

A Litter Strategy for Cambridge

To:

Councillor Rosy Moore,
Executive Councillor for Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity
Environment and Community Scrutiny Committee 23/03/2022

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 makes recommendations on the approval and adoption of a litter strategy (Strategy) for Cambridge City (set out in detail at Appendix A).
- 1.2 The proposed Strategy is comprised of:
 - I. A strategic vision.
 - II. A schedule of policies to support and achieve the vision; and
 - III. An action plan which sets out key tasks, timescales, and responsibilities for the strategy's implementation (this is set out in Appendix B).
- 1.3 The Strategy is recommended for approval and adoption following extensive research and stakeholder engagement, including a public survey, focus group and series of officer task and finish groups.
- 1.4 The proposed Strategy's vision is: **"For Cambridge to be a city which is free of litter, fly-tipping, and dog waste"**
- 1.5 The Strategy reflects the public consultation results and identifies areas for strategic action which include:

- Effective litter disposal infrastructure provision
- Awareness raising and education
- Enforcement
- Collaboration and partnership working
- Civic pride and social responsibility

- 1.6 The Action Plan sets out a range of issues and concerns that have emerged from the research and consultation. These issues and concerns are reflected in the Strategy's proposed strategic aims and supporting policies.
- 1.7 The Strategy is intended to support positive change in behaviours, make it easy to dispose of litter, continue with our enforcement activity, when it is proportionate and reasonable to do so, maximise the productivity of our streets and open spaces waste management service and minimise the volume of litter.

2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor is recommended to

- Approve the adoption and use of the proposed 'Litter Strategy for Cambridge' (ref. Appendix A).
- Instruct Officers to format the Strategy for publication and to prepare a Communication Plan to support its adoption and implementation.

3. Background and context to the Strategy

- 3.1 Cambridge City Council (Council) has a statutory duty to keep land and highways clear of litter and refuse as far as is practicable (ref. Section 39 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990).
- 3.2 Under section 5 of the Litter Act 1983, the Council also has powers to provide and 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

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

materials, such as wastepaper, 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, recovery, and where it is technically, environmentally and economically practicable.

- 3.4 The Council also has powers to prosecute those who drop litter, or to issue fixed penalties in lieu of prosecution under the Environmental Protection Act 1990.
- 3.5 The Council's street cleansing service is responsible for servicing 1,300 street and 540 open space litter bins: and undertaking litter picking, highway sweeping, 'rapid response' 'deep clean' and graffiti/ fly tip removal. The service also provides public realm community engagement and enforcement, including for dog control offences, fly tipping, littering, unauthorised camping, abandoned vehicles, waste management offences and education campaigns.
- 3.6 The Council's street cleansing and litter management service employs 55 staff (which equates to ~88000 hours per annum operational capacity) and currently costs the Council ~£2.7m per annum.

4 How we developed the Strategy

4.1 The Strategy was developed using the following terms of reference, as agreed at Environment and Community Services Committee in January 2021:

- 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.*

4.2 As part the requirements to achieve the terms of reference and to help inform the Council's Operational Hub ² development plan, Plan B Management Solutions was commissioned to complete a comprehensive assessment of our streets and open spaces waste management service provision. The results of the assessment were used to inform the Strategy's development and in particular the supporting Action Plan in Appendix B.

4.3 As part of the Strategy development phase, we completed a benchmarking exercise with Bristol, Oxford, and Canterbury City Council's. This research has highlighted that there is no one solution to the provision of streets and open space waste management services, rather several basic approaches that are modified to suit local circumstances driven by specific local goals.

4.4 The public consultation which we undertook to support the Strategy's development ran for 6 weeks (1st July 2021 to 15th August 2021) yielded 454 responses. The full findings are available at Appendix C.

4.5 This public consultation gives recommendations on raising awareness, working with businesses and education establishments, enforcement and civic pride and social responsibilities. These requirements are reflected in the strategic policies and aims and resulting action plan

4.6 The consultation results also gave us good data to allow:

- an analysis of current litter 'hot spots'.
- a comparison of current service provision against 'hot spots' to identify service pressure areas.

² Cambridge City Council must relocate its Streets and Open Spaces depot facility and waste transfer operation from its current site at Cowley Road. The Council has identified a site also located in the Cowley Road industrial area.

- an outline of the causes of the identified litter issues, based on best available information, and the ways in which the Council can contribute to improving the situation.
- An assessment of current and future behavioural change activities, including awareness raising, education and enforcement, to help deliver the Strategy.

4.7 The Strategy focus group had 23 attendees and contributed to a discussion on how a Strategy can help the service. This piece of work presented additional actions (from the public consultation) for the Strategy to consider around learning from others, reporting and servicing of bins, and continued community engagement. The full focus group results report is available as at Appendix D.

4.8 Strategy Task and Finish Groups were established to work on current service provision, alternative approaches and partnership working and bin types, locations, and ways of working.

4.9 The Task and Finish Groups identified issues and concerns for the Strategy to consider and respond relating to

- Working with others
- Sharing best practice
- Benchmarking
- Campaigns and communication
- Deposit Reward Schemes
- Investment need
- Enforcement
- Volunteering opportunities
- Number of bins/ their locations
- Review collection methods
- Design of bins
- Volumes of litter
- Education

These are all considered and reflected in the proposed Strategy.

5 Summary of Research Findings

5.1 Research conducted during the Strategy has highlighted that littering is fundamentally a behavioural problem and the Strategy states that good litter disposal infrastructure and clear expectations, supported by

proportionate enforcement, helps reinforce social pressure to do the right thing.

- 5.2. It is evident from the research that people need to both understand what they ought to be doing and be motivated to do the right thing. It also suggests that they must have the opportunity to do so, and that is where the provision of necessary infrastructure, based on the recommended national guidance produced by WRAP (Waste Resources Action Programme), with regard to the design, number and location of public litter bins and other items of street furniture designed to capture litter, and the associated supporting principle of 'Right Bin, Right Location and Right Reason', comes in.
- 5.3. Research suggests that litter management infrastructure alone is not enough to solve the problem; information is required to build capability to properly use different types of bins, and campaigns and/or enforcement activity are required to create the motivation for people to use them and dispose of their waste responsibly.
- 5.4. The proposed Litter Strategy includes policies for waste reduction and recycling and in general seeks solutions so that recycling is made clearer and easier, so that people understand which is the correct bin for disposing of different waste items. This also applies to infrastructure where a simpler system is expected to help cut littering by making the expected behaviour clearer for users.
- 5.5. Effective local infrastructure is not just having the right number and type of bins but also siting them in appropriate locations and using visual cues to maximise the chances of them being used properly.

6. Implications

6.1 Financial implications:

- a. There are no financial implications identified at this time, though it should be noted that the Strategy Action Plan (ref. Appendix B), includes actions to review the design, location, and number of bins in the city; maximise the use of mechanical handling and minimise the associated vehicle movements, which will have both capital and revenue budget implications associated.

- b. These implications will be addressed through the consideration of business cases and associated budget proposals, as part of the Council's annual Budget Setting Report process for 2024/25.

6.2 **Staffing implications:**

The management and implementation of the Strategy will be resourced from within existing staffing resources. Any staffing implications associated with implementing the Strategy Action Plan (ref. Appendix B) will be managed in accordance with the Council's Organisational Change policy.

6.3 **Equality and poverty implications:**

An EQIA was developed to support the consultation associated with the development of the Strategy. The Strategy EQIA has identified no significant impact on those with protected characteristics.

6.4 **Other implications:**

There are no other implications identified

7. **Consultation and communication considerations**

7.1 The development of the strategy was informed by a public survey, this sought views on the issue of littering in Cambridge and effectiveness of the Council's current streets and open spaces management service, 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.

In addition to the survey, the Strategy development phase also included public focus group on how a strategy can help the service to tackle known litter 'hot spots', and

7.2 No further consultation is required, and participants of the survey will be updated on the development of the Strategy.

7.3 As part of the Action Plan to support the Strategy a Communication Plan is to be developed. This will help support the strategic ambitions of the Strategy, including the policies and associated actions.

8. Background papers

The following background papers used in the preparation of this report:

- WRAP³ (2020) 'The Right Bin in the Right Place'
- StreetScene Services Baseline Benchmarking Summer 2022
- Task and Finish Group outputs
- Plan B – Baseline Assessment

9. Appendices

Appendix A - 'A Litter Strategy for Cambridge'
Appendix B - 'A Litter Strategy for Cambridge – Action Plan'
Appendix C - 'Litter Strategy Consultation Public Survey Report'
Appendix D - 'Litter Strategy Consultation Focus Group Discussion'
27th July 2021

10. 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)

³ WRAP is a not-for-profit organisation working with governments, businesses, and citizens to create a world in which we use resources sustainably.