

## **Appendix 1**

### Update for Overview and Scrutiny Committee PI 13 – Town Enforcement Officer

This paper updates Members on the work of the new post of Town Enforcement Officer (TEO). This post was recruited to in August 2011 in response to rising levels of litter in the town and parks. The role of the post was to deter littering, encourage responsible waste management by businesses and to build relationships within the town centre through a regular visible presence.

The reality has been that having this regular presence in the town centre has given added value that we did not perceive would be possible with only one officer. The post holder has been able to:

- Reduce littering by deterring individuals and reducing it at source by working with businesses;
- Increase compliance by businesses with the requirements for waste disposal and increase income to the council through waste collection contracts (Approx 10 new contracts);
- Improve the visual amenity and safety of the town centre by reducing the number of A Boards and improving their location, regular monitoring of pavement licenses, daily removal of fly posters, liaising directly with street cleansing and waste collection colleagues to help maintain standards, arranging provision of suitable refuse storage and collection for flats above commercial premises, and daily reporting of highway defects;
- Improve the efficiency of the council by undertaking check visits and monitoring for different service areas such as Licensing and Planning, including checking for display of statutory application notices, letter drops to businesses, checking of permit and licence conditions, as well as gaining the cooperation of businesses to clear sections of the high street outside their premises.
- Improve and develop relationships with stakeholders in the town centre to encourage a joint responsibility, ownership and pride that is resulting in the emergence of a stronger team of *guardians* in the town including the Police, PCSOs, the college, local businesses, the street cleansing team, CCTV, security guards, business managers, workers and residents.

The officer is becoming an expert in the town centre and how it operates on a daily basis. This knowledge is being fed into the town centre redevelopment projects to assist the future plans and ensure they are inherently designed to work for the town.

In relation to the parks, occasional patrols to deter dog fouling are already undertaken but as the weather warms up the Town Enforcement Officer will be undertaking regular joint patrols with the Park Rangers to reduce the littering problem that became evident last year. In addition, projects to target hot spot areas outside of the town centre, such as St Albans Road, are being developed.

Particular achievements over the last 6 months include:

- Carrying out a 'branded' promotional/educational campaign to encourage people to stop littering. Posters on bus shelters, in the High Street and material in the Watford Observer.
- Used fixed penalty notices (FPNs) as a means of tackling those who continue to litter, issuing 222 FPNs and handing out butt/gum boxes where appropriate.
- Worked in partnership with the college on a campaign to reduce littering by students incorporating information into their induction programme, followed up with FPNs for those that persisted in dropping litter. Note that when the college first reopened street cleansing staff were collecting around 7 bags of litter from the top of the town between 12-2pm. With the enforcement presence this reduced to just 2 bags.
- Supported street cleansing to adjust cleansing regimes to reduce cigarette butts.
- Participated in surveying and prioritisation of the service roads as the first stage in improving these areas over the next year.
- Visited all food businesses in the town to reduce their litter at source (reduce packaging and serviettes) and ensure appropriate waste arrangements are in place. Several food businesses are cooperating to manage their impact on the town centre by cleaning litter from the front of their premises.
- Commenced a program of visiting all business premises in the town centre to review their waste management, recycling and disposal arrangements, promoting recycling and ensuring they have legal trade waste collections. Enforcement action is taken where the businesses don't co-operate but to date we have only had to issue 1 FPN. In addition, work is shortly due to commence on reducing cigarette litter from town centre workers by working with companies to provide and encourage the use of cigarette bins.
- Reduced the number of illegal flyers being distributed. 9 FPNs have been issued and the number of illegal distributors (who don't have permits that require responsible distribution and clearance of litter) has reduced; as has the litter from flyers.
- Formed positive relationships and obtained the support of town centre stakeholders including The Harlequin Centre, town Centre businesses, the Police and CCTV in order to effectively enforce anti littering legislation and as a precursor to work aimed at them taking more of a pro active role and responsibility in improving the town centre environment.
- Resources released from the Licensing Enforcement functions due to the TEOs involvement are being used to bring in income by providing contract services to Dacorum BC and implementation of the service review findings that are due to provide savings of around £40,000/annum from the changed delivery of licensing functions.

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