

THRIVING PLACES- ACHIEVING CLEAN, WELCOMING NEIGHBOURHOODS

Report of the Assistant Director of Neighbourhoods

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Under the partnership-owned Neighbourhoods and Prevention strategy we have committed to creating, developing and maintaining “thriving places” across the borough. Within this pillar of the strategy, our vision is to ensure our neighbourhoods are safe, animated, accessible and sustainable.

2. WHAT DOES GOOD LOOK LIKE?

- 2.1 A key element the Thriving Places work is that places that are clean and well-presented, with minimal environmental crime and ASB, in which people will want to live, work and play. Teams across place management work hard in our communities to make this the reality, supporting families and individuals with issues they encounter in the public realm. We also support residents who want to contribute to their local area, training those who want to volunteer in our beautiful greenspaces or linking them with local voluntary, community faith and social enterprise to support the great work these organisations do in our public realm. It should be highlighted though, that Stockport does not suffer from the same level of significant enviro crime seen elsewhere in GM and beyond.

3. WHAT DO WE MEAN BY ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME AND ASB?

- 3.1 A range of behaviour and/or offences including but not limited to:
- 3.1.1 Waste crimes (Fly Tipping and littering, public health concern accumulations of waste on private land, abandoned vehicles)
 - 3.1.2 Fly Posting & Graffiti
 - 3.1.3 Prevention of Damage by Pests
 - 3.1.4 Vandalism
 - 3.1.5 Car Cruises

4. ACHIEVING THE STANDARD WE WANT FOR THE BOROUGH

- 4.1 We can only achieve the good standard we are looking for in our public realm by taking a collaborative approach with communities and partners, employing a suite of different activities, ranging from prevention to enforcement. It is vital we keep our streets clean, with good quality services to collect waste and inappropriately disposed of rubbish, ensuring that the council is proportionate in its actions. This means encouraging the right behaviours, removing the waste as quickly as possible and committing proportionate resources to enforcement and a deterrent.
- 4.2 The council's approach is to clean up badly disposed waste quickly, provide warnings where people have acted inappropriately but seek to enforce where there is a big or repeated problem. This means that streets are kept clean and

costly enforcement is targeted. This needs to be balanced with the reality that in very few cases is evidence available.

5. CURRENT PREVENTION ACTIVITY

5.1 *Education*

5.1.1 Warnings and educational interventions when appropriate such as advisory household recycling visits, promotion of enforcement outcomes and involvement in GM fly tipping awareness raising promotional initiatives as a first step.

5.1.2 This includes boroughwide initiatives such as the Spring Clean programme and social media stories and output, or coordinated regional approaches such as a GM campaign to raise awareness of the impact of using unlicensed companies to remove garden and other waste which inevitably ends up being fly-tipped.

5.2 *Working with businesses and families to support them to change behaviour*

5.2.1 As a precursor to enforcement we work with those in the borough who are acting inappropriately with regards to waste disposal and other issues, giving them the opportunity to change their behaviour. Examples include neighbourhoods officers building up relationships with local businesses on their patch so that they are able to challenge where there is inappropriate behaviour and work with the offenders to quickly rectify their behaviour. Similarly, it may include talking to private homeowners who are not using the waste collection system appropriately to ensure they are able to follow the agreed processes.

5.3 *Working to address the root cause*

5.3.1 This would include preventative approaches working to cultivate community pride through maintaining good standards of cleanliness throughout the borough as well as working directly with offenders such as the youth engagement programme R Time aiming to utilise diversionary activity and the engagement of those undertaking Community Payback to work positively to improve our public realm.

6. CURRENT ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITY

6.1 Local Authorities have a range of statutory duties defined in legislation as well as a suite of discretionary powers to resolve key environmental and antisocial matters of local priority and of public health detriment. The neighbourhood

teams currently use a mix of Community Protection Warnings, Community Protection Notices, Fixed Penalty notices and prosecutions.

- 6.2 Enforcement of significant enviro crimes is considered based on evidence and taking account of proportionality, Government Guidance, The Regulators Code and Stockport Council Enforcement Policy. Successful enforcement is reliant upon evidence being available often to a criminal standard and as a result, is resource intensive for specialist officers. Our enforcement intervention resources are therefore targeted with the aim of prioritising:
- statutory duties;
 - when there are significant organised environmental crime incidents or repeat offending with evidenced significant impact on a local community, there being an imminent public health risk; and
 - the value of the intervention for our resident as against the resource cost.

7. DAYS OF ACTION

- 7.1 To maximise the impact of our prevention/ enforcement combined approach, we work in partnership with police and other partners to take action in specified locations across the borough focusing on a range of issues such as environmental crime.

8. WHAT IS THE CURRENT POSITION - DATA

- 8.1 In the first 2 quarters of this reporting year there have been 905 fly-tipping incidents reported, an increase from 735 at the same point in the previous year which reflects our push on encouraging residents to use our online reporting system, alongside enforcement through Community Protection Warnings.
- 8.2 In terms of enforcement so far this year the team have been vigilant in serving warnings as a first step in line with our prevention-first approach

Notice Description	2023 1 st April- 31 October
Community Protection Warning	142
Community Protection Notice	4
Fly tipping and littering FPN	3
Fly tipping prosecution	1
Household Waste Duty of Care FPN	2
Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949 S4	9
EH Protect Act 1990 Sect 34	2
Car Cruising PSPO contravention FPNs	58
total	221

- 8.3 Whilst this data shows the borough is not without environmental crime that we must take action to address, we know that compared to our some of our neighbours in GM our issue is on a much smaller scale and despite fewer dedicated officers and fewer prosecutions and penalties served out streets are arguably considerably cleaner and free of litter.

9. HOW DO WE SUPPORT OUR PREVENTATIVE AND ENFORCEMENT APPROACHES?

9.1 *Neighbourhood multi-agency teams*

9.1.1 Where there are persistent, ongoing or particularly problematic issues in a neighbourhood, the relevant manager will bring together a multiagency team to agree on a plan and approach to address the specific issues.

9.1.2 Similarly, where there are ongoing youth ASB issues, a multiagency group will follow the “Ladder of intervention” approach which looks to support families and young people with a preventative approach in the first instance rather than jumping straight to punitive action.

9.2 *Supportive, balanced, proportionate*

9.2.1 It is important that we take a balanced, proportionate approach to address issues where they arise, making sure we are supporting residents who may have taken inappropriate action out of a lack of understanding or necessity, for example paying for a man and van found on social media to remove waste either because they didn't know they weren't licensed, didn't have their own transport or couldn't afford to pay a professional.

9.3 *CCTV*

9.3.1 There are many different types of CCTV / surveillance cameras which are used to address a range of antisocial behaviour including environmental crime. Officers are developing a clear outline of the benefits and limitations of the various types of surveillance which will then assist officers and elected members in assessing whether the issue they want to resolve could be supported by the use of CCTV or whether there are other, more appropriate interventions. The proposed approach will be taken through the One Stockport Safety Partnership governance structure for sign off.

9.3.2 It is important to consider the importance of the privacy of our residents when seeking options for surveillance and ensuring that a proportionate approach is taken. It should also be noted that there are a number of limitations to surveillance, around ability to identify perpetrators, perceived versus real deterrent effect and cost and ongoing revenue liabilities.

10. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

10.1 The strength of our approach is that it is a proportionate one. We support our communities in educating them to act reasonably in relation to household waste disposal and other antisocial matters through a variety of interventions in a stepped way and also in acting robustly through enforcement when warranted. We are prioritising those matters where there is a statutory requirement to do so and using discretionary powers and approaches to address the most significant current matters. This results in the maintenance of a generally good standard of environmental cleanliness across the borough.

10.2 The areas we intend to focus on for improvement are:

10.2.1 Develop a data led approach and tailored intervention strategies according to identified localised neighbourhood enviro crime issues.

10.2.2 Carry out targeted action periods and publicise the results of those.

10.2.3 Investigate the use of social media and other communication channels to raise awareness around rogue traders etc.

10.2.4 Including written warnings such as Community Protection Warnings in our reporting to illustrate our full range of intervention activity.

10.2.5 Develop Enviro-crime Protocol with CCTV approach included

10.2.6 Consider changes to the recording of offenses to improve enforcement approach

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 Members are asked to comment on balanced approach of prevention and enforcement described in the paper