

HSC Resident Representative Budget Amendment Proposal 19th January 2021

Background:

Since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, cases of fly tipping on City Council housing estates have increased. The City Council's in-house Enforcement Team do not have jurisdiction in some enclosed internal communal areas of housing estates, so they cannot assist with the clearance and prosecution of offences. As a result, clearance has fallen to the two Estate Champions, housing management and sheltered housing to organise and fund. The Enforcement Team do support with clearances on external sites, but their capacity is often limited.

A Zero-Tolerance Policy was created and approved in 2018 to help address the problem. The policy aims to increase resident safety by promoting zero-tolerance of any items left in internal communal areas. Work has been undertaken to map out procedures, but a fundamental difficulty is the capacity of staff to deliver it within existing resources.

Community days are also usually held to help mitigate the issue of fly-tipping. However, these were cancelled throughout 2020/21 due to government restrictions, the impact of which has compounded the problem.

The cost of clearance charged to the housing management budget per annum is as follows-

2018/19 £17,558	2019/20 £34,507	2020/21 to date £32,911
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Potential Solution:

City Council tenants and leaseholders played a central role in the development of the Zero Tolerance Policy, they continue to promote and enforce it through regular estate inspections. To help tackle the growing fly tipping problem they want to make a case to create a new fixed term post dedicated to delivering the objectives within the Zero Tolerance Policy, as the first point of call at the operational level.

The post: an Education and Enforcement Officer who works solely on City Council housing estates and sheltered schemes. The focus of the post is twofold: firstly, educating the community about Zero Tolerance and the fire safety risk of fly tipping in internal communal areas, encouraging sustainable behaviour change. Secondly, having powers to investigate and issue a fixed penalty notice to prosecute the criminal act of fly tipping. This includes assessing sites for breaches of fire safety, investigating fly-tip cases to identify the offender, asking them to dispose of it properly and issuing a fixed-penalty notice if they do not. If the offender cannot be located the block will be charged and the Estate Champion undertakes clearance. The fines will generate an income, so it is a more sustainable approach to the current situation of simply clearing the mess free of charge.

The officer would work alongside the Estate Champions, working through the Risk Warden Register on a rolling programme through the estates by Ward. Aiming to deal with the high and medium risks sites as a priority, moving on to some of the lower risks as time permits. Targeting delivery to one Ward per month would mean that the officer could travel to work and join the Estate Champions in their existing vehicles. Having two officers attend sites is also helpful because clearance of large items is difficult for a lone worker.

Cost:

The post would initially be 1-year fixed term, grade 5 up to £45,491 including on costs. This is the same as Public Realm Enforcement Officers within Streets and Open Spaces.

It is proposed that rather than increase the 2021/22 budget, this budget amendment would instead be funded using some of the existing Housing Transformation Fund which is included in the budget at £120,000 for the financial year with the Strategic Director having delegated authority to allocate this resource.

Consultation:

Estate Champions, Housing Managers, Operations Manager (S&OS), Elected Resident Representatives and Resident Inspectors have all been consulted and contributed to this proposal.