

REVIEW BY THE RESIDENTS, EDUCATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE: LITTERING AND FLY-TIPPING IN HILLINGDON

Cabinet Member(s)	Councillor Philip Corthorne
Cabinet Portfolio(s)	Housing and The Environment
Officer Contact(s)	Neil Fraser, Democratic Services
Papers with report	Final review report

HEADLINES

Summary	To receive a review by the Residents, Education and Environmental Services Policy Overview Committee in 2019/20 which looked at the topic of littering and fly-tipping within Hillingdon. The review makes some recommendations for Cabinet to consider.
Putting our Residents First	This report supports the following Council objectives of: Our People; Our Built Environment; Our Natural Environment.
Financial Cost	There are few direct financial costs arising from the initial recommendations, however, the report does suggest a number of activities which would demand additional officer time and resource. Any additional costs would be identified as part of any future exploration of the recommended activities proposed in this report.
Relevant Policy Overview Committee	Residents, Education and Environmental Services.
Relevant Ward(s)	All.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Cabinet welcomes the Committee's findings from their review into littering and fly-tipping and the recommendations outlined below, noting that their implementation will be taken forward with officers by the Cabinet Member for Housing & The Environment:

Policy Overview Committee Recommendations

Greater Landlord & Tenant Awareness:

- a. That Waste Services promotes the Council's waste collection services in a targeted way to key landlords, letting agents, the Landlords Forum, Housing Associations on their and their tenants responsibilities;**
- b. To include consideration of 'welcome information' for new tenants on waste and recycling procedures, via letting agents and key landlords.**

Beautification and Civic Responsibility

- a. That officers increase the scope of roadside beautification through the planting of wildflowers to instil greater civic pride in areas, visually helping to deter littering from cars and by pedestrians;**
- b. That a new 'warning letter' regime be instigated, with letters issued to suspected offenders as recommended by officers following receipt of complaints;**
- c. That the Council develops its relationship with external organisations such as Keep Britain Tidy and participates in national civic awareness campaigns;**
- d. That officers investigate the possibility of introducing a unique reference number for each bin to enable Waste Services to easily identify patterns (via reports/requests from residents) where particular bins overflow regularly or indeed are underused, and in turn, allow them to deploy limited resources more strategically and effectively.**

Hard-hitting Communications Campaign:

- a. That Cabinet note some of the detailed ideas and creative approaches (not recommendations) suggested by the Committee in the report for consideration as part of the Council's wider communications campaign, including poster campaigns to highlight the impact, cost, and potential fines resulting from littering and fly-tipping;**
- b. That Corporate Communications produces a catchy online clip showing how to report fly-tipping and to book the bulky waste removal service, sharing online and across social media platforms;**
- c. That officers further investigate, and report back to the Cabinet Member with proposals, on the potential for "CCTV appeals" on video and social media, for residents to help identify offenders caught on CCTV in an effort to promote greater public engagement and a new avenue of information for securing successful later prosecutions;**
- d. That ASBET officers, in conjunction with the Legal officers and the Corporate Communications team, roll out a regular programme to publicly 'name and shame' offenders once prosecuted, communicated widely including to Councillors, Street Champions and Neighbourhood Watch.**
- e. That the Council publicise all successful prosecutions from the preceding 12 months through the Communications team.**

Engaging Volunteers and Young People:

- a. That the Council provides free litter picking equipment to established local groups, residents associations, schools, Ward Councillors or street champions, upon request;**

- b. That the Waste Services Team establish a programme of liaison with Hillingdon Schools, including environmental awareness and training, pupil led poster campaigns; and regular litter-picking activities;**
- c. That the Council steps up its use of Community Payback to help clear litter and fly-tipping in parks, as well as ‘hotspots’ such as alleyways.**

Embracing National Changes

- a. Following the Motion approved at Council on 16 January 2020 and national changes expected from the 2020 Environment Bill, notes that the Committee will revisit what additional steps can be taken by the Council should new powers and the ability to impose larger fines be granted upon local authorities to provide a stronger deterrent, reporting back to Cabinet as appropriate.**

Reasons for recommendations

The recommendations of the review will enable the Council to further address the blight of littering and fly-tipping across the Borough, through the use of innovative approaches to public engagement and awareness, and additional tools for officers to pursue increased prosecution of offenders.

Alternative options considered / risk management

The Cabinet could decide to reject some or all of the Committee’s recommendations.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

At its meeting of 26 June 2019, the Residents, Education and Environmental Services Committee considered the topic of littering and fly-tipping as its next major review. Reviewing the number of enquiries logged by the Council’s call centre at the time, the Committee was informed that Members and residents had made over 19,000 enquiries relating to such matters over the preceding 12 months, with issues including fly-tipping on Borough highways, fly-tipping on Council owned land, drug-related litter, and refuse on street paths and highways. A more detailed breakdown of the type of fly-tipping and littering queries that had been logged is included as Appendix 1.

The Committee had previously received an information report detailing fly-tipping from the perspective of the Council’s Anti-Social Behaviour and Environment (ASBET) team. However, the Committee was mindful that the issues had implications for a variety of Council departments, including the Contact Centre, Enforcement teams, Waste Services, and even ICT Team. For example, under the Council’s digital transformation project, new fly-tipping reporting tools are to be included in updates to the Council’s website.

Understanding that these issues were a source of great interest for both Members and residents of Hillingdon, the Committee approved the topic as its next major review, and progressed to securing witnesses as part of its work to gather further information to inform any potential recommendations to Cabinet.

As a topical issue, with a large number of Member and resident enquiries lodged with the Council regarding fly-tipping and anti-social littering, the Committee set out to first understand the extent of the issue within the Borough, before learning of the work being done to address the issues, including how the Council aimed to support resident reporting, how those reports were being addressed, and what the Council's plans were for future actions and improvements.

In addition, the Committee aimed to explore new ideas and best practice from outside the Council, through identifying actions and initiatives undertaken by other local authorities, as well as local and national volunteers and agencies.

Through all information gathering, the Committee was mindful of the need to find cost-effective, workable solutions, including improving how the Council was identifying and prosecuting offenders, noting that the Council had agreed additional funds for 2019/20 on fly-tipping prosecution.

Recently, the Covid-19 pandemic has become the most significant societal event worldwide, with implications on all facets of life, including littering and fly-tipping. A review of the calls logged by the Contact Centre on these topics, for the period January-October 2019 and January- October 2020, shows a 17.88% reduction in the number of incidents notified to Hillingdon, set out in the table below:

Period	Number of incidents logged
01 January - 30 October 2019	13,810
01 January - 30 October 2020	11,341

It is possible that this reduction of approximately 18% incidents logged has been due to the national lockdown, which prohibited the public from leaving the house, except for food, exercise and essential working. However, information provided by officers during the information gathering stage did highlight that whilst the number of individual incidents was reducing, the volume of fly-tipped waste was increasing overall.

Officer Comments on Recommendations where relevant

Officers note and welcome the Committee's primary findings that the Council has a strong focus on services and activities to support reducing littering and fly-tipping within the Borough.

Resource within the Team is being enhanced with additional Recycling Officer posts. With these posts filled, work can commence on engaging with landlords, letting agents, the Landlords Forum, Housing Associations on their and their tenants responsibilities, along with schools.

A new waste supervisor post has been approved, and as part of their duties they will be working alongside other waste supervisors to support volunteers requesting litter picking equipment and working with external partners to participate in work to reduce fly-tipping and littering.

Corporate Communications has noted the recommendation regarding posting CCTV appeal footage on social media/the Council website. The service would request that the CCTV team works with Legal Services to approve the release of any footage and that they send Corporate Communications short and edited clips at the highest resolution to ensure effectiveness and newsworthiness.

If the proposals are agreed by Cabinet, the Waste Team, ASBET, Open Spaces, CCTV and Communications will work in partnership to explore all suggestions and provide feedback on progress.

Financial Implications

There are few direct financial costs arising from the initial recommendations, however, the report does suggest a number of activities which would demand additional officer time and resource. Many of the communications and resident engagement proposals will be supported by three new Recycling Officers, these posts having been built into the 2020/21 budget. Any further additional costs will be identified as part of any future exploration of the recommended activities proposed in this report.

RESIDENT BENEFIT & CONSULTATION

The benefit or impact upon Hillingdon residents, service users and communities?

The Committee's recommendations, if approved, will enable the Council to further address the blight of littering and fly-tipping across the Borough, through the use of innovative approaches to public engagement and awareness, and additional tools for officers to pursue increased prosecution of offenders.

Consultation carried out or required

The Committee sought a wide range of internal witness testimony, as set out in the report.

CORPORATE CONSIDERATIONS

Corporate Finance

Corporate Finance has reviewed this report and concurs with the financial implications set out above, noting that there are no direct financial implications associated with the recommendations within this report.

Legal

The Borough Solicitor confirms that there are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL.