

REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE



DATE	10th December 2019
PORTFOLIO	Community & Environmental Services
REPORT AUTHOR	Joanne Swift
TEL NO	01282 477301
EMAIL	jswift@burnley.gov.uk

Dog Fouling Working Group

PURPOSE

1. To consider the recommendations of the Dog Fouling Working Group.

RECOMMENDATION

2. To agree to implement the following recommendations of the Working Group as part of the Council's operational response to dog fouling;
 - Implement a resident hotline and promote to encourage reportage
 - Extend enforcement patrols
 - Ensure dog fouling functionality is reviewed for Member reporting
 - Provide quarterly ward performance updates to support resident groups, parish Councils and drop ins
 - Support ward / park initiatives E.G action days / weeks - a holistic approach of door knocking / community involvement and feedback
 - Implement the use of signage and targeted communications at selected locations where fines have been issued, to raise greater awareness of patrol activity with local residents and to serve as a deterrent
 - Increase the dog fouling FPN to the current maximum of £100
 - To develop a seasonal forward plan of Comms activities.
 - Profile and targeted communications to incorporate local resident groups and schools

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

3. To ensure the Council continues to provide a proactive service that responds to the concerns of local residents.

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

4. In July 2019, The Executive as part of its cleaner and greener agenda established a cross-party working group of Members and Officers to look at how the Council could strengthen its approach to promote socially responsible dog ownership and reduce dog fouling across the borough. It was anticipated that the Working Group would report to the Executive with their recommendations within 6 months.

5. **Service Background**

Feedback from residents indicates that concerns about dog fouling remain high. Initial meetings discussed the governing legislative powers, existing service delivery and the key local issues. In summary, the Anti-Social Behaviour and the Crime and Policing Act 2014 provide the overarching legislative powers. Boroughwide enforcement patrols for dog fouling and pro-active work with residents are undertaken by LA Support (Formerly Kingdom Environmental Services) and the Council's Park Ranger service. Patrols and priority setting for dog fouling patrols have traditionally been set from community information, obtained from residents and Members.

6. **Working Group Priorities**

The initial meeting was held on the 29th August 2019 and was constructive in 'setting the scene' of existing operational delivery, the terms of reference of the Group and to enable the key priorities of the Group to be established. At this meeting the Group were also consulted on the proposed Public Space Protection Order for Dog Control. The recommendations of the Working Group have been considered and incorporated within the consultation outcomes and the report to the Executive, on this matter.

7. Appendix One – *Working Group Priorities* provides a summary of the activities that have been recommended by the Working Group, that would be undertaken within each of the proposed recommendations. The Group recommended the importance of stronger 'reporting in' mechanism for residents and Ward Members. A dedicated hotline for dog fouling, similar to the approach that is currently in place to report motor cycle nuisance was recognised and recommended. (The hotline would provide Members and residents the opportunity to report any incidents to a dedicated answerphone, that whilst would not be 'manned' 24/7 it would be periodically checked by Officers within working hours and the intelligence used to determine hotspot patrol priorities).
8. A further key strand of work recommended by the Group is the support of a robust dog fouling communications plan to facilitate the;
 - Review of existing publicity
 - Continued reporting of hotspot areas
 - Reinforcing of the importance of socially responsible dog ownership
 - To provide a feedback loop of activities and enforcement at the local level
 - Inclusion of targeted publicity messages via schools and residents' groups based on the profile of dog fouling offenders
9. Dog fouling is enforced by the issue of Fixed Penalty Fines. The current fixed penalty charge for dog fouling is set by the Council at £75.00. The Council has retained the penalty charge of £75.00 at this level since its introduction. Following consideration of this,

Members of the Working Group recommend that from 2020 the charge for dog fouling that is set by the Council is increased to the national / legislative maximum. The maximum charge is set by DEFRA and is currently £100.00. Local benchmarking demonstrates that most Lancashire Authorities that enforce on dog fouling, currently impose the maximum fine of £100.00.

The Working Group recommend this change as being necessary to;

- Demonstrate the Council’s robust response to those offenders that commit dog fouling.
- To serve as a deterrent
- To demonstrate to the wider community that the Council will take a tough stance on this issue of key public concern.

10. Members of the Working Group requested benchmarking data on current dog fouling targeted activity performance across neighbouring Authorities. Other Lancashire Authorities were contacted and the following recorded performance data for dog fouling was obtained;

Local Authority	17/18	18/19	19/ to date
Blackburn	19	26	7
Blackpool	N/A	15	2
Burnley	249	66*	24*
Chorley	-	0	-
Hyndburn	-	-	4
Lancaster	3	3	2
Preston	3	0	0
Pendle	-	-	12
Ribble Valley	1	7	3

**Recorded year from 1st Jul – 30th June*

11. As can be seen, the Council currently takes a robust approach and is successful in tackling dog fouling. Members of the Working Group recognised the positive action that the Council has already previously taken to address this key resident concern. Members of the Working Group recognised that the implementation of the proposed recommendation would continue to strengthen the council’s targeted approach to tackling dog fouling across the borough, working in partnership with our residents.

Should the proposed recommendations be approved by the Executive, Officers will develop an action plan for delivery to commence from January 2020, for implementation and delivery during 2020/21. Performance updates will be provided to Members via the Council’s Strategic Priority Update reports. Ward performance and details of activities will be provided via Member, Parish Council and resident updates on a regular basis.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND BUDGET PROVISION

12. The proposed recommendations will be delivered via existing operational budgets.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

13. The proposal supports the commitment in the strategic plan to “implement a range of initiatives to maintain a clean, safe, attractive and environmentally friendly borough”.

DETAILS OF CONSULTATION

14. Cross Party Dog Fouling Working Group during August – November 2019.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

15. None

FURTHER INFORMATION

PLEASE CONTACT:

Jonathan Jackson

ALSO:

