

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting:	19 January 2016
Subject:	Enviro-Crimes Review Monitoring Report
Report of:	Val Garside, Environmental and Housing Services Group Manager
Corporate Lead:	Rachel North, Deputy Chief Executive
Lead Member:	Councillor J R Mason, Lead Member for Clean and Green Environment
Number of Appendices:	None

Executive Summary:

The report provides an update on progress against actions contained in the Environmental Crime Report, arising from a review by the Overview and Scrutiny Working Group review approved by the Executive Committee on 16 July 2014.

Recommendation:

To CONSIDER the progress against the recommendations arising from the Enviro-Crimes Review and to APPROVE closure of the review.

Reasons for Recommendation:

To improve the way that environmental crimes are investigated in Tewkesbury Borough. Improving recycling and caring for our environment is a key objective within the Council Plan.

Resource Implications:

Environmental Health carry out fly-tipping and abandoned vehicle enforcement work within its current resources.

Educational and promotional work in relation to dog fouling is carried out using existing resources, including the Environmental Health, Community Safety and Communications teams.

Purchase of new signage for dog fouling and fly-tipping has been taken from existing budgets.

Legal Implications:

The recommendations/actions may give rise to an increased demand for legal services in relation to prosecutions or legal advice.

Risk Management Implications:

If the Council does not have in place effective arrangements for reducing the level of

environmental crimes then there is a reputational risk due to resident's dissatisfaction leading to increased complaints and reported incidents.

Performance Management Follow-up:

The recommendations arising from all Overview and Scrutiny Reviews are monitored every six months.

The number of reported environmental crimes is monitored by means of a performance indicator.

Environmental Implications:

Implementation will result in an improvement in the environment.

1.0 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

1.1 A review of the way in which Tewkesbury Borough Council investigates environmental crimes was undertaken by a Working Group of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The review considered the Council's approach in tackling environmental crimes, and considered what legislative powers were available in addition to those already employed. The resulting report set out the findings from the review and made recommendations in respect of how environmental crimes could be dealt with in the future. The report was considered at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 10 June 2014 and adopted at the meeting of the Executive Committee on 16 July 2014.

1.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has previously received considered updates on the progress against actions set out in the review report at the meetings on 13 January and 21 July 2015.

2.0 ENVIRONMENTAL CRIMES REPORT ACTIONS CARRIED OUT

2.1 In the report presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July 2015, it was reported that all but two of the review recommendations had been completed. The outstanding recommendations at that time were:

- Organise a training session tailored to the Police, explaining how they can help in tackling dog fouling.
- Carry out educational campaigns at local schools to make them aware of the dangers of dog fouling. Explore partnership working with other agencies.

2.2 In November, Tewkesbury Borough Council arranged a multi-agency 'Day of Action' in Churchdown, putting Officers in the community to highlight and tackle the following:

- issues relating to dog fouling;

- issues relating to littering and fly tipping;
- a 'drop-in' information stand in the GL3 Churchdown Community Centre;
- Officers to patrol the streets; and
- talking to dog walkers.

2.3 The day also served to promote volunteering for litter picking and the Council's 'Paws on Patrol' scheme to get dog walkers to observe and report crimes they may witness. The event was arranged with the very close cooperation and partnership of Churchdown Parish Council which provided a lead on many aspects of the day. The event was promoted widely through posters, literature, websites, social media, shops and schools. The Police were heavily involved, bringing a mobile vehicle to the GL3 car park to warn and inform the community about burglaries, and accompanying Tewkesbury Borough Council Officers on early morning and evening dog walking patrols, giving information to dog walkers, and others in the area, regarding the consequences of allowing dogs to foul, as well as information on how to report incidences of dog fouling they may witness. The exercise also served to educate those in the Police most likely to get involved in such issues, in what to do if they witness fouling. Severn Vale Housing Society was also involved in the day and helped to deliver messages combatting fly tipping and abandoned vehicles. It is planned to have another Day of Action in Spring 2016 in another Parish, yet to be confirmed, and for it to be repeated regularly.

2.4 A proposal was put to those attending the Town and Parish Council Seminar on 11 November 2015 for Tewkesbury Borough Council to work collaboratively on tackling enviro-crimes. The proposal is that Tewkesbury Borough Council leads on a project to employ an Officer to complement the work that both Tewkesbury Borough Council and the Parishes already carry out to tackle the issue. The Officer could:

- carry out regular patrols in dog fouling 'hot spot' areas;
- promote in schools, local community groups and events etc;
- serve fixed penalty notices;
- help provide Officers with information to take prosecution actions; and
- monitor the worst affected areas and make recommendations for actions including arranging campaigns.

The extent of the work of the Officer is yet to be decided, and could be dictated by the wishes of the Parishes which would pay a contribution for the project to operate for a two or three year period. Tewkesbury Borough Council would contribute 'in kind' by being the employing authority and would coordinate the work and provide regular feedback to the Parishes. The Tewkesbury Borough Council contribution would be made using existing management resources within the Environmental Health Team. Initial feedback is that Parishes will support the proposal, although what is included in the project and how much has yet to be confirmed (for example, the Officer could have a wider monitoring and actioning role in relation to other enviro-crimes such as littering and fly-tipping). Members will be kept updated on the progress of this proposal through the quarterly performance management reports.

2.5 The above work means that all of the recommendations are now complete and Members are asked to approve closure of the review.

3.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

3.1 The Working Group considered a number of options and these are contained in its report.

4.0 CONSULTATION

4.1 None

5.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

5.1 Environmental and Housing Service Plan.
Council Plan 2012 – 2016.

6.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES

6.1 Environmental Protection Act 1990.
Dog Fouling of Land Act 1996.
Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005.
Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (Human/Property)

7.1 A resource was identified to deliver enviro-crime enforcement (and therefore to deliver the actions in the Environmental Crime Report) as part of the Direct Services service review, the allocated budget for this resource was transferred to Environmental Health early in 2015.

8.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (Social/Community Safety/Cultural/ Economic/ Environment)

8.1 Implementation will result in an improvement in the environment and sustainability.

9.0 IMPACT UPON (Value For Money/Equalities/E-Government/Human Rights/Health And Safety)

9.1 An Equality Impact Assessment was completed. Fly tipping and dog faeces in particular can pose serious risks to health.

10.0 RELATED DECISIONS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTS

10.1 Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 10 June 2014 “Enviro-Crimes Review Report”
Executive Committee: 16 July 2014 “Review of Environmental Crimes”

Background Papers: Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 10 June 2014 “Enviro-Crimes Review Report”
Executive Committee: 16 July 2014 “Review of Environmental Crimes”

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Appendices: None