

**TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL**

**CABINET – 18 February 2021**

**SAFER AND CLEANER NEIGHBOURHOODS THROUGH THE APPROPRIATE USE OF OUR CIVIL ENFORCEMENT POWERS**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR: NEIGHBOURHOOD & ENFORCEMENT SERVICES**

**LEAD CABINET MEMBER: CLLR RICHARD OVERTON**

**PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT**

**1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS**

1.1 Robust Enforcement is a key priority for the Council as part of our work to Protect, Care and Invest to create a better borough. The Council fulfils a variety of enforcement duties spanning a number of services including Planning and Housing however, this report focuses on the Public Protection Team who work to protect and support our residents and businesses in the following ways:

- Covid-19 Enforcement/compliance;
- Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) & environmental Crime;
- Civil Parking Enforcement (adopted on the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020)
- CCTV Monitoring & Deployment
- Consumer Protection (trading standards);
- Licensing;
- Food Hygiene and Standards; (Star Ratings)

1.2 The graphic below by provides a summary of the activities undertaken by the Public Protection team in 2020:



- 1.3 Section 11 of this report provides an update of further activities planned for 2021 with the aim of ensuring we use our enforcement powers to continue to address the minority who continue to blight our communities by committing ASB.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That Cabinet note the steps taken and the results of first full year of Civil Parking Enforcement from 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020.
- 2.2 Cabinet note the success of enforcement activity undertaken in 2020 and endorse the new areas of focus proposed for 2021 as featured in section 11 of this report.
- 2.3 Cabinet delegate approval to the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Enforcement, Community Safety and Customer Services in consultation with the Director of Neighbourhood & Environmental Services, to approve and adopt a new Fly Tipping Strategy.

## **3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

<b>COMMUNITY IMPACT</b>	Do these proposals contribute to specific Co-Operative Council priority objective(s)?	
	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All neighbourhoods are a great place to live</li> <li>• A community – focussed innovative council providing efficient, effective and quality services</li> <li>• Our natural environment is protected, and the Council has a leading role in addressing the climate emergency</li> </ul>
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	No	
<b>TARGET COMPLETION/ DELIVERY DATE</b>	The Fly Tipping Strategy is anticipated to take 6 months to develop and implement. All Enforcement activity and compliance with Covid-19 regulations will be ongoing during pandemic. The new Community Actions Teams (CATS) as outlined in this report will commence from April 2021.	
<b>FINANCIAL/ VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT</b>	Yes	The Neighbourhood Enforcement Officers, and other costs associated with CPE, are funded through a combination of Council base budget, income from penalty notices issued, contributions from Town & Parish Councils and a grant from the Police Crime Commissioner (PCC) of £200,000. The PCC funding is to

		<p>be drawn down annually in phases over the first 4 years of operation of the scheme.</p> <p>The response to Covid-19 has mainly been resourced from existing staffing; however, additional staffing costs have been incurred for temporary staff, contractors and overtime payments. These have been funded from additional grants allocated from Central Government such as the Enforcement &amp; Compliance Funding of £101,000.</p> <p>Costs associated with fly tipping are met from existing budgets with income also being received from issuing fixed penalty notices.</p> <p>The new community action teams will be jointly funded by the Council and Town and Parish Councils who sign up to the partnership deal.</p> <p>MLB 14.01.21</p>
<b>LEGAL ISSUES</b>	Yes	<p>Enforcement Officers have delegated powers under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to carry out investigations, issue fixed penalty notices or refer offences of fly tipping for prosecution.</p> <p>A Fly Tipping Strategy is not required under the above legislation; however, the development of such a strategy will not only allow officers to target their investigations and enforcement actions, but should also seek to reduce the incidence of fly tipping through publicity, partnership working and education.</p> <p>A strategy will also assist in achieving the objectives of the Council Plan. A strategy would not form part of the Council Plan so it will be for Cabinet to approve any strategy developed by officers. Cabinet can delegate that power to individual members of Cabinet.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">PM – 14/01/2021</p>
<b>OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS &amp; OPPORTUNITIES</b>	Yes	<p>Covid-19 – Continuing support to local businesses through positive engagement, advice and solutions to enable them to operate legally and safety throughout the pandemic.</p>
<b>IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS</b>	No	<p>Borough-wide impact</p>

**PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

**4. Background**

4.1 During the past three years, there has been greater partnership working with West Mercia Police and other key enforcement partners. Timely information sharing and analysis to focus enforcement activity underpins this partnership working and planned targeted operations. The Council continues to support and actively engage in ‘Multi Agency Targeted Enforcement’ activity (MATES) across a wide variety of settings, including serious and organised crime.

**5. Covid Compliance**

5.1 Since March 2020 the Covid Enforcement Team has been providing advice, information and, enforcement on the emergency legislation put in place to protect both our residents and businesses to control the spread of Covid-19 in the borough. In doing this, both reactive and proactive intelligence led inspections have been carried out across all types of businesses including retail, hospitality, close contact services, wholesalers and distributors to ensure that they are Covid secure. These inspections have been supported regularly by West Mercia Police, particularly around licensed premises and across the borough’s retail parks and town centre.



5.2 The Council has redeployed resources to undertake the role of Covid-19 Street Champions. These champions have been on the ground in all Wards since November; reporting daily on issues to allow Public Protection Officers who hold civil enforcement powers to follow up on possible breaches.

5.3 We continue to provide and guidance to residents and businesses in response to updated regulations issued by the government in response to the pandemic.

**6. Environmental Crime**

6.1 Environmental crime affects our communities, businesses and natural environment. It continues to be a problem across the Borough and ranges from fly tipping, littering and dog fouling to fly posting, domestic and business waste offences as well as abandoned vehicles as captured below:



6.2 Fly tipping has become a national problem across the country as well as the Borough; following the first national lockdown in 2020, a significant amount of fly tipping was experienced with our enforcement and grounds & cleansing teams both responding and developing ways to tackle this increase. This increase not only placed pressures on limited resources but also has significant impact on our environment.

6.3 In response, a rural and urban focus throughout August 2020 took place where targeted enforcement activity was undertaken. Based on borough wide fly tipping data, we undertook a focus on fly tipping enforcement across a number of areas within Woodside while at the same time concentrating on a number of rural hot spot areas. Within Woodside, the teams were supported by Ward Members, volunteer Street Champions and our Household Recycling & Waste teams positively working with residents around managing waste and recycling. Based on data and intelligence a further enforcement focus within Brookside took place during October.

6.4 The table below provides an overview of the interventions taken:

Area	Fly tips investigated	Information leaflets posted	Fixed Penalty Notices issued
Woodside (4 weeks)	53	223	9
Brookside (5 days)	22	73	5

- 6.5 During the Woodside focus fly tipping reduced on a weekly basis and by half compared to the start of the initiative. In Brookside, fly tipping decreased by 50% from the start of the focus and based on the previous three weekly reports. It is envisaged that, through the use of the new Community Action Teams, the success of these trials combined with a strategy, will continue to drive down fly tipping across the borough. The experience of the focus on fly tipping will be used to develop a new Fly Tipping Strategy that will set out the approach to tackle fly tipping across the borough.
- 6.6 The summer of 2020 also saw a significant increase in littering across the borough with evidence particularly from fast food restaurants. In response, a letter to all drive thru restaurants was sent in June 2020 from the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Enforcement, Community Safety and Customer Services and the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood, Commercial Services and Regeneration to enlist their support in reducing the amount of street litter. This has resulted in an evolving partnership project with a large restaurant chain with outlets across Telford; this includes sharing of data to highlight litter hotspots near to their restaurants which in-turn is supported by litter picks undertaken by their staff. This partnership approach and information sharing ensures our delivery is intelligence led helping to reduce levels of litter across the Borough.

## **7. Licensing & Trading Standards**

- 7.1 The Licensing Team have continued to support business in determining and granting new and renewed premises and personal licences to maintain both public safety and standards in the borough. Such licences include Taxi's, alcohol, street trading, scrap metal and animal establishments.
- 7.2 The Council recognise the pandemic has been very challenging time for businesses particularly the hospitality sector. In supporting local business, we have been in frequent contact with our taxi and hospitality trade to help them remain operational in a Covid secure manner. Where possible, licence fee breaks have been implemented in a number of sectors that have been affected by the pandemic. Officers have also participated in a number of MATES Covid focused operations in the night-time economy and throughout the year been involved in supporting the Health Protection Hub with contact tracing as required.
- 7.3 The Trading Standards team, while supporting the Covid response, have ensured that consumer protection matters have been maintained where possible. The graphic below provides a summary of their activity:



- 7.4 The team have focussed on a variety of areas of concern some of which are Covid related and include a surge of complaints around 'hiked prices' for essential items and scams. Intervention also ensured that the importers and suppliers of personal protective equipment (PPE) have compliant/safe stocks for front line workers.
- 7.5 Following the first lockdown in 2020, there was a noticeable increase in doorstep crime complaints received from concerned residents; the intervention in response to the complaints received prevented three households from paying a total sum of £10,000 for goods and services being sold illegally. The team's work is based on intelligence, reacting to complaints and, dealing with businesses that pose a risk to consumers through the distribution of unsafe or illegal products or activities that are fraudulent and cause financial detriment to residents.

## **8. Food Hygiene and Standards**

- 8.1 The response to the Covid 19 pandemic has had an effect on the work of the Food Hygiene and Food Standards 20/21 inspection program – largely due to some premises being closed and supporting the safe reopening of some establishments looking to diversify. As a result, the team have followed the Food Standards Agency (FSA) Covid-19 guidance to prioritise the inspection program and continue to inspect high-risk premises, those that are non-complaint or not yet rated (new business). These inspections remain a priority, despite business restrictions, to ensure that our residents and businesses are protected. We remain on target to meet the required inspections to established food businesses.
- 8.2 New businesses are being prioritised by the risk they pose to the public in both food hygiene and Covid secure terms.

**9. Civil Parking Enforcement**

- 9.1 Following Cabinet Approval in 2019 for Telford and Wrekin Council to progress Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) this new arrangement became embedded within the authority from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020. This new arrangement focussed on the Councils Neighbourhood Enforcement Team taking the lead role in enforcing parking both on and off street.
- 9.2 As a result of the first national lockdown during 2020, CPE was suspended in line with government guidance. However, with the easing of national lockdown in June 2020 CPE activity resumed as part of our support to safely reopen district centres and local business. The graphic below summarises their activity:



- 9.3 Building on the implementation of CPE, there is opportunity to further develop and enhance the local community based enforcement approach. The team have engaged with Town and Parish Council's to expand enforcement into a wider place based response through newly created Community Action Teams (CAT's). This revised approach will see environmental and parking enforcement, public realm maintenance and locality officer liaison offered as a package to work in partnership with Town and Parish Council's to tackle priorities at a local level. This will see the council provide match funding the level of investment provided by individual Town and Parish Council's. At the point of writing this report, seven Community Action Teams have already been agreed with a number of Town and Parish Council's anticipated to progress in the coming month.
- 9.4 Despite the challenges of 2020, implementation of CPE across the borough has been successful and continues to grow with the support of Town and Parish Council's.



## **10. Borough Wide CCTV**

10.1 In 2019 the borough benefitted from £500,000 joint investment made by the Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner to enable upgrade, replacement and enhancement of CCTV coverage across the borough. The detail of this CCTV infrastructure will be subject to a future Cabinet report once the programme of work has completed; however, work to date has comprised:

- 201 CCTV camera's upgraded and networked;
- 48 new cameras have been installed in key ASB and inquisitive crime hot spot locations across the borough;
- 15 new mobile camera's purchased and now available for covert deployment;
- A new viewing suite at Oakengates, enabling live monitoring at weekends by police volunteers and cadets, is nearing completion;

10.2 The footage available from CCTV will be utilised by the Council and partners to assist in the search to identify those who commit crime in our borough.

## **11 Next Steps**

11.1 Our new jointly funded Community Action Teams will commence from April 2021 and will be tasked locally by Town and Parish Councils to address areas of concern that require attention including enforcement and public realm maintenance.

11.2 A Fly Tipping Strategy will be developed for approval by the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Enforcement, Community Safety and Customer Services to tackle fly tipping across the Borough.

11.3 Along with increased media coverage on enforcement activities, we are currently developing dedicated web pages to host details on our enforcement activity. The dedicated web pages will provide details of our enforcement activity including appeals for information and recent successes.

11.4 As outlined within this report, we will continue use intelligence and data to inform our approach to enforcement and compliance to ensure residents are protected and businesses are operating safely. We will continue to take an active part in the multi agency MATES exercises to address criminal exploitation.

11.5 The new £1.5m Safer Communities Programme, featured in a separate Cabinet report, will also bring investment into known crime and ASB locations to help address the root cause of crime as well as the impact of crime itself. This programme will be multi-agency and based on the Brookside Safer Streets programme currently underway in partnership with West Mercia Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner.

## **12 IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- 12.1 While Civil Parking Enforcement is relatively new to Telford & Wrekin Council this report outlines successful implementation and management that has enabled enforcement activities to be delivered through the Community Action Team (CAT) working in partnership with Town and Parish Council's.
- 12.2 Through delivery of the CAT, additional resource has been secured to ensure our neighbourhoods are great places to live. The development and delivery of a fly tipping strategy will set out a consistent approach to tackle fly tipping that significantly blights local communities. Together with an intelligence led approach to enforcement activities, this will deliver a cleaner safer borough through the use of our enforcement powers.

## **13 PREVIOUS MINUTES**

None

## **14 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

### **Report prepared by:**

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