

DOG FOULING INITIATIVES UPDATE	7th February 2017
TO: ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE	
FOR INFORMATION	

Linkage to Council Strategy (2015-19)	
Strategic Theme	Protecting and Enhancing our Environment and Assets
Outcome	To provide an update to Members with respect to dog fouling initiatives
Lead Officer	Bryan Edgar
Cost: (If applicable)	N/A

The following report has been prepared further to Members' queries regarding dog fouling reduction initiatives implemented by Council in the past and how this might be addressed in the future.

During April/May 2016 Council promoted a dog fouling campaign piloting areas in known hotspots within Ballymoney, Coleraine, Limavady and Moyle. This included Dog Warden/Enforcement Officers carrying out patrols, engaging with the public to promote responsible dog ownership and enforcement. Technical Services staff followed up with respect to cleansing of areas. The initiative included the use of press releases, social media and physical signage within the pilot areas and the marking and recording of incidences of fouling. A dedicated email for reporting dog fouling was established and remains in place. Over the pilot period there was a marked reduction in the dog foul recorded at each location the programme was resource intensive and despite the education element, 2 fixed penalties were issued.

Throughout the year all complaints received with respect to dog fouling are investigated by the enforcement team and where there is sufficient evidence gathered, fixed penalty notices (FPNs) are issued. During 2015-2016 15 such notices were issued and payment received. Where possible individual enforcement officers remove dog foul and treat the area to deter a recurrence. In other cases the matter is referred to the cleansing section to address.

A number of dog foul bag dispensers have been positioned on known popular walkways to facilitate owners who have forgotten to bring a bag with them on their walk to enable them to clean up after their dog. All litter receptacles within the

Borough are able to accept dog foul. Again litter bins are provided within towns, villages and popular walking locations to enable the proper disposal of all litter.

During the Summer bathing season (June – September) dog wardens and enforcement officers carry out patrols on beaches during weekends and evenings. It is proposed that this be reviewed as part of the incoming years business plan and service redesign to make best use of the current resources including the engagement of all Council staff to help tackle this issue.

It is planned that a further education initiative be commenced prior to the end of the current financial year to raise public awareness and promote responsible dog ownership. This will include early morning and evening interventions by enforcement officers with dog owners and include the distribution of branded dog foul bags and information leaflets. This would be supported by a media campaign with the assistance of the Public Relations section. The campaign will consider best practice and take into account elements used by others that have been shown to achieve results. Where possible we will look to engage and work with the local community. A pilot area has already been identified and work is progressing regarding implementation.

We are also considering current new technology available to allow citizens to report incidents easily and accurately through smartphones so that a more targeted response may be provided.

Dog fouling continues to be one of the most persistent issues of complaint. Protecting and enhancing our natural environment and assets is a key corporate objective and the Environmental Services Directorate will consider all opportunities and implement initiatives to ensure that this is met with respect to dog fouling and littering in general. The Directorate have dedicated teams of enforcement officers and cleansing staff who take great pride in ensuring the towns and villages are cleansed to a very high standard. Through a balance of education and enforcement where appropriate the aim would be to encourage all dog owners to be responsible and clean up after their dogs. We will continually seek the cooperation of the public to report incidents of dog fouling by contacting the Environmental Services Directorate or by the dedicated email dogfouling@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk to assist staff in their efforts to catch the small number of irresponsible dog owners who continue to cause problems for all.