

6 December 2018		ITEM: 6
Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview & Scrutiny Committee		
Grounds Maintenance, Street Cleansing and Fly Tipping Update		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: N/A	
Report of: Daren Spring, Assistant Director for Street Scene and Leisure		
Accountable Director: Julie Rogers, Director of Environment and Highways		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

This report provides an update on the progress of the Cleaning and Greening service and outlines service aspirations for the future which seek to address and improve perceptions of street cleanliness, grounds maintenance and parks, playgrounds and open spaces. The report also provides Cleaner, Greener and Safer, Overview and Scrutiny committee with an update on fly tipping in Thurrock, this includes the types of materials fly tipped, the most common locations where fly tipping takes place, the cost of clearing and preventative measures to reduce and prevent fly tipping from taking place.

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee are requested to note the performance and service achievements in relation to Fly Tipping. and;**
- 1.2 To note performance in relation to the Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing section elements of the Clean it, Cut it, Fill it programme since last reporting to Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny in July 2017.**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1** Following a recent restructure within the Environment and Highways Directorate the Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing teams are now known as the Cleaning and Greening service. The Cleaning and Greening teams continue to work on enhancing the service and raising resident perception. The vision of Place and the growth of the borough requires an environment which is clean, green and welcoming to all.

2.2 Following reinvestment in the service through the Clean It, Cut It, Fill It programme the Cleaning and Greening Teams comprise the following breakdown of staff.

Team	FTE
Arboriculture	3
Burials	5
Clean and Green	4
Grounds Maintenance East	24
Grounds Maintenance West	26
Parks and Open Spaces	25
Street Cleansing	45.6
Grand Total	132.6

2.3 The structure of the Cleaning and Greening section is detailed below:



3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

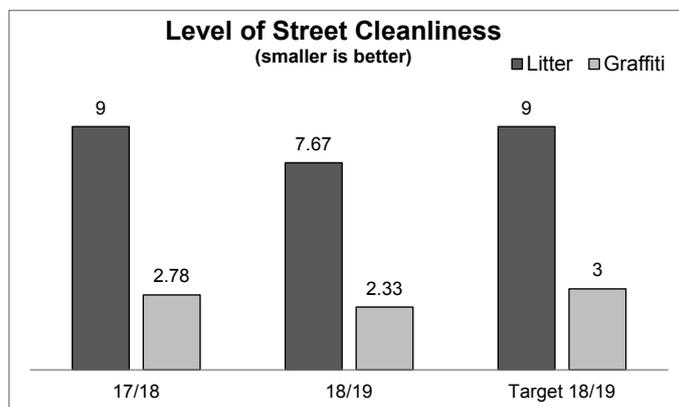
3.1 Cleaning

3.1.1 The standard of street cleanliness is regularly monitored and measured through a series of site inspections that cover a number of land types. The inspections are undertaken in 3 tranche; each covers a number of wards and 300 sites.

3.1.2 Assessment of street cleanliness used to be carried out by internal officers from our Housing Service. From 2017-18 assessments of street cleanliness have been carried out by Keep Britain Tidy Inspectors, offering an independant and nationally recognised criteria and assessment. As a result of the change in methodology the KPI targets were revisited and adjusted. In

year one the performance was above target and as a consequence new higher targets were agreed to demonstrate our continual strive for improvement.

- 3.1.3 For 2018-19 only the first of the inspections has been carried out, with results showing good performance. The table below includes the details of the results for the past 18 months (smaller figures indicator better performance).



- 3.1.4 Some of the land types that have been a focus for the cleansing team have shown exceptional results. For the following land types, the scores for the first inspections in 2018-19 were all returned as 0 indicating a very high standard of cleanliness:

- Main Retail and Commercial
- High Obstruction Housing
- Medium Obstruction Housing
- Low Obstruction Housing

Land types that are receiving additional focus to increase overall cleanliness and raise the KPI standards are:

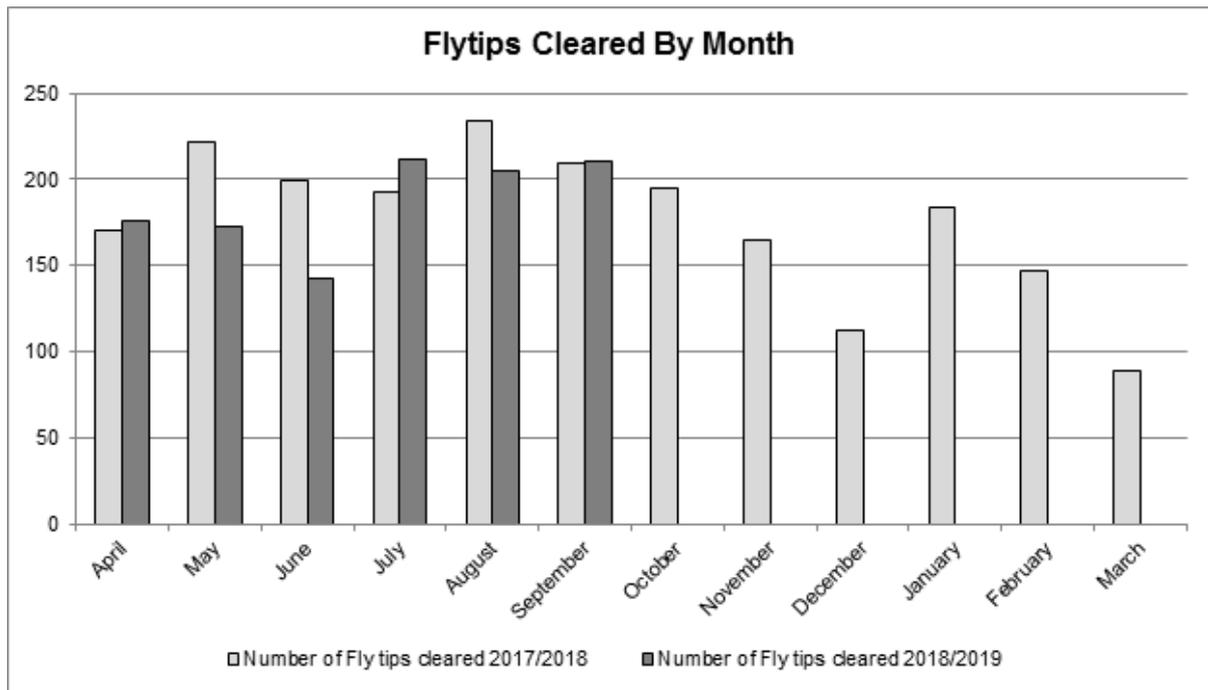
- Main Roads
- Rural Roads
- Recreation areas
- Other Retail and Commercial

There are instances where road cleanliness becomes a greater challenge, for example when areas are being redeveloped and construction is taking place. Lorry movements from these sites can lead to mud transferal via vehicle tyres, which causes the cleanliness of the roads to deteriorate below the desired standard. An example of this was Buckingham Road, in this particular case joint tasking of the service, with colleagues in the Planning Enforcement team, took place to ensure that the companies involved complied with planning regulations and preagreed standards. Officers ensured that a wheel washing facility was used by the lorries exiting the site and that the roads were mechanically swept on a more frequent basis to maintain cleanliness.

- 3.1.5 Investment in fleet replacement has enabled Street Cleansing to benefit from the replacement of two medium sized street sweeping vehicles and the delivery of two new large mechanical sweepers is eagerly awaited, replacing aging vehicles and providing increased reliability. To improve standards for levels of detritus, focus will be given to backlines and channels preventing growth on footways. The service is also implementing more effective working practises by integrating the mechanical and manual sweeping programmes.
- 3.1.6 The team have been proactively improving the standard of cleanliness with a number of deep cleanse programmes rolled out over the course of the year. These have taken place across a number of sites including Chafford Hundred and Lakeside. Additional staff are also operating at weekends to ensure that the Boroughs Parks are litter picked, bins are emptied more frequently and the areas are welcoming and enjoyable for residents. On the days that Grays Market is in operation, additional staff and resources have been deployed to maintain the high standard of cleanliness in our town centre.
- 3.1.7 A key factor for the improved level of street cleanliness has been the reintroduction of barrow beats and the two additional charge-hands, along with the reintroduction of the Major routes litter picking team. This team has ensured the focus on litter picking the major routes that traverse the borough, as well as some of the rural roads which are not appropriate for barrow beats. The team's current schedule focuses on a ten working day cycle for these areas.
- 3.1.8 Once again this year the Street Cleansing teams were actively engaged in supporting the "Clean for the Queen" programme, although the weather on the scheduled weekend was poor, ten voluntary groups were supported in local litter picks on that date and adjacent weekends.
- 3.1.9 The cleaning of the Council maintained section of the A13 has taken place, at a schedule of 4 times per year. The increase in litter picking from 3 to 4 times annually has improved the litter levels on this stretch of road and we continue to apply pressure to Highways England and their contractor Connect Plus to increase frequency on the roads for which they are responsible.

3.2 Fly Tipping

- 3.2.1 One of the challenges the service face, is the removal of a large number of fly tips. The actual cost to remove all fly tipping is difficult to determine as small instances of fly tipping is removed by various small caged vehicles during routine maintenance. Collections are generally mixed with other rubbish which is collected from litter bins etc. There is a dedicated vehicle which solely collects fly tipping and the following cost is based on the waste collected by this vehicle from April 2018 to date £73,484.88. Recent examples of persistent or large scale fly tipping include the following locations: Love Lane, Cart Lane, Curzon Drive.



3.2.2 The physical appearance of the borough has been blighted by environmental crime ranging from dog fouling to large fly tips. In order to maintain an attractive environment for residents and businesses and maximise the effectiveness of the Clean it, Cut it, Fill it campaign the Council needs to show a zero tolerance of irresponsible and criminal behavior such as fly tipping, graffiti, fly posting, dog fouling, littering and the abandonment of vehicles.

3.2.3 On occasion we engage a contractor to assist with the removal due to the specialist content of the waste e.g. asbestos. We continue monitoring the number of fly tips and work with partners, including the Police, Environment Agency, other local authorities, Farmers and Private Land owner groups. This includes multi-agency operations with the police patrolling and stopping suspect vehicles. Once the investigation work has been completed, on Council owned land the fly tip is removed. If the fly tip is on Private land, the owner of the land can be issued with a Community Protection Warning. Failing to remove the fly tip may lead to a Notice being served. In instances where the fly tip is on private land and is deemed hazardous, the matter is referred to the Environmental Protection team to investigate. The Environmental Protection Officers have designated powers to deal with this type of fly tip more quickly.

3.2.4 Environmental Enforcement is the primary method by which the Council regulates activity impacting the public realm. Together with the work of teams in the Cleaning and Greening section, an appropriate degree of enforcement action assists in identifying fly tipping evidence and reduces the need for Environmental Enforcement officers to visit every fly tip. Operatives for the Cleaning and greening teams have received the relevant training to allow them to check small fly tips for evidence. If no evidence is found the fly tipping is removed by the operatives with immediate effect. When it is found an

Enforcement officer is contacted to attend, capture and safeguard the evidence for potential court submission, prior to the removal of the fly tip.

- 3.2.5 In July 2018, three Environmental Enforcement Officers were recruited increasing the number of Environmental Enforcement Officers in the Service to four, plus one Senior Environmental Enforcement Officer. This increase allowed for a new way of working to be introduced namely the 'Quadrant Model'. The Borough of Thurrock is now split into four areas with one Environmental Enforcement Officer assigned to one quarter of the Borough. This model allows each Environmental Enforcement Officer to concentrate on a specific area and target any activity concerning Environmental Enforcement including Anti-Social Behavior based on specific Quadrant issues in liaison with the police.
- 3.2.6 Cabinet approved that maximum fixed penalty fines permissible by legislation would be imposed to fly tipping offenders, which is £400.00. This approach was taken in an attempt to deter would be fly tippers from fly tipping in the borough. Since April 2018, 73 fixed penalty notices for fly tipping have been issued. If an FPN isn't paid prosecution will follow which would result in full recovery of cost at the discretion of the court, the maximum penalty on conviction is an unlimited fine.
- 3.2.7 The Environmental Enforcement officers carry out joint tasking exercises with various agencies including the Police and the Environment Agency. Known fly tipping hot spot areas are targeted by officers from a number of agencies to try to resolve the issues. The type of fly tipping can vary from small fly tips which occur often or large one off fly tips. Various forms of preventative measures are also used in an attempt to deter fly tipping. CCTV is used when necessary to try to identify offenders as well as being used as a visual deterrent in some cases.
- 3.2.8 Various communication channels are used to inform residents of appropriate ways of disposing of waste, to signpost to information and encourage residents to report fly tipping. Local and nationwide poster campaigns are also used to warn people of the penalties that apply should they inappropriately dispose of waste, an example of a new campaign due to be released in January is attached as appendix 1. Where prosecutions are successful the council proactively media release, illustrating the zero tolerance approach taken.
- 3.2.9 Grays Town Centre and surrounding areas receive the most complaints regarding unauthorised deposits of waste. This was confirmed by a heat map generated from uniform. After reviewing the different types of waste that was being fly tipped, it was apparent that the volume of individual reported incidents was higher than the Borough average however, the fly tip size was usually small (2-3 black bags). Using this intelligence, the Environmental Enforcement officer responsible for the Grays quadrant decided the best option available to tackle the issue, was to set up an action day. Having 9 officers on the site at the same time made the team visible and acted as a

deterrent, as well as finding waste and commencing appropriate enforcement action.

3.3 Greening

3.3.1 The Parks and Open Spaces team have removed 178.900 tonnes of green waste between April – September 2018.

3.3.2 The team have since October 2017, carried out winter pruning maintenance to 29 sites, 23.240 tonnes of green waste was removed as a result of this work. The remaining sites have been added to a programme and will be completed over the coming winter periods.

Service Area	Function	Annual Output
Greening (includes all Parks and Open Spaces and Country Parks)	No. of Playgrounds maintained.	77
	Total Area Maintained	517.50 hectares
	No. of Urban Parks maintained.	90

3.3.3 A review has commenced of the parks and green spaces, initial work has brought parks and green spaces to an operational standard, for the start of the season. We will continue to look at improvement to the inspection and maintenance of our play and sports facilities, working to ensure that facilities have been improved with repairs and replacement pathways/surfaces, replacement of play equipment, foliage reduction, installation of benches and litter bins.

3.3.4 Given the difficult start to this year's grass cutting season with a period of snow followed by wet conditions the Teams have worked hard throughout the grass cutting season in our parks, open spaces and cemeteries to improve the standard of maintenance. Winter maintenance work will be carried out over the next 5 months, with a view to enhance the appearance of these sites. The winter maintenance will include path edging and shrub and hedge pruning. There is a programme in place to ensure that our parks, open spaces and cemeteries are looking their best. The Shrub pruning winter maintenance programmes are due to commence at the end of November, ensuring that all shrub and hedged areas across the borough are maintained. Previously schedules spanned a 5 year programme; to improve the quality of the maintenance this frequency is being increased to a tri-yearly programme, and this includes our open cemeteries.

3.3.5 This year the team have deployed new ride-on mowers, this has resolved some of the previously experienced reliability issues, thereby ensuring that all areas have been cut to schedule and enhancing the height of cut for specific areas. We continue to look at equipment and plant to enhance the work that we conduct and we had staff attend a national exhibition of the latest products and equipment for grounds care, sports and green space management.

3.4 Proposed Future Approach

- 3.4.1 Over the next 12 months a focus for the team will be reviewing the Street Cleansing rounds and routes ensuring that our resources are effectively deployed and that there is the appropriate balance of mechanical and manual cleaning, with trials of some pavement mountable mechanical sweepers. Whilst the service exceeded cleansing targets last year and are on target to deliver this year, the service will continually aim to exceed Key Performance Indicator targets set.
- 3.4.2 The training of staff will continue to ensure that the service meets the national standards required for their roles, including RPII (Register of Play Inspectors International) accreditation for our Play inspectors, ICCM (Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium management), cemeteries operative training for our cemeteries staff and to ensure that operatives working on sports have an appropriate fine turf qualification.
- 3.4.3 The service are also exploring whether a small waste vehicle could be used across all services to assist with public bin emptying, increasing efficiency and potentially overcoming blocked access issues for the waste collection service.
- 3.4.4 The service is rolling out the use of the Bartec system. This enables ground operatives to report issues, while out and about, and provide a live system for the call centre and depot staff to receive updates throughout the working day. This will also enable the service to upload finance data, produce a bill of quantities and facilitate costing models for future income generating work.
- 3.4.5 The service is in the process of procuring and implementing the Arbortrack electronic tree management system to effectively manage Thurrock Council's tree stock in an efficient, effective and digital manner. The Council has responsibility for the ongoing maintenance and management of over 20,000 street trees (including trees in parks and open spaces). As part of that responsibility the Council can be held liable for any injury or damage caused by tree failure. In order to mitigate against that risk, we need to be able to demonstrate that we not only have an accurate record of the location, species and condition of the trees in the Borough, but also that we have a scheduled programme of regular maintenance and accurate records of works completed.
- 3.4.6 The Environment Service will continue to explore creative and innovative ways to continue to enhance and improve the service delivery in the most effective way.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 This report provides Cleaner, Greener, Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update on the positive work taking place in relation to the Street Scene and Leisure service, as well as the challenges facing the service in relation to Fly Tipping.

5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

5.1 N/A

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

6.1 N/A

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Laura Last**
Management Accountant

There has been no budget for fly tipping since 2014/15.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **David Lawson**
Assistant Director of Law & Governance & Monitoring Officer

There are no Legal implications associated with this report.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Becky Price**
Team Manager – Community Development and Equalities

There are no Diversity and Equality implications associated with this report.

7.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

N/A

8. Background papers used in preparing the report (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

N/A

9. Appendices to the report

Appendix 1 – Fly Tipping Poster

Appendix 2 – Communication Plan

Report Author:

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Environment and Highways