

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Acting Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services (Land & Environmental Services)

Community Safety & Environmental Services Committee: 6 December 2006

Subject: West Dunbartonshire Council – Litter Control Strategy Update 2006

1 Purpose

- 1.1** This report provides the Committee with an update on the performance of the Grounds Maintenance Section in delivering the Council's Litter Control Strategy since the previous report presented to Committee on 02 November 2005.

2 Background

- 2.1** Since the implementation of the Litter Control Strategy in October 2003 there have been sustained improvements in the cleanliness of the local environment. This has been due to the enhancement of the existing Street Cleaning services and the employment of the Council's two Litter Control Officers.
- 2.2** The Litter Control Officers have been responsible for promoting the Council's Strategy by assisting in reducing the effects of Litter and Dog Fouling in West Dunbartonshire, through a combination of education, awareness raising and enforcement. This has been achieved by talks and presentations in schools, at community group meetings and other suitable venues, together with the issue of Fixed Penalty Notices to tackle the legislative aspects of Litter and Dog Fouling.

3.0 Main Issues

- 3.1** The Education Programme for Schools has now been developed and has been rolled out to the schools. The DVD entitled "The New Adventures of Binman" along with associated quizzes and a board game has been rolled out to 29 primary schools in the West Dunbartonshire area.
- 3.2** The Council has introduced a three pronged approach to tackling Dog Fouling issues. Free 'Biodegradable Poop Scoop' bags are distributed to various outlets throughout West Dunbartonshire to encourage responsible behaviour by dog owners. During the past year, in excess of 650,000 bags have been provided. Over two hundred additional dual purpose litter bins have been installed throughout the area. Additional signs have been placed on lampposts throughout the area providing information highlighting the terms of the Dog Fouling (Scotland) Act 2003.

- 3.3** As a result of this three pronged approach, the Council was successful in achieving a Silver “Green Apple” Environmental Award. This Prestigious Award was presented at the House of Commons in November 2005.
- 3.4** Since July 2005 there have been 15 Fixed Penalty Notices issued for Littering and Fly Tipping incidents. There have also been 10 Fixed Penalty Tickets issued for Dog Fouling. Through regular monitoring, increased publicity, and enforcement action the public are becoming more aware of their requirements in relation to the legislation on littering and dog fouling. It has been noted that a greater number of dog owners are taking heed of their responsibilities and are noticeably cleaning up after their dogs. Since July 2005, 252 complaints have been received relating to Dog Fouling.
- 3.5** Fly tipping is a significant problem within West Dunbartonshire and is of concern to all members of the community. As a consequence, the Grounds Maintenance and Environmental Health Sections considered a requirement for partnership working to ensure the most effective use of available resources in eliminating fly-tipping within West Dunbartonshire. It was recognised that this should create a better environment and provide a better service to the public. A Joint Working Partnership has been implemented which requires the Grounds Maintenance Section to investigate fly tipping on Public Ground and the Environmental Health Section to investigate fly tipping on private ground. Since July 2005, 1,027 complaints have been received relating to Fly Tipping and 357 complaints have been received relating to Littering.
- 3.6** The Litter Control Officers now have access to the Scottish Crown Office Specialist Reporting System which is used to report incidents of Litter Offences to the Procurator Fiscal. To date one case within West Dunbartonshire has been referred to the Procurator Fiscal using this system.
- 3.7** The Grounds Maintenance Section also works closely with the Anti Social Behaviour Co-ordinator and funding from Anti-Social Behaviour budgets has been made available to Grounds Maintenance to assist with the costs associated with the purchase of Biodegradable Poop Scoop bags used in promoting the Litter Control Strategy.
- 3.8** This year the Grounds Maintenance Section was involved in a radio campaign which was run over a period of one week to publicise the legislation on Littering and Dog Fouling and the enforcement action in place. There has also been publicity of Dog Fouling and Litter issues at Community Day Events, local Community Clean Ups and Publicity Days in supermarkets.
- 3.9** The Litter Control Officers attend the multi-agency Anti Social Behaviour Partnership Meetings which are held on a six weekly basis. This enables all partners to highlight problems experienced within their particular field, and a partnership approach can be developed towards tackling these issues.

- 3.10** In order to measure the standard of Street Cleanliness within the West Dunbartonshire area, surveys are carried out based on the nationally recognised LEAMS system which is administered by Keep Scotland Beautiful (KSB). Seven surveys are carried out throughout the financial year, 4 in house, 2 by another authority and 1 by KSB. The advantages of this are that the Council can measure and improve its street cleanliness in line with other authorities and draw comparisons between partner authorities as a means to exchange best practice. This allows self monitoring to assess continuous improvement. In West Dunbartonshire the Street Cleaning index has improved in the last three years. In 2003/4 the index was 67, in 2004/5 the index was 69 and the index for 2005/6 was 73.
- 3.11** Under Sections 58-61 of the Anti Social Behaviour (Scotland) Act 2004 the Council is now empowered to serve a Graffiti Removal Notice on a person responsible for a relevant surface where that surface has been defaced with graffiti which is either offensive or detrimental to the amenity of the locality, requiring them to remove the graffiti within a specified period of 28 days. The Litter Control Officers investigate all incidents of offensive/racist graffiti and will take action to liaise with owners to encourage prompt removal. It is often also necessary to photograph such graffiti and liaise with local police. Since July 2005 the Council has received 1,284 complaints relating to Graffiti.

4.0 Personnel Issues

- 4.1** None.

5.0 Financial Implications

- 5.1** The funding of the litter strategy is contained within existing departmental revenue budgets.

6.0 Conclusions

Since the implementation of the Litter Control Strategy in 2003 the condition of the environment is continuing to show steady improvement. This is due to the implementation of additional street operatives, mechanical sweepers, employment of two Litter Control Officers, provision of bio degradable poop scoop bags, provision of signage, provision of additional street bins and an increased public awareness. It is believed that partnership working between the integrated Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleaning Service together with Housing Services and Environmental Health is providing a more efficient service to the public. A significant amount of work has been carried out and time devoted to ensure that the Area of West Dunbartonshire is a clean, healthy and safe environment to live in.

7.0 Recommendation

- 7.1 The Committee is invited to note the content of this report which outlines the continuous improvements since the previous Litter Strategy Update of November 2005.**

Ronald M Dinnie
Acting Director of Housing, Regeneration & Environmental Services
(Land & Environmental Services)
Date: 7 November 2006

Wards Affected:	All
Appendix:	None
Background Papers:	Litter Control Strategy 2003 (Available from Lynda McLaughlin, Manager of Commercial Operations upon request).
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