

# **PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AGENDA**

**Wednesday, 8th February 2023 at 7.15pm**

**Council Chamber, Braintree District Council, Causeway House,  
Bocking End, Braintree, CM7 9HB**

**THIS MEETING IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**  
*(Please note this meeting will be audio recorded)*

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**Members of the Partnership Development Scrutiny Committee are requested to attend this meeting to transact the business set out in the Agenda.**

Councillor J Abbott  
Councillor J Baugh  
Councillor G Courtauld (Vice Chairman)  
Councillor Mrs M Cunningham (Chairman)  
Councillor A Hensman

Councillor T McArdle  
Councillor Mrs J Pell  
Councillor Mrs J Sandum  
Councillor Mrs L Walters

Members unable to attend the meeting are requested to forward their apologies for absence to the Governance and Members Team on 01376 552525 or email [governance@braintree.gov.uk](mailto:governance@braintree.gov.uk) by 3pm on the day of the meeting.

D GASCOYNE  
Chief Executive

## **INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS – DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

### **Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI), Other Pecuniary Interests (OPI) or Non-Pecuniary Interests (NPI).**

Any Member with a DPI, OPI or NPI must declare the nature of their interest in accordance with the Code of Conduct. Members must not participate in any discussion of the matter in which they have declared a DPI or OPI or participate in any vote, or further vote, taken on the matter at the meeting. In addition, the Member must withdraw from the Chamber where the meeting considering the business is being held unless the Member has received a dispensation from the Monitoring Officer.

### **Public Question Time – Registration and Speaking:**

The Agenda allows for a period of up to 30 minutes for Public Question Time. Members of the public may ask questions or make statement to the Committee on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affect the district and matters listed on the agenda.

All questions or statements should be concise and should be able to be heard within the 3 minutes allotted to each speaker.

Anyone wishing to ask a question or make a statement are requested to register their interest by completing the Public Question Time registration [online form](#) by **midday on the second working day** before the day of the Committee meeting.

For example, if the Committee Meeting is on a Tuesday, the registration deadline is midday on Friday, (where there is a Bank Holiday Monday you will need to register by midday on the previous Thursday). The Council reserves the right to decline any requests to register to speak if they are received after this time.

When registering for Public Question Time please indicate whether you wish to attend the Committee meeting 'in person' or to participate remotely. People who choose to join the meeting remotely will be provided with the relevant link and joining instructions for the meeting.

Please note that completion of the on-line form does not guarantee you a place to speak during Public Question Time. You will receive email notification from the Governance Service confirming whether your request is successful.

The Chairman of the Committee has discretion to extend the time allocated to registered speakers and the order in which they may speak.

In the event that a registered speaker is unable to connect to the meeting, or if there are any technical issues, their question/statement may be read by a Council Officer.

Further information on public question time is available on the [Council's website](#).

### **Health and Safety:**

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**Documents:**

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The meeting will also be broadcast via the Council's YouTube Channel.

**Comments and Suggestions:**

We welcome comments to make our services as efficient and effective as possible. If you have any suggestions regarding the meeting you have attended, you can send these to [governance@braintree.gov.uk](mailto:governance@braintree.gov.uk)

**1 Apologies for Absence****2 Declaration of Interests - Scrutiny Committee**

1. To declare the existence and nature of any interests relating to items on the agenda having regard to the Code of Conduct for Members and having taken appropriate advice (where necessary) before the meeting.

2. To declare the existence and nature of any instruction given by or on behalf of a political group to any Councillor who is a member of that group as to how that Councillor shall speak or vote on any matter before the Committee or the application or threat to apply any sanction by the group in respect of that Councillor should he/she speak or vote on any particular matter.

**3 Public Question Time**

(See paragraph above)

**4 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Partnership Development Scrutiny Committee held on 16th November 2022 (copy previously circulated).

**5 Litter Management Scrutiny Report****5 - 21**

**PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**SCRUTINY REVIEW INTO LITTER MANAGEMENT IN THE BRAINTREE**  
**DISTRICT 2022/23 (DRAFT SCRUTINY REPORT)**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Members of the Partnership Development Scrutiny Committee were tasked with conducting a Scrutiny Review into the topic of 'Litter Management' at Braintree District Council.'

The Terms of Reference for the Partnership Development Scrutiny Committee are as follows:-

- Driving forward existing partnerships;
- Helping to bring partnership working into the Council's mainstream work;
- Bringing together partners within the public sector for the benefit of the community;
- Developing an approach to future partnership working with both the public and the private sector;

**What is Litter?**

Litter generally includes synthetic materials associated with smoking, eating and drinking that are improperly discarded, left by members of the public, spilt during other operations or transported on the wind from another area. The Environmental Protection Act 1990, for example, states that litter is 'anything that is dropped, thrown, left or deposited that causes defacement in a public place'.

The topic of 'Litter Management Across the Braintree District' was first submitted by Councillor Abbott as a means of improving coordinated working with the Council's partners in order to deter and manage littering, debris and unauthorised advertising along the trunk roads through the Braintree District. Following extensive discussions with the Management Board and the Chairmen of the Scrutiny Committees, it was agreed that the topic should be allocated to the Partnership Development Scrutiny Committee for the purposes of Scrutiny Review. In line with the Terms of Reference for the Committee, Members would need to focus their Scrutiny Review on how the Council engages with its partners and the effectiveness of those arrangements (e.g. with volunteer groups).

In order to facilitate the Scrutiny Review into 'Litter Management,' Members of the Partnership Development Scrutiny Committee sought to address the following questions:-

- 1) What past campaigns/exercises have been arranged by the Council in order to improve the management of litter across the District? What were the

benefits/costs of these? Notes: Could look at past exercises such as the “Don’t be a tosser” campaign, who was involved etc.

- 2) What are the cost/resources implications of litter management activities for the Council? Notes: E.g. staffing levels required. Could examine implications of recent investment / £20k - £30k of new signage and bins across the District over the last 18 months.
- 3) Who are the Council’s Partners in respect of litter management, and how effective are these arrangements?
- 4) How does the Council engage with its Partners when undertaking new campaigns and activities?
- 5) Going forward, how could the Council improve coordinated working with partners in order to help ensure that we both deter and manage littering, debris and unauthorised advertising along trunk roads? Notes: E.g. could look at litter management exercises undertaken by other Local Authorities, successes/failures, etc.

## **INITIAL OBSERVATIONS**

At the first meeting of the Partnership Development Scrutiny Committee on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2022:

- The Terms of Reference and Work Programme were introduced to Members
- The Committee was invited to consider any next steps that they wished to take in order to progress the Scrutiny Review Members noted that due to the District Elections scheduled for May 2023 the Scrutiny Review would need to be completed by March 2023
- Members indicated that they would like to invite a representative of National Highways to advise on their procedure for delegating litter issues on national highways to authorities such as County or District Councils.
- Members sought to understand how District Councils communicated with one another on cross boundary issues and who was responsible for resolving those issues
- Members sought to better understand the definition of litter as well as the duties and responsibilities of the individual parties and historic awareness campaigns conducted by the Council
- Members indicated that it would be helpful to receive an overview of what different services across the council did in terms of litter management, as well as their relationship with Parish and Town Councils. Potential future witnesses for the review were identified and included officers in the Marketing and Communications team and volunteer/community groups such as Braintree East Group, Halstead in Bloom, Green Heart Volunteers as well as volunteer litter pickers in Kelvedon and Feering
- Members sought to better understand the schemes that local businesses have in place in order to address litter

## **INPUT FROM THE MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS TEAM – 13<sup>th</sup> JULY 2022**

The Chairman was pleased to welcome Ros Alam, Marketing and Engagement Officer, and Tania Roberge, Marketing and Communications Manager, to the meeting. The Marketing and Engagement Officer and Marketing and Communications Manager gave a presentation for Members detailing the various litter campaigns that the Council had undertaken over the previous ten years and the partnerships that had been developed as a result. During the presentation, reference was made to the Green Heart of Essex campaign (Green Heart), one of the earlier litter management campaigns implemented by the Council, the success of which helped to pave the way for future litter management campaigns.

The Green Heart programme launched in 2010 in response to a number of factors, such as the high cost associated with keeping the district clean and tidy (£1.3million) and the results of the 2008 'Place' survey, which indicated that customer satisfaction levels around cleanliness were decreasing at 64%. The Green Heart programme lasted for a period of two years, and its ambition was to make the district one of the cleanest and greenest in the UK with an investment of £250,000.

The ambition of the Green Heart was to be achieved by:-

- Encouraging partners, businesses and residents to get involved;
- Implementing a joined up cross-Council approach to service delivery, and;
- Encouraging everyone to take responsibility for keeping the District clean.

The programme involved strong partnerships from Parish and Town Councils, voluntary groups, Essex County Council, Highways Agency, neighbouring Councils, Eastlight Community Homes (then Greenfields Community Housing), businesses schools and market traders. A number of littering 'hotspot areas' were identified across the district, such as Galley's Corner in Braintree, which led to the creation of the Galley's Corner Partnership. After approximately six months of campaigning, which involved night time observations with the Police, issuing fines, providing car litter bags, sharing advice, the Council recorded a reduction in littering of 47%.

Schools across the district were signed up to the programme and introduced a zero tolerance approach to litter, with litter picks and competitions, and work was also undertaken with housing associations to implement littering 'blitz' days at various housing estates. Over 200 volunteers (known as Green Heart Champions) were also signed up to the programme in order to conduct litter picks within their local areas.

As part of the Green Heart programme, a number of educational campaigns were undertaken by the Council, which included the controversial but successful 'Report the Tosser' campaign. The campaigns were then followed by a reporting mechanism designed to empower people to report cases of littering and/or dog fouling; as a result, over 1,200 reports were received.

The outputs from the Green Heart programme included: Green Heart branding applied to vehicles, uniforms and litter bins; a pledge to support signed by residents and businesses; installation of new larger litter bins along the A12 and A120; bee and butterfly friendly shrubs; installation of new cigarette bins in town centres, and

Parish Councils planted a host of golden daffodils and Jubilee Oaks. In terms of the overall outcome of the programme, the district saw a reduction in litter of 55%, customer satisfaction levels for cleanliness rose from 64% to 87% and the district as a 'Place to Live' rose from 85% to 92%.

Following the conclusion of the Green Heart programme, the Council was keen to continue with its partnership working and develop a more Essex-wide approach under the title of 'Love Essex' in order to identify and foster new partnerships. Accordingly, the 'Cleaner Essex' group which was comprised of all fifteen Essex Local Authorities, all Essex McDonalds, KFC and Dominos and independent local businesses was formed. Some of the benefits of partnership working in this respect, such as shared expertise, economies of scale and sponsorship opportunities, were also touched upon.

In 2017, the focus of the Love Essex group shifted from littering to fly-tipping, due to an increase in cases of 16% in 2016 and the significant costs associated with clearance. As a result, the Council adopted Keep Britain Tidy's 'Crime Not to Care' campaign which was implemented across Essex. The aim of the campaign was to educate the general public about the impacts of fly tipping and make them aware that they were, by law, responsible for the disposal of their rubbish. The campaign was advertised via the press, social media, banners, vehicle livery and local roadshows. As a result of the campaign, the average number of fly tips in Essex decreased by 15%, and by 7% in Braintree.

The campaign subsequently went on to be nominated in the Keep Britain Tidy awards in regard to its partnership working.

In respect of the Braintree District, a number of other campaigns that had been undertaken were also referenced, which included anti-dog fouling campaigns and, in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, a new anti-litter campaign which aimed to reduce the amount of personal protective equipment (PPE) waste. The PPE waste campaign was linked back with past campaigns such as 'Report the Tosser' and strengthened with new messages about the impacts of masks and other forms of PPE waste on the natural environment. It was added that the Council still encouraged and recruited Green Heart 'Champions,' the numbers of which were constantly increasing.

To summarise, Members were provided with a list of the factors which comprised a successful marketing campaign, such as: a good campaign slogan, budget, staff resources, cross departmental working, follow-ups on enforcement issues and monitoring and evaluation.

The full presentation may be viewed via the link below to the Council's YouTube Channel:-

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z0CjXBo9Sec>

Further to the presentation, the following information was provided in response to the questions raised by Members:-



- During the Green Heart of Essex campaign, all businesses were contacted in order to ask them to take responsibility for their litter; primarily, this approach was targeted at fast food outlets, public houses and betting shops, or any premises where it was thought there would be a large amount of litter.
- In terms of littering, 'hotspot' areas were targeted during the campaigns. Areas where there was a lot of littering were identified first and a partnership was then established with the businesses in those areas. It was added that the issues identified at the time were not necessarily specific to younger people; in fact, much of the littering that had been identified took place in the district's town centres, especially where there was a busy nightlife. Members were asked to let the Council know if they were aware of any local hotspot areas for littering in their Wards.
- Members were advised that the 'triggers' for new litter campaigns were a combination of factors; for example, in the past, the Marketing team had worked closely with the Council's Street Scene team, who would inform them of any reoccurring issues or emerging trends regarding litter. When the smoking ban was first implemented, a campaign was undertaken around smoking related litter. Similarly, when a number of fast food outlets began opening up, a campaign was conducted around car littering. The team would also link in with national campaigns, which could be accessed free of charge.
- Once a campaign had finished, monitoring work would be undertaken for a few weeks afterwards, unless feedback indicated that monitoring needed to be extended. Whilst it was possible to reintroduce or 'reinvent' past campaigns, long-term campaigns often became less effective if the same messages were being circulated. As such, the marketing team tried to vary the ten campaigns that were undertaken in order to keep littering messages fresh and eye-catching.
- Members were informed that over the past ten years, the Council had conducted at least one litter specific campaign each year, if not more, some of which had been centred on the Braintree District, whereas others were Essex-wide and national campaigns such as Keep Britain Tidy.
- The Marketing and Communications team were responsible for much of the Council's social media coverage around litter. The team also managed social media interactions and press releases around successful littering prosecutions, which helped to ensure that enforcement action taken by the Council was being highlighted to the public alongside deterrent campaigns.

**INPUT FROM COUNCILLOR CHRISTA DOBSON (FEERING PARISH COUNCIL)**  
**– 28<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2022**

The Chairman was pleased to welcome Councillor Dobson of Feering Parish Council to the meeting.

Councillor Dobson said that after Lockdown in 2020 there had been a rise in fast food littering along roads within the village, and with other residents she had decided to discuss the idea of a community litter pick with the members of the Environment Working Group at Feering Parish Council:

- The first litter pick was advertised and arranged and the tools such as litter pickers, hi-vis jackets were provided by the District Council's Street Cleaning Team
- Twenty five residents took part and there was interest in making it a regular event
- The litter picking volunteers complemented the work of the Parish Handyman who collected litter along the outskirts of the village where it was not necessarily safe for volunteers to cover
- Although there were initial setbacks, the local community had gone on to benefit from the litter picks, the hours for volunteering were flexible, and it allowed residents to meet new people and broaden their social circles. There was also an element of cross-working with litter pickers in neighbouring Coggeshall and Kelvedon. Furthermore, with the litter pickers covering residential areas, the Handyman was able to concentrate on clearing areas of land that were less accessible to residents, such as rural roads
- In terms of the Council's involvement, temporary, yellow 'no littering' signs were previously provided along Inworth Road as a deterrent for car littering, which reportedly worked well. Indeed, once the signs were removed, rates of littering increased along the road again. Consideration was also being given towards the use of the 'Don't be a Tosser' campaign signs
- It was felt that a 'Report Littering' campaign should be undertaken by the District Council to highlight both of the issue of littering and the consequences for those people who are caught
- It was suggested that the District Council could produce information posters that could be displayed on Parish noticeboards about the issue of fly tipping along rural roads and the need to check that Waste Carriers were actually licensed to undertake waste clearances. Furthermore, it was felt that both Coggeshall Road and Inworth Road in Feering would benefit from a 'fly-tipping camera' or permanent signage
- Cigarette butt littering was a major issue in and around locations such as the train station in Kelvedon, with rates worsening after Covid. There seemed to be a prevalent issue with littering amongst younger people and a lack of waste and/or recycling bins particularly around shops and parks. It was felt that the Council could work with Parish Councils to consider these issues and how they might be managed more effectively with use of the Council's neon green bins in wider areas across the district
- Littering issues along the A12 and A120 grass verges were mainly due to drivers throwing rubbish out of their vehicles onto the roads. It was asked whether the District Council could give consideration towards managing the areas in the District more effectively by making building sites responsible for picking up their own litter, working collaboratively with Essex Highways and/or National Highways to find a solution, or by clearing verges before they were trimmed

**In response to questions from Members, Councillor Dobson said that:**

- The volunteer group had received an abundance of equipment from the District Council to assist them with clearing litter, which included litter pickers, bags, high visibility jackets and gloves. He said that it would also be useful for the group to receive some litter picking hoops
- The litter picking team used the purple bags to collect the litter, which were then deposited next to, or as close as possible to, public bins. The bags would then be collected on a Monday by the Handyman and left at the central waste collection point for removal by the District Council. It was noted that some of the volunteers recycled wine bottles or other types of glass when they came across this type of litter. It was noted that this practice should remain the choice of the volunteer and not a requirement, due to health and safety issues associated with collecting this type of waste.
- In respect of litter from fast food restaurants, it was felt that the customers were the ones that needed to be targeted in respect of awareness around litter management. It was noted that littering from fast food establishments seemed to be far less of an issue in other countries which was likely due, in part, to the higher fines charged for such offences, but also a prevalent, anti-litter culture. Councillor Dobson was able to facilitate the work of the litter picking volunteer group with the support of the District Council, through the supply of the necessary equipment, and by linking in with 'Keep Britain Tidy's' Autumn cleaning campaign (in lieu of the Spring clean in 2020, which was postponed due to Covid). The success of the group was mainly attributed to the willingness of volunteers to take part and give up their time on a regular basis to combat littering, as well as the involvement of the local Handyman. It was noted that many people now had dashcams in their vehicle which could be used to obtain evidence when identifying littering offenders.
- Permanent anti-littering signage would be useful to have around 'hotspot' areas of the District, as this seemed to deter people from littering in the Inworth Road area. Heavier fines for littering would also be useful.
- It was agreed that a list of registered waste carriers could be displayed in local areas across the District and in Parish magazines, which would be useful in terms of helping residents to avoid using the services of 'rogue' carriers, who were known to collect waste and then dispose of it illegally in the form of fly tipping.

**In response to the information that was provided, the following questions and actions were raised:**

Councillor Abbott asked whether:

- Whether the purple sacks containing waste which were later collected by the Council, were taken for recycling or to landfill
- The District Council could develop a more co-ordinated approach to clearing litter along the A12 with Essex Highways
- The Council could undertake communications around issues relating to dog waste bags that were left on tree branches and in hedges along public rights of way routes throughout the district
- It would be possible to contact a member of National Highways and ask that they attend a future meeting of the Committee to talk about issues in relation to the A12. Councillor Abbott agreed to send the Essex Highways Officer's contact details to Governance Officers outside of the meeting

Councillor Courtauld agreed to explore whether Members' Councillor Community Grants could be used to help fund more litter picking equipment for parishes within his ward, such as litter picker hoops.

Councillor Sandum raised a question around the possibility of the District Council requesting that the Governance increase littering fines, as it was felt that the current fines were not enough of a deterrent. It was added that it would also be useful if successful prosecutions within the district could be promoted locally, both to reassure people that littering was taken seriously and as a deterrent for would-be offenders. At the end of the questions, the Chairman expressed her thanks on behalf of the Committee to Councillor Dobson for her presentation and the information provided.

### **INPUT FROM BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL OPERATIONS TEAM AND HEAD TEACHER GREAT BRADFORDS JUNIOR SCHOOL - 16<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2022**

INFORMATION: The Chairman was pleased to welcome Levi White, Waste and Street Cleaning Manager, Steve Wilson, Operations Manager at Braintree District Council and Justin Wrench, Head Teacher of Great Bradfords Junior School to the meeting.

**The Chairman invited the Head Teacher of Great Bradfords Junior School to introduce himself first and inform the Committee about the litter management activities undertaken at Great Bradfords Junior School. The key points from the presentation were as follows:**

- Members were advised that Great Bradfords Junior School was a large school of 360 children aged between 7 and 11 years
- The school's code of conduct was set around three important values which were;  
***To be safe, To be kind, and To be responsible***
- Great Bradfords had set up a committee called the Global Green Team which comprised of twelve Year 5 children aged between nine and ten years old who focused largely on eco and green improvements in the school. Part of their role was also to carry out regular litter picks across the school sites and they had previously been supplied litter picking tools from Braintree District Council
- The committee had also assisted in ensuring the planting of over one hundred trees in 2020, the installation of solar panels to the school in 2021, and this year had secured the fitting of over three hundred and fifty LED lights across the school
- It was reported that in Year 4, the children followed a project entitled 'Who is responsible for our waste and planet'. The focus of this was around the issue of litter and the impact this was having on the planet. This included the children litter picking the entire school site, collecting data from this, and identifying issues of why litter was collecting in certain areas

- It was noted that due to the school being situated at the bottom of an estate and within close proximity to the road, a large majority of litter was blown on to the school site from the road
- One of the main issues the children had identified was that they only had access to single use bins that were not designed particularly well and wind would often blow the contents out of the bins and disperse litter around the school site
- As part of the project the children used IT software to design their own bins. They had also recently invited the Chairman of the Council, Councillor Andrew Hensman and Councillor Mrs Wendy Schmitt, Cabinet Member for Environment to the school together who took part in a debate with the children around bins and litter
- The Head Teacher informed Members that they were still awaiting some action regarding new and additional bins. He had recently received an update and unfortunately this fell outside the remit of Braintree District Council, and was a matter for Essex County Council and their funding, however it was reported that the Cabinet Member for Environment was currently negotiating with some large companies locally to source funding for some additional bins for all local schools
- In the recent past, a Year 6 cohort had led a project on the use of single use plastics and their impact on the environment. The children were tasked with writing to local and multi-national companies along with the local MP who passed the information on to the Prime Minister at the time. Members were advised that the children had received a response from the Prime Minister and the project was passed on to the Minister for the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
- The project had culminated in a whole school litter pick over a series of two weeks which saw every child in the school go out and remove litter from the local community. Hi-vis jackets and litter picking tools were loaned to the school from the District Council to assist with the initiative
- There was a project evolving with the current Year 6 cohort entitled 'What does it take to transform' which looked at the impact of climate change but also different biomes across the world and how these were being affected along with the impact of deforestation
- Members were informed that the children were holding an exhibition next month which would include some artwork formed solely from litter and single use plastics which focused on the topics of the effects of climate change and deforestation. An invitation to attend the exhibition was extended to Members.

**In response to questions from Members, the Head Teacher supplied the following information:**

- The majority of schools would have their own variations of eco councils and littering projects although he could not confirm that this was the case for all schools
- The duties of the twelve children who made up the Global Green Team included encouraging other children to participate in litter picks, going round to classrooms at lunchtimes ensuring teachers had switched off lights, interactive white boards, and projectors

- They had not yet considered the option of whether any grants were available to assist with the issue of new and sorting bins but were keen to explore this further to see if any funding was available
- The trade waste for Great Bradfords School was managed by Braintree District Council, and they were currently looking at package options for waste management as it was noted that charges for schools food waste was quite significant
- It was agreed to circulate to Members copies of the school children's project work to enable Members a greater understanding of the work the schools had carried out
- The Head Teacher advised Members that should they have any follow up questions, Members were welcome to email him, and if Members were interested in visiting the school and meeting the children he would be happy to facilitate this

**The Chairman invited Levi White, Waste and Street Cleaning Manager and Steve Wilson, Operations Manager to make their presentation to the Committee.**

**The full presentation slides are available to view on the Council's website at the following link:**

**<https://braintree.cmis.uk.com/braintree/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/1235/Committee/21/Default.aspx>**

The key points from the presentation were as follows:

- Members were reminded that as the principle littering authority the District Council had a statutory authority under the Environmental Protection Act to maintain public highways and to clear litter from land in which they were directly responsible for
- It was reported that the waste and street management structure consisted of Levi White, Waste and Street Cleaning Manager along with a supervisor, twenty five operatives, and two highway rangers who worked on behalf of Essex County Council. They had a total of fifteen vehicles
- The street cleaning service had a controllable budget of £1.25 million which was mainly split between staff and vehicles along with a proportion being delegated to the street cleansing agreement with the Parish Councils. - The primary functions of the street cleansing service included staff patrolling the main towns of Braintree, Witham and Halstead, including the town centres, surrounding areas, and open spaces. Other duties involved district wide litter picking crews, an "A roads" team who patrolled major A roads and litter hotspots throughout the district
- It was noted that whilst some of the teams were labelled as the Braintree and Witham Teams, they were not limited to these areas and covered areas outside of this remit.
- Currently across the district the Street Cleaning Team were emptying a total of 1125 litter bins and the frequency of collection depended on a number of factors which included the area, footfall and usage. They also reviewed trends

and complaints and in order to increase collections where necessary. The street cleansing service were also responsible for 957 dog bins, again the frequency for these differed across the district based on the same variations as the litter bins.

- The street cleansing service also provided a rapid response team who were predominantly called out to clear fly tips in the district in almost all occasions within one working day.
- Members were informed that the street cleansing service work in partnership with a number of bodies including Parish Councils, Essex County Council Highways, national highways and voluntary groups across the District. Internally the Street Cleansing Team worked closely with Communications and Marketing who were the strategic lead on the campaigns delivered
- The Street Cleansing Team were also the main support for all litter campaigns rolled out across the district and were responsible for the set up and monitoring of the projects. It was reported that the team had carried out some research following a previous litter signage campaign and had recorded a 28% reduction in ground litter
- Following the roll out of new bins installed in laybys along the A12 and A120, it was reported that there had been a reduction in ground litter in the laybys from 15% down to 7-8% and the team had seen an increase in the amount of litter being collected from the bins. These were monitored once a month and following the installation of the new bins, saw an increase on one route from around 250kg of litter from laybys, to 310kg collected
- It was reported that the stretch of A12 that the Council were responsible for had a total of 49 bins installed at laybys, whereas the section of the A12 within Colchester City Council's jurisdiction was serviced by one additional layby in comparison and only maintained six bins in total.
- The Street Cleansing Team were also considering a greater use of digital technology including CCTV and "litter cams". "Litter Cams" were highly sensitive static cameras that could detect the smallest pieces of waste being thrown out of a vehicle. These had recently been trialed in Maidstone, however it was questioned whether these just moved the litter further along the highway
- It was reported that the litter and dog bin routes throughout the district would be reviewed in 2024. It was also being considered to bring in a new policy enabling members of the public to put in requests for new and additional litter bins throughout the district
- It was noted that one of the biggest challenges being faced was the cultural issue of the 'throw away' society and it was important to continue to educate people

**In response to questions asked by Members, the following information and actions were raised:**

- It was reported that one of the biggest challenges in litter prevention was on slip roads as these were difficult to install signage and litter pick. Due to the fast travelling vehicles on these roads special permissions and traffic management were required to service these roads. The District Council were working to overcome this by gaining support from the collaborative partnerships that had been set up

- It was considered that litter bins were not always clearly visible therefore the initiative to install bigger brighter bins would enable drivers to locate the bins easier and encourage usage. It was believed that the decrease of litter seen on the ground and increase of litter collected from the bins was an indication that this had been successful
- Members were informed that part of the collaborative work being carried out along the A12 with other authorities presented the Councils the opportunity to align their communications and work together on the same initiatives to project a stronger and clearer message
- Councillor Abbott advised he had been in contact with a representative of National Highways who had confirmed they undertook weekly inspections of litter along all major roads and reported this to the responsible authority. Councillor Abbott then sought clarity from officers to confirm whether any correspondence had been received from National Highways in respect to certain areas along the A12. The Operations Manager reported that he had also been in contact with National Highways regarding the same issue and had been advised that the Braintree District was one of the better areas along the A12 in comparison to areas under other local authorities and that they continued to work closely with National Highways
- In response to a question raised, it was reported that the waste from litter bins could not be recycled due to issues around contamination and was therefore sent to landfill sites. Officers confirmed that they had contacted the Probation Service to enquire whether there was the option for offenders undertaking community service to work alongside the District Council to complete tasks such as litter picking and repainting graffiti but were yet to receive a response. It was confirmed that the collaborative partnership was in its infancy with the main group meeting each quarter and sub-groups meeting monthly
- It was noted that previous litter sweeps along the A12 had been carried out at night whereby traffic management were booked in advance. There was one occasion where the litter pick team were able to piggyback behind a national highways contractor which was a much cheaper alternative for the District Council however this was at the discretion of the contractor

## **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

As part of the Scrutiny Review it was considered a valuable addition to our evidence gathering would be to forward a questionnaire to all Parish and Town Councils inviting them to take part. The questions that were put forward were:

- What, if any, litter management activities are undertaken by your Parish Council, and who is involved with this? (E.g. what are the cost/resource implications of litter management).
- Which, if any, partners does your Parish Council work with to undertake litter management activities?
- What past/current successes have there been with managing litter in your area? (e.g. any past successful campaigns that you could provide details on, any volunteer groups, etc).



- Are there any challenges associated with managing litter in your area?
- Going forward, how do you think coordinated working between Parish/Town Councils with the District Council could be improved in order to deter and manage littering in future?

Responses were received from twenty-four Councils, and can be found collated in [Appendix A – Survey Responses](#).

An invitation was also extended to National Highways to attend a Partnership Development Scrutiny Committee meeting to give further evidence for our review, but the Area Manager, Nigel Allsopp was unable to attend but answered questions in writing by email which were put before him. Please see [Appendix B – National Highways Area Manager response](#).

## **CONCLUSION OF THE SCRUTINY REVIEW**

Having reviewed all the evidence within this Scrutiny Review the Committee has identified that:

- There are no fundamental concerns regarding how the Council works with its partners, although additional engagement was welcomed as a positive step. When considering future partnerships, consideration could be given to looking more widely or deeply for partners. Other initiatives identified at Full Council may require the concept of partnering to change, although the Committee could assist Officers in who they approach
- The Council undertakes effective campaigns with a range of partners to improve the management of litter across the district
- Parish Councils value the Council's service provision and are keen to engage further to achieve even greater improvements
- Investment in additional resources has resulted in a reduction in litter
- The Council is effective at engaging with its partners when undertaking new campaigns and activities
- Litter on the most major and most minor routes are the most problematic to remove and resolve
- Fast food, building site litter and litter from operatives working on building sites made up a significant percentage of litter in some areas, and warranted targeted action
- There remains a need to educate people to not drop litter, to be aware of the consequences of dropping litter and to not drop litter as a result
- Public perception is that the penalty for littering is too low and should be increased to act as a deterrent and alter littering behaviours
- Officers, Members and residents play an integral role in litter reduction and the success evident within the review often is at least partially as a result of an individual or group or department's efforts to go above and beyond and provide exceptional service

## **RECOMMENDATIONS OF SCRUTINY REVIEW**

The Committee started the Scrutiny Review in July 2022 knowing that we were not

going to solve the litter issue entirely. Litter management in itself is a very large topic but we feel the direction that we followed as a Committee involved in partnership working will hopefully add value to the service the Council already provides and that the recommendations contained in this report represent cost efficient ways of tackling litter through education, enforcement, raising awareness and continuing to work with the partnerships that the Council is already involved with and to look to further opportunities to work with other partners in the future. Following the conclusion of the Scrutiny Review into Litter Management in the Braintree District, Members of the Partnership Development Scrutiny Committee would like to make the following recommendations:

### **Recommendation - 1**

Operations to work closely with the National Highways through their new committee for their cooperation to give local authorities who are members of that committee to have better access to the trunk road network (A12 and A120) by means of Programmed Traffic Management to carry out litter picking along with any other regular maintenance work by other partners. Cabinet Member responsible for Highways to raise the concerns with Essex County Council and National Highways and encourage them to attend to raise the profile of the issue and be solutions driven.

### **Evidence**

The Traffic Management is an essential and expensive element of these major works. At present Operations try to piggy back onto other Contractors Traffic Management facility on an adhoc basis, which doesn't allow for a regular programme of litter clearing to these areas, therefore large areas remain littered for long periods.

### **Recommendation - 2**

Encourage Operations Department to look at recycling bins to encourage greater recycling in town centres. (Re: example of Bin in Buxton Derbyshire, High Peak Borough Council in partnership with Nestle water (Photograph [here](#)))

### **Evidence**

If we are encouraging greater time spent in our town centres for the purpose of socialising, then we need to have the appropriate waste receptacles in place to promote our council's green agenda on recycling.

### **Recommendation - 3**

Communications team to continue to work with the fast food outlets to investigate and implement appropriate campaign materials to monitor and regulate littering levels and to try to educate those that continue to discard their takeaway litter both as pedestrians and from vehicles.

### **Evidence**

The returned responses from parish and town council surveys indicate that for a number of parishes especially within a few miles of a takeaway premise litter thrown

from vehicles is a continuing and increasing problem. Evidence is also borne out by Committee members from their wards.

#### **Recommendation - 4**

The Communications and Operations team along with the Cabinet Member to encourage the Essex County Councillor Portfolio Holder to invest in secondary schools to get the subject issues onto the educational agenda and effectively engage schools in a litter reduction campaign to ensure that this agenda sits at the forefront of educational settings and young people's priorities.

**Evidence** Responses received from Parish Councils surveys suggest that younger children are very conscientious in depositing litter correctly, but the responsibility appears to wain in some older secondary age children.

#### **Recommendation - 5**

The Communication and Operations Team, along with the Cabinet Member to encourage the Essex County Councillor Portfolio Holder to invest in an education programme with all schools to design posters containing litter prevention information be designed and made available for businesses, shops, leisure and tourism sites, pubs and restaurants. The availability of these posters be promoted through the media. We believe this recommendation will be a low cost initiative that will give residents and businesses the power to display promotional literature to discourage littering.

#### **Evidence**

The knowledge gained from our evidence gathering sessions were that in the last ten years that at least one litter campaign was carried out each year by the authority and this could form a future campaign and by producing posters to have displayed in prominent places throughout the district and designed by young people in schools it could form part of Recommendation 4 (education) and in turn be a visual reminder to businesses and the public.

#### **Recommendation - 6**

It would be very helpful if Braintree District Council could facilitate signposting on their website so the public can easily access the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) directory of licensed waste carriers in the area. This signposting could also be shared with Parish Councils for them to disseminate to their residents.

#### **Evidence**

Following the presentation from Councillor Dobson of Feering Parish Council, she outlined the concerns that residents had when requiring a skip hire or similar to remove waste from properties, whether the carrier was a bona fide operator.

#### **Recommendation - 7**

Where success appears to have been achieved following the mobile 'Do not litter' signs being 'in situ' in what were persistent hot spots of discarded litter, consideration might be given to a permanent sign being put in their place outlining the penalties if littering occurs. It would require Highways involvement and an opportunity to explore joint working with the County Council should be pursued to promote this shared agenda, alongside continuation of the successful current system in place to reduce littering.

### **Evidence**

From Parish Council surveys evidence shows that significant improvement was seen following the removal of the signs for some considerable time afterwards. It was felt that benefit could be had from a permanent sign in place.

### **Recommendation - 8**

The Operations team to explore further opportunities to support community groups and Parish Councils with procurement of equipment to aid their litter collection. Signposting of grant funding availability and other opportunities would continue to be explored.

### **Evidence**

From the Parish Council responses the acknowledgement that Braintree District Council Operations were invaluable in their support to the Parish Council and the benefit of partnership working for favourable outcomes in customer service was very evident.

### **Recommendation - 9**

That the Portfolio Holder liaises with the Local Government Association to lobby the Secretary of State to look at imposing much greater fines to act as a real deterrent for both dropping litter and fly tipping, so that it truly identifies the environmental crime that it is and identifies the perpetrators of the offence.

Cabinet to review the fines they charge and the success achieved in payment of the fines, alongside consideration of whether the framework also requires review.

### **Evidence**

Taken from *Defra's Review of fixed penalties for environmental offences and introduction of civil penalties for littering from vehicles outside London Summary of responses August 2017 - Page 4.*

An overwhelming majority of responses (87%) agreed that the fixed penalties for littering should be increased.

Fourteen councils felt that increasing the fixed penalties would help to maintain or increase the deterrent effect. An increase in fixed penalties would send a tougher message to those who continue to litter and could mean that a fixed penalty notice is viewed as more than just a minor offence.

Eight councils said it would lead to reductions in litter, change littering behaviour and generally lead to a better quality of environment.

## **LINKS TO MINUTES AND AGENDAS OF MEETINGS**

[11<sup>th</sup> May 2022](#)

[13<sup>th</sup> July 2022](#)

[28<sup>th</sup> September 2022](#)

[16<sup>th</sup> November 2022](#)

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Ros Alam, Marketing and Engagement Officer, Braintree District Council

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Councillor Christa Dobson, Feering Parish Council

Tania Roberge, Marketing and Communications Manager, Braintree District Council

Levi White, Waste and Street Cleaning Manager, Braintree District Council

Steve Wilson, Operations Manager, Braintree District Council

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