

Item

Developing a Litter Strategy for the City

To:

Councillor Rosy Moore,
Executive Councillor for Climate Change, Environment and City Centre -
Environment and Community Scrutiny Committee 28/01/2021

Report by:

Alistair Wilson, Development Manager, Streets & Open Spaces
Tel: (01223) 458514 Email: alistair.wilson@cambridge.gov.uk

Wards affected:

All

Key Decision

1. Executive Summary

1.1 This report considers and make recommendations on the development of a litter strategy (Strategy) for Cambridge City.

1.2 The Strategy will comprise of four key parts:

- I. A strategic vision including a set of principles and policies.
- II. An appraisal of current service issues identifying areas of opportunity and setting out a current position statement, including:
 - an assessment of the current infrastructure provision.
 - an analysis of known current litter hotspots.
 - a comparison of current provision against hotspots to identify potential service pressure areas.
 - an outline of the causes of the identified issues based on best available information, and ways in which the Council can contribute to improving the situation.
 - Investment need based on current service performance and appraisal.

- III. A review of current and potential future behavioural change activities, including awareness raising, education and enforcement, to help deliver the Strategy.
- IV. An action plan which sets out a phased programme of activity to deliver the Strategy.

2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor is recommended to

- a) Support the development of a litter strategy for Cambridge as outlined in the report.
- b) Approve
 - i. The terms of reference set out at 4.3.
 - ii. The programme of work to achieve the Strategy as set out in the Project Initiation Document (appendix A) subject to approval by Business Transformation Board.
 - iii. The use of community and stakeholder engagement and
 - iv. Research to support the development of the Strategy.

3. Context

- 3.1 Cambridge City Council (Council) has statutory duties to keep land and highways clear of litter and refuse as far as is practicable (Section 39 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990).
- 3.2 Under section 5 of the Litter Act 1983, the Council has powers to provide and may maintain in any street or public place receptacles for refuse or litter. The Highways Act 1980 provides a similar power to install refuse or litter bins in streets. Once a bin has been installed, the Council has a legal duty to plan for the regular emptying and cleansing of that bin.
- 3.3 There are some additional Regulations¹ which relate to the management of recycling-on-the-go bins. Councils which provide recycling bins for materials, such waste paper, metal, plastic or glass, are required to manage them by way of separate collection, where this is necessary to ensure that waste undergoes recovery or to facilitate or improve

¹ Paragraph 13 of the Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011 (as amended)

recovery, and where it is technically, environmentally and economically practicable.

- 3.4 The Council also have powers to prosecute those who drop litter, or to issue fixed penalties in lieu of prosecution under the Environmental Offences (Fixed Penalties) (England) Regulations 2017.
- 3.5 The Council's street cleansing service is responsible for servicing 1,300 street and 540 open space litter bins; litter picking; highway sweeping; 'rapid response' 'deep clean' and graffiti/ fly tip removal. The service also provides a range of fee earning traded operations for both internal and external clients, including void property/ garden clearance; forecourt sweeping; and fly tip clearance. The service also provides public realm engagement and enforcement, including dog fouling, fly tipping, graffiti, camping, abandoned bikes/ locks, bins left on streets and education campaigns.
- 3.6 Street cleaning and litter management currently costs the Council ~£2.7m per annum. 55 staff are employed in this service area equivalent to ~88000 hours per annum.
- 3.7 The provision and siting of bins has not, in the past, been a very strategic activity; litter bins have been placed because of requests or based on past needs without keeping these under review. This means that in the majority of cases, the Strategy must address issues around an existing suite of bins in a range of shapes, sizes, colours and conditions, and a good number of these bins may be in the wrong places. The principle of *Right Bin, Right Location and Right Reason* will be applied during our work on developing the Strategy.
- 3.8 It is intended that an improvement plan will form part of this wider Strategy. It will mean systematically auditing the assets already in place
 - assessing their effectiveness in terms of a range of factors including siting, ease of use and ease of emptying.
 - determining any gaps in provision.
 - summarising needs and putting in place a plan for moving from the current situation to one of more effective infrastructure.

3.9 With concise, objective evidence in place about the effectiveness of the existing infrastructure, and a clear strategy and plan in place for improvements, it will be easier to prioritise existing future resource needs and help to identify where there may be investment need.

4 Developing the Strategy

4.1 The strategy will be formed of four parts:

- I. A strategic vision including a set of principles and policies.
- II. An appraisal of current service issues identifying areas of opportunity and setting out a current position statement, including:
 - an assessment of current infrastructure provision.
 - an analysis of current litter hotspots.
 - a comparison of current provision against hotspots to identify service pressure areas.
 - an outline of the causes of the identified issues based on best available information, and ways in which the Council can contribute to improving the situation.
 - Investment need based on current service performance and appraisal.
- III. A review of current and potential future behavioural change activities, including awareness raising, education and enforcement, to help deliver the Strategy.
- IV. An action plan which sets out a phased programme of activity to deliver the strategy.

4.2 The Strategy will have the following primary objectives

- Improvements to and the integration of service delivery standards aligned to customers managed expectations, using online digital systems.
- To produce quality information and data to support service improvements.
- To improve the efficiency of the service and this could include time saved, financial gain, improved service delivery and improved management of service resources.

4.3 The Strategy will be developed using the following terms of reference.

- a) To investigate how street and outdoor public space litter is managed in Cambridge.
- b) Review the statutory and non-statutory obligations that the Council has. This will include consideration of key areas such as:
 - Dog fouling
 - General street litter (including cigarettes, gum, street flyers, fast food litter)
 - Roadside litter (including litter from cars, gulleys and weeds, fly tipping)
 - Litter in green spaces (focusing on litter in parks and other green spaces).
- c) To consider how other authorities, in the UK and abroad, manage the issue of litter and identify and evaluate examples of best practice and their potential application in Cambridge.
- d) To raise community awareness of litter in Cambridge and investigate how it can become a cleaner city.
- e) To review the Council's performance in terms of managing litter, including benchmarking against comparator authorities.

4.4 We will use the Councils project management processes with task and finish groups (T&FG) to help develop a Strategy in line with the above terms of reference. The following groups are recommended

- a) Alternative approaches and partnership working.
- b) Bin types, locations, and methods of collection.
- c) Consultation, research, and development of Policy.
- d) Current service performance and opportunities to improve.

4.5 T&FG outputs, key findings, consultation and research results, a proposed Strategy and action plan will be presented to Scrutiny Committee in the Autumn cycle 2021 for consideration and approval.

5. Implications

5.1 Financial implications:

- a. There are no financial implications identified at this time.

- b. The timetable for the Strategy and its associated policy development is recommended, so that future budget items can be considered in the Budget Setting Report in Autumn 2021.

5.2 **Staffing implications:**

The development of the Strategy will be resourced from within existing staffing resources.

5.3 **Equality and poverty implications:**

The equality implications for policy proposals will be considered at the development stage of this Strategy. An EQIA will be developed to support the consultation associated with the development of the Strategy.

5.4 **Other implications:**

Climate change, community safety and other considerations will be part of the T&FG terms of reference and will form part of the key findings reported back to Scrutiny Committee.

6. **Consultation and communication considerations**

6.1 The development of the strategy will be informed by a public survey, to be undertaken in February and March 2021. The aim of the survey will be to:

- Seek views on the issue of littering in Cambridge and effectiveness of the current of street and outdoor public space litter management service in Cambridge, including.
 - Determining what respondents think about the various types of litter in Cambridge.
 - Understanding levels of awareness of existing regulations and penalties relating to these issues and views on the effectiveness of its enforcement and,
 - Seeking comments and suggestions on what else could be done to reduce litter in Cambridge.

- 6.2 The community survey will adopt the following methodology:
- The questionnaire/research will be online for 6 weeks.
 - Hard copies will be available on request for those without online access.
 - Follow up communications will be made to ensure buy-in.
 - The survey will be supported by a communication plan (twitter, Newspapers, staff email),
 - All secondary schools and older people's forums will be amongst those contacted.

7. **Background papers**

Background papers used in the preparation of this report:

WRAP² (2020) The Right Bin in the Right Place

8. **Appendices**

Appendix A – Project Initiation Document for a Litter Strategy

9. **Inspection of papers**

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

Alistair Wilson, Development Manager, Streets & Open Spaces,
(tel: 01223-458514, email: alistair.wilson@cambridge.gov.uk)

² WRAP is a not for profit organisation working with governments, businesses and citizens to create a world in which we use resources sustainably.