

Committee: **Executive Committee**
Date of meeting: **16th June 2021**
Report Subject: **Adoption of Litter and Fly-Tipping Strategy**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr. Joanna Wilkins / Executive Member Environment**
Report Submitted by: **David Watkins – Team Manager - Street Scene**

| Reporting Pathway | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------|----------------------|
| Directorate Management Team | Corporate Leadership Team | Portfolio Holder / Chair | Audit Committee | Democratic Services Committee | Scrutiny Committee | Executive Committee | Council | Other (please state) |
| 23/03/2021 | 25/03/2021 | 28.05.21 | | | 12.04.21 | 16.06.21 | | |

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 The report is to seek approval from the Executive Committee for the adoption of a new Council Litter and Fly-Tipping Strategy for 2021-2026.

2. Scope and Background

2.1 Scope

2.1.1 This report provides information on the rationale, relevance and benefit that a Litter and Fly-Tipping Strategy would have to support the Council in the effective and efficient management of litter and fly-tipping across the County borough.

2.2 Background

2.2.1 Keep Wales Tidy's (KWT) Caru Cymru received funding through the Welsh Government Rural Communities - Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, which is funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the Welsh Government.

2.2.2 A successful application was made to Caru Cymru for £30,000pa over a three-year period commencing 2019/20. The project aim is to improve the quality of the environment for everyone. The project emphasis is on long term behavioural change rather than continuing to rely on just cleaning up.

2.2.3 The Caru Cymru scheme supports projects that make environmental improvements within residential areas by developing benefits for people, businesses and their communities.

2.2.4 The funding application was to include the appointment of a Local Environmental Quality (LEQ) Officer who would work with existing Litter champions and groups along with engaging with schools and community groups to raise awareness, educate and promote Local Environmental Quality issues within the borough, raise awareness and support long term behaviour change, unfortunately this has been delayed due to the Covid pandemic.

- 2.2.5 It was identified that for the Council to have a more effective and positive impact on the scheme, a relevant strategy and supporting policies would be required to support the management of the project's aim. Therefore, included in the funding application was for a specialist LEQ consultant to be appointed to review the Street Cleansing Service and draft a Blaenau Gwent Litter and Fly-Tipping Strategy.
- 2.2.6 A tender process was commenced in November 2019, with the contract being awarded to Red & White Resource Ltd.
- 2.2.7 The consultant commenced work in January 2020, which involved:
- Spending time in Blaenau Gwent to get an understanding of the area, its communities and issues.
 - Collation of all litter data, demography, and operational processes
 - Meeting and interviewing all relevant stakeholders such as Keep Wales Tidy, Blaenau Gwent Litter Champions, Volunteer Groups, Officers and Frontline Street Cleansing staff.
- 2.2.8 A thorough review and analysis of the cleansing service and the feedback from stakeholder meetings and interviews allowed the consultant to draft an independent and objective Litter and Fly-Tipping Strategy for Council consideration and adoption.
- 2.2.9 Unfortunately, the commencement of the Covid 19 pandemic in March 2020 prevented additional site visits and follow up stakeholder workshops, however it was felt that the information and data obtained to that point (20th March 2021) was sufficient in order to complete a draft Litter and Fly-Tipping Strategy for adoption by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council.

2.3 **The Strategy (Appendix 1)**

- 2.3.1 From the information ascertained from the consultation process with stakeholders, a shared vision and a number of key objectives have been established for the new Litter and Fly-Tipping Strategy 2021-2026 that will deliver recognised environmental improvements to ensure Blaenau Gwent realises the shared vision, these are;

The Vision

- 2.3.2 *“To radically reduce litter and fly-tipping so we can improve our natural habitats as well as our wild and urban landscapes, increasing pride and awareness of our local heritage and desire to keep it litter free.”*

2.3.3 **Key Objectives**

1. To have a strategy that provides a framework for action.
2. To reduce litter and fly-tipping in Blaenau Gwent over the next five years.
3. To build on success of our litter champions and have a strong connection within the local communities on litter and fly-tipping issues.
4. To deliver an effective communication and engagement plan for the prevention of litter and fly-tipping.
5. To have an improved understanding within the local community of issues around litter and fly-tipping.

6. To provide effective and efficient council services that make the best use of the resources available to tackle litter and fly-tipping, including enforcement.

2.3.4 **Action Plan (appendix 2)**

2.3.4.1 The strategy action plan (five years) sets out key actions to be undertaken during the lifespan of the strategy 2021-2026, these are set out under four themes, as follows:

1. Influence
2. Engage
3. Adopt Best Practice
4. Empower

2.3.4.2 The timelines associated with the key actions within the action plan are set out as follows:

- short-term – One to two years
- medium-term – two to three years, and,
- long-term – three to five years

2.3.5 The full strategy document is attached at appendix 1 with the action plan attached at appendix 2.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 The Community Services Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 12th April 2021 supported the adoption by the Council of the Litter and Fly-Tipping Strategy.

3.1.1 **Option 1 (preferred)**

To approve the adoption of the draft Blaenau Gwent Litter and Fly-tipping Strategy 2021-2026

3.2

3.2.1 **Option 2**

To not approve the adoption of a new Blaenau Gwent Litter and Fly-Tipping Strategy 2021-2026.

4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

4.1 The Litter and Fly-tipping Strategy 2021-2026 links into the Council's Corporate Plan 2018-2022 'Strong and Environmentally Smart Communities': to re-invest in environmental services to address the issues created by fly-tipping, dog fouling, littering, grass cutting, street cleansing and pest control.

5. **Implications**

5.1 **Benefits**

- Adoption of a Litter and Fly-tipping Strategy will see Blaenau Gwent as one of only two Local Authorities in Wales to have a specific litter and fly-tipping strategy providing a strategic direction that supports its aim to improve the local environment quality to the benefit of the community.
- The Strategy will raise awareness, educate and promote Local Environmental Quality issues in Blaenau Gwent.
- The Strategy will identify ways to communicate the impact of litter and assist behavioural change projects.
- The Strategy will provide a route to establishing other supporting policies i.e. a litter and dog bin protocol.
- The strategy and action plan will support the council with the submission of bids/applications to external funding providers.

Dis-benefits

5.2

Increased service standard expectation from the community.

5.2.1

Risks

5.3

Risks Option 1

5.3.1

- Service standards may not improve if the Strategy is not adopted.
- The action plan may be more challenging than anticipated.
- The strategy may be required to be delivered over a longer period.
- Should the strategy not be adopted then the Council will have no strategic direction for dealing with litter and fly-tipping matters.

Risks Option 2

5.3.2

- Should the strategy not be adopted then the council will have no clear strategic plan for dealing with litter and fly-tipping going forward.
- Key partners may withdraw their support.
- Service change opportunities may be lost.
- The council would have no strategic document to use as a basis for securing external funding opportunities.

Budget

5.4

The service reviews and subsequent Strategy provision has been funded by Welsh Government.

5.4.1

5.4.2

The three-year funding programme of £30,000 per year from 2019/20 will assist with the implementation costs of the strategy objectives and policies with the council continuing to support the ongoing associated revenue costs for the services provided.

5.4.5 It is anticipated that the strategy action plan will be delivered within existing revenue resources.

5.5 **Legal**

5.5.1 Enforcement is a key area of work within the new Litter and Fly-Tipping Strategy and will require ongoing legal support from the Council's Environment, Legal and Estates teams.

5.6 **Human Resources**

5.6.1 There will be a need to appoint an LEQ officer on a fixed term basis, this will be funded by Welsh Government through the grant already awarded.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

6.1.1 Littering across all local authorities in Wales is monitored through the Welsh Government's Local Environment Audit and Management System (LEAMS). LEAMS records two issues in the street scene environment. Firstly, street cleanliness and Secondly it records Adverse Environmental Quality Indicators (AEQI) - this would include fly-posting, graffiti, dog fouling, vandalism, weeds and detritus. Audits have been published on an annual basis since 2007.

6.1.2 The Cleanliness Indicator in Blaenau Gwent has continued to increase in recent years and have shown that the percentage of highway that is of a high or acceptable standard of cleanliness has consistently been over 90% in the last three years with figures reaching 100% by the end of 2019/20. In addition, whilst fly-tipping continues to be a problem in Blaenau Gwent, the time taken to collect the waste has reduced over the past year.

6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

6.2.1 Public consultations and litter champion surveys, have identified that the impact of litter has a detrimental impact of the perception of the local environment. Therefore, the strategy outcomes and policies will put systems in place to improve the environment to the benefit of the whole community.

6.2.2 Strategy implementation will allow for engagement with schools and community groups to raise awareness, educate and promote Local Environmental Quality issues within the borough.

6.2.3 Engagement with other key stakeholders such as the business community, KWT and LHB to holistically achieve the ownership of improving the Local Environment for residents.

6.2.4 The Council will have a document that sets out the strategic direction for dealing with litter and fly-tipping matters, resulting in protecting the local environment and tackling the problem of litter and fly-tipping through partnerships.

6.3 **Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)**

6.3.1

Extensive consultation was undertaken through a Street Cleansing review to provide the necessary information needed in the drafting of this Strategy, this included engagement with the following:

- Blaenau Gwent Member Engagement
- Keep Wales Tidy
- Litter Champions
- External partners/Community Groups
- Welsh Government
- Departmental officers

6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***

6.4.1 A five year action plan has been developed identifying key actions to be undertaken on a short-term, medium-term and long-term basis over the next five years 2021-2026.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

The consultant has undertaken a fundamental review of the Street Cleansing service.

The findings of the review formed the basis of the strategy and identified the Key Objectives, and actions to improve the Local Environmental quality for the future.

There will be a need both corporately and operationally to adopt some service changes to ensure it is fit for purpose for residents, visitors and sustainable going forward.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

6.6.1 There are opportunities to work with housing associations, community groups, individual volunteers, trusts and local businesses to secure ways to raise awareness, change behaviour and share responsibility.

6.6.2 The consultant reported that the engagement process had been successful with participation and involvement particularly from the volunteers being very high and positive and will benefit the wider community.

6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***

6.7.1 The content of this report has been considered across a number of services including; Education, Environmental Services, Community Services, and Community Safety.

6.8 ***EqlA(screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)*** **N/A**

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 The five-year action plan will be monitored through Scrutiny and the Executive with quarterly update performance reports being submitted together with an annual LEAMS report being submitted.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- Appendix 1 - Litter Strategy 2021-2026
- Appendix 2 – Litter Strategy Action Plan 2021-2026