawings or paintings that have been deliberately made by a person or persons on any physical structure in the outdoor environment, usually with a view to communicating some message or symbol, etc. to others.

Our city has been around for Millenia founded by the Romans in ACE 97, under Emperor Nerva as Colonia Glevum Nervensis or Glevum. The city is known for its historic buildings and structures that have been on occasion, victim to graffiti, such as etchings carved onto the surface of walls and furniture etc. originating from the earliest days of these structures and historic graffiti are now part of their heritage as well.

Categorising Graffiti

Juvenile – generally takes the form of “x loves y” type messages or lists of first names. They are usually written with felt-tip, burnt into a surface with a lighter or marker pens.

Tags – stylised personal graphic identifiers depicting names or nicknames, which are often large and in bold colours. Tags can be pictorial, drawn free hand or using stencils, and are usually painted with spray cans or drawn with marker pens.

Scratches – marks caused by the deliberate use of a sharp instrument to cut into painted surfaces, wood, plastic, brick etc. However, if these scratches form words, then they should be classified as ‘juvenile’ or ‘tags’ as appropriate.

Ghost – graffiti which has been partially removed or has faded to such an extent that it has lost its initial visual impact.

Contentious – any graffiti which could be offensive to members of the public. This would include any obscene, racial, or religious graffiti.

Stencil – any graffiti which has been sprayed through a stencil, unless it is deemed that it forms a ‘tag’.

Almost anything can serve as a medium to create graffiti including paint, marker pens, chalk, pencils, adhesive labels, lighters, knives, and other sharp instruments.

Offensive graffiti can be categorised as:

- Racist, sexual, insulting to the general community or any wording that is reported by the public as offensive.
- Offensive language
- Language of a racially, religiously insulting, or inciting nature
- Hate statements.
- Graphically explicit images sexual or violent nature
- Graphically intimidating images or text
- Images that are textually or visually offensive in context

Gloucester's heritage sometimes fall victim to vandalism and can be categorised as heritage crime.

Heritage crime is any offence which harms the value of heritage assets and their settings and/or assets are sites which are considered to have a value to the heritage of England and include:

- Listed buildings.
- Scheduled monuments.
- World Heritage Sites
- Protected marine wreck sites.
- Conservation areas
- Registered parks and gardens
- Registered battlefields
- Protected military remains of aircraft and vessels of historic interest.
- Undesignated but acknowledged heritage buildings and sites.

How to Report Graffiti

On the City Council website through the online form available or by contacting customer services.

Graffiti on public land

Anyone can ask us to remove graffiti from public property such as public buildings, monuments, benches, and bins.

What you need to know

We try to clear graffiti as quickly as possible. If the graffiti is offensive, we'll remove it the same day if reported before 1pm on a working day.

Graffiti on Private Property or Land

If the graffiti is on private land, it is usually the responsibility of the landowner, you will need to ask them to remove it.

How to report non-offensive graffiti:

Contact the owner of the property, for example:

- Billboards or advertising hoardings, contact details are usually displayed on the billboard.

- BT or BT Openreach <https://www.openreach.com/help-and-support/damage-health-and-safety>
- Bus stop shelters, contact details are usually displayed on the shelter.
- Churches, contact the church or diocese directly.
- Construction hoardings, contact details are usually displayed on the hoarding.
- Post boxes, email customer.service.team@royalmail.com.
- Railway bridges, email customer.relations@crosscountrytrains.co.uk.
- Railway Station Premises <https://www.railhelp.co.uk/gwr/report-security-issues/property-damaged/at-station>
- Link to Identifying Openreach equipment
https://www.openreach.com/content/dam/openreach/openreach-dam-files/images/help-and-support/damage-health-and-safety/identifying_our_equipment_guide.pdf

How to report offensive graffiti on private land

If the graffiti is offensive and on private property, you can report the incident to us for investigation.

By Telephone: 01452 396 396 Monday to Friday 09:00 to 17:00.

Or https://gloucester-self.achieveservice.com/en/service/Contact_us

Offensive graffiti is any wording or imagery that causes offense.

We try to help private landowners' clear offensive graffiti as quickly as possible.

Measures for further consideration:

Measure	Current Approach	Progress & Process Improvement	Team	Estimated Target
Further improvements to reporting mechanism such as Fix My Street	Not currently used	Currently under development	Business Transformation Team	Q4 24/25
Reducing the rewards by rapidly removing unauthorised or unwelcome graffiti	Within current scope and prioritized where possible	Review timescales and resourcing	Waste Recycling and Street Scene	Ongoing
Advising residents and businesses on prevention measures such as treating the surface with a protective covering to allow for easier cleaning should it happen again, or repainting the area so any future unauthorised or unwelcome graffiti can be covered over.	Not currently done	Comms process to deliver messaging. Identifying and who to contact (Bt specific Openreach Process)	City Centre Management	Q1 25/26
Consideration of the deployment of mobile CCTV cameras	Not currently done.	Work with NPT to support Criminal Investigations and Prosecutions of Prolific offenders	Community Safety Partnership & Neighbourhood Policing Team	Ongoing

Measure	Current Approach	Progress & Process Improvement	Team	Estimated Target
Creating a shortcut in Listed Building and Heritage system so future damage can be removed in a timely manner.	Not currently done	To be considered	Business Transformation Team	Q1 25/26
Brief all authority staff on the action they can take if they see, or witness acts of unauthorised or unwelcome graffiti	Not currently done	Lunch & Learn to be arranged	All	Q4 24/25
Work with the planning team and the police's Designing Out Crime Officer (DOCO) team to build prevention into design.	Not currently done	Internal staff training to be arranged and partnership working to be embedded	Planning Team	Q1 25/26
Use regular communications and social media to highlight the detrimental effects of unauthorised or unwelcome graffiti and ask for the community to help.	Not currently done	To be added to Communications Schedule	City Centre/Community Wellbeing Teams Communications Team	Q4 24/25
Work with the Business Improvement District (BID) to support Community Clean up days	Not currently done	To be raised at Stronger Safer Gloucester Partnership	Place & BID	Q4 24/25

Measure	Current Approach	Progress & Process Improvement	Team	Estimated Target
Develop a database of all unauthorised or unwelcome graffiti and street art together with detailed case notes using the authority's case management system.	Not currently done	Case management System to utilise Fix my Street and examine links with other data sets	Business Transformation Team	Q2 25/26
Consider street art as an alternative outlet at authorised sites	Not currently done	Work with VCS, Bid and other community organisations to develop events	All Ward Members	Q4 24/25
Consider Enforcement for any case that needs a multi-disciplinary approach	Not currently done	Work with NPT to assist investigation and Prosecutions for Criminal Damage	Enviro Crime Team, SOLACE with Neighbourhood Policing	Ongoing
Engage with groups and understand their reasons why they create graffiti	Not currently done	Working group to be expanded to include additional Stakeholders	Waste Recycling and Street Scene, Community Engagement, VCSC	Ongoing
Develop a scheme to provide paid for services to businesses for removal	Not currently done	Scheme to be developed and trialed	Waste. Recycling, Streetscene, Ubico	By end Q3 25

Measure	Current Approach	Progress & Process Improvement	Team	Estimated Target
Identify resource requirements for City Council to support identification of ownership when reports are made.	Not currently done	Analysis of time requirements to be undertaken	Transformation team.	By end Q2 25/26
Work with friends' groups to provide training to enable them to remove some graffiti themselves.	Not currently done	Develop training and liaise with friends' groups where we know graffiti is an issue currently.	Open spaces	By end Q2 25/26
Investigate expanding Graffiti priority removal process to premises neighbouring and or adjacent to heritage premises.	Not Currently done	Task force to consider costings and resource requirements to determine feasibility and or funding streams.	All teams	By End Q2 25/26

Measure	Current Approach	Progress & Process Improvement	Team	Estimated Target
Collaborate with Network Rail, Virgin Media, Bt Openreach, City Fibre and other utility companies to develop a fast-track reporting and removal process and the possibility of a value-added fund process to support removal.	Not Currently Done	Taskforce to identify relevant lead personnel at relevant utility companies to initiate discussions.	All Teams	By Q2 25/2026