



Northumberland

County Council

Ashington and Blyth Local Area Council

Date: 13 March 2019

Environmental Enforcement and Environmental Campaigns Update

Report of the Interim Executive Director of Place: Paul Johnston

Cabinet Member for Environment & Local Services: Councillor Glen Sanderson

Purpose of Report

The Local Area Committees received a report on dog control enforcement and the Green Dog Walkers Campaign in September 2018. This Report provides an update on environmental enforcement and the Council's environmental campaigns.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 1) receive and comment on the report

Link to Corporate Plan

This report is linked to the Living and Enjoying parts of the Corporate Plan 2018-21 that have the objectives 'We want you to feel safe, healthy, and cared for' and 'We want you to love where you live'.

Key Issues

1. Dog Fouling Complaints.

1.1 Dog fouling complaint levels started to reduce following the launch of the Green Dog Walkers Campaign in July 2017. This reduction has been sustained throughout 2018.

Dog fouling complaints	2016	2017*	2018	Direction of travel (2018 compared to 2016 ↑increase/↓decrease)
	1933	1509	1398	↓27.7%

*GDW Campaign started July 2017

2. The Green Dog Walkers Scheme.

2.1 The Green Dog Walkers Scheme is one part of an overall approach by the Council to tackle environmental issues that utilises the three 'E's: engagement, education, and enforcement. Green Dog Walkers pledge to always clean up after their dog and dispose of the bag in a bin, and when walking their dog to wear the Green Dog Walker armband, offer free dog bags to encourage others, hand out leaflets and at all times adopt a non-confrontational and friendly approach to changing attitudes about dog fouling.

2.2 Green Dog Walkers continues to be popular with the public: on the 21st February 2019 the number of members reached **2000**. This has far exceeded officer expectations and makes it the most successful scheme of its type in the North East.

2.3 Green Dog Walkers was awarded the Northumberland Community Project of the Year 2018. It has also been recognised at a national level by Keep Britain Tidy who short-listed it as a finalist in their Community Engagement Award 2019. In doing so Keep Britain Tidy recognised the Council's: *'achievements in improving local environmental quality'*.

2.4 Officers are starting to develop the 2019 programme of campaign activities to start in late spring and run through to Autumn. At present the details of events cannot be confirmed. However the aim is to have activities across all the LAC areas and where possible held in partnership with the local Parish or Town Council.

3. Waste control complaint levels.

3.1 The statistics below are the number of reports received by Neighbourhood Services together with those pro-actively identified by Neighbourhood Services staff during litter pick patrols. There has been a significant increase in recorded fly tipping, however this can nearly all be accounted for by changes to reporting by Neighbourhood Services frontline staff at the Stakeford depot. In early 2018 management identified that Stakeford depot was not using the same reporting

methodology as the other depots and front line teams were not recording the unreported fly tips that they were collecting on their scheduled street cleansing routes. This was rectified by April 2018 but means there has been historical under reporting from that depot.

Type of complaint	2017	Additional reports from Stakeford Depot in 2018	2018 (including additional reports)	Direction of travel (2018 compared to 2017 ↑increase/↓decrease)
Fly tipping	2437	879	3390	↑39.1% (↑3.0%)*
Littering reports	863		1105	↑28%

* (3390-879) compared to 2017.

We continue to encourage residents to dispose of their waste responsibly and take their bulky waste to one of our 12 Household Waste Recycling Centers or use the councils Bulky Waste service. We have seen an increase in demand for our Bulky Waste Service in the first 9 months of this year with 216 additional requests booked between April & December 2018 compared to the same period in 2017 (6,681 compared to 6,465). In the same period the volume of waste residents have taken to Household Waste Recycling Centers also increased by just over 150 tonnes.

3.2 The statistics for 2017/18 across the neighbouring North East Council areas have been benchmarked against Northumberland's 2018 total to allow comparison as to the relative rate of incidents. The table below shows total number of fly tipping incidents together with the number of incidents per Km² to allow for a more direct and meaningful comparison.

Council Area	Total number of fly tipping incidents 17/18*	Number of fly tipping incidents per Km ²
County Durham	7629	2.8
Gateshead	9448	171.8
Newcastle	9616	84.4
North Tyneside	2388	28.9
Northumberland	3390*	0.7
South Tyneside	5933	92.0
Sunderland	9055	66.1

*Number for 17/18 is 2511. Number for 2018 is 3390 so comparison is made with the higher number.

The above statistics show that Northumberland, even with the increase in recorded fly tips, still has the second lowest total number of fly tips in the North East and has the lowest incidence density per Km² area by a significant margin.

3.3 Littering reports have also increased but the underlying reasons are not known, Neighbourhood Services have not reduced the number of litter picks and our internal performance measures show that there is not more litter present during inspections.

3.4 The profile of litter amongst the general public has grown in the last 12 months with awareness of single use plastics and marine litter having a national profile and Northumberland's own litter campaign being well promoted, this increase in awareness is likely to have contributed towards the increase in people reporting litter.

3.5 The number of fixed penalty fines issued for littering has increased in 2018. The Council is currently running a campaign to reduce Roadside Litter and its Litter Heroes public engagement campaign has recently won a national award.

4. Environmental Campaigns to reduce waste and protect the environment.

4.1 At the recent Keep Britain Tidy Annual Network Awards three of the Council's environmental campaigns were awarded finalists places: Litter Heroes, Love Parks and Green Dog Walkers. The Litter Heroes, delivered by Neighbourhood Services won in its category.

4.2 Additionally the Council in 2018 was subject to an annual Keep Britain Tidy audit and its work on tackling environmental issues was considered an exemplar. The council received positive feedback for its campaigns and activity to engage volunteers and raising awareness on local environmental quality issues. Support for volunteer and community engagement was particularly highlighted as a positive achievement, as was the ongoing activity with the green dog walkers campaign. The auditors were keen to hear of the recently launched roadside litter campaign and offered support to the council in measuring effectiveness and improvement on completion. The performance management framework in Local Services was also recognised as being beneficial to managers to manage and steer environmental improvement.

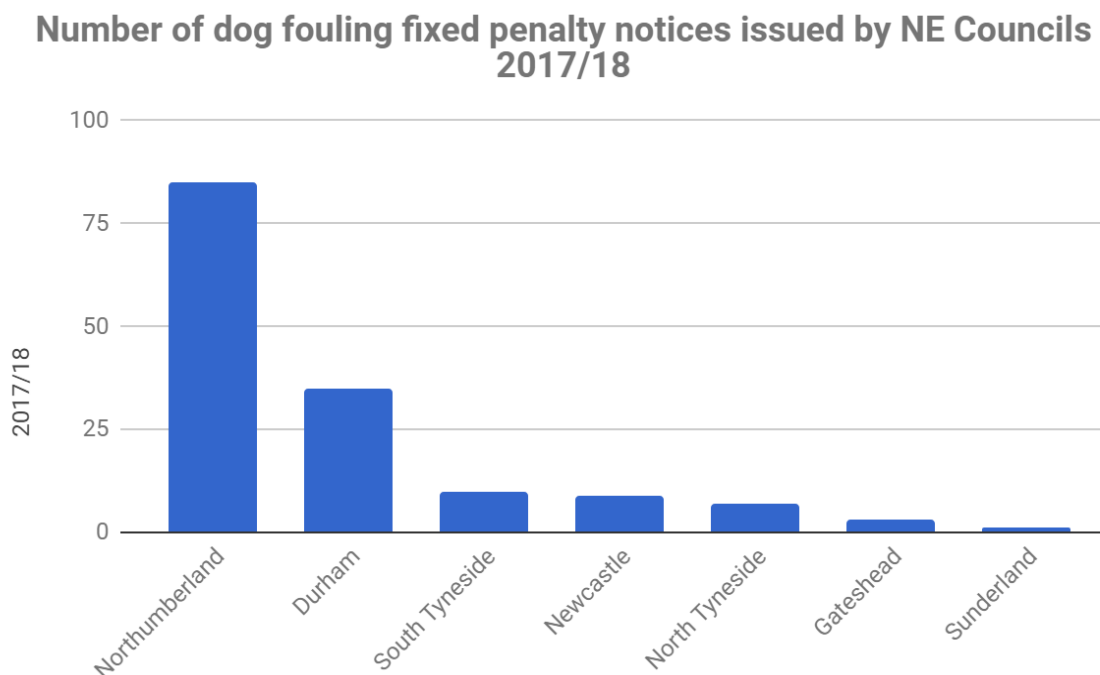
4.3 The Council is also running a campaign to particularly raise public awareness about roadside litter as part of our Love Northumberland Hate Litter Campaign. This has included sponsored adverts at petrol station pumps and on the back of buses. There have been press releases and we have used social media to get across key messages including the impact roadside litter can have on our wildlife.

5. Environmental offences, Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) 2018

5.1 The table below gives enforcement fixed penalty notices issued for 2018 and provides a percentage comparison to the numbers in 2017. There have been very substantial increase in littering and fly tipping fines issued.

FPN Offence	Number of FPNs 2017	Number of FPNs 2018	Direction of travel (2018 compared to 2017) ↑increase/↓decrease)
Dog fouling/control	80	94	↑17%
Littering	104	165	↑61%
Fly tipping & waste accumulation offences	19	40	↑110%
Total	203	302	↑48.7%

5.2 Benchmarking of 2017/18 numbers of dog fouling fixed penalty fines issued by the seven North East Councils showed that Northumberland served the highest number and significantly higher than most neighbouring authorities.



5.3 However the significant rise (34%) in fly tips notified to the environmental enforcement team for investigation during 2018 compared to 2017 has placed

significant strain on the teams time and resources. A review of the current practices relating to the investigation and evidence gathering at fly tipping incidents is planned, which will seek to increase the body of staff trained to undertake initial evidence gathering activity to support the dedicated enforcement teams.

6. Environmental offences prosecutions - 2018

6.1 2018 has been another very busy year for the Environmental Enforcement & Animal Welfare Team through the court system. The preparation of Court cases can be extremely labour intensive for both the Enforcement Team and the lawyers in Legal Services who have an exemplary success record in court.

Offence	Numbers of Prosecutions 2018	Court success rate 2018
Dog fouling	3	100%
Animal welfare (including animal cruelty)	14	100%
Littering	20	100%
Fly tipping & waste accumulation offences	7	100%
Total	44	100%

6.2 Also because the Magistrates Court sometimes issue fines at or even below the amount of a fixed penalty fine taking a case to court may not result in any significant additional deterrent effect.

IMPLICATIONS ARISING OUT OF THE REPORT

Give the implications

Policy: None

Finance and value for money: Costs are met from existing budgets

Human Resources: None

Property: None

Equalities(Impact
Assessment attached)

The implementation of the campaigns does not present potentially significant equality issues.

Yes ☐ No ☒ N/A ☐

Risk Assessment:

None

Crime & Disorder:

The campaigns promotes responsible dog ownership and environmental responsibility so should reduce related offences

Customer Considerations:

The campaigns are delivered in such a way as to ensure that a consistent and proportionate approach is taken in all circumstances.

Carbon Reduction:

None

Consultation:

None

Wards:

All

Report sign off.

Finance Officer	AM
Monitoring Officer/Legal	NM
Human Resources	n/a
Procurement	n/a
I.T.	n/a
Portfolio Holder(s)	GS

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