

Report to Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 9th July 2009

Portfolio: Environment

Subject: Safer, Cleaner, Greener Strategy

Officer contact for further information: John Gilbert/Jim Nolan

Committee Secretary: Adrian Hendry



Recommendations/Decisions Required:

To receive and consider the “Safer, Cleaner, Greener” strategy document and to make recommendations to Cabinet (strategy to follow)

Report:

1. The “Safer, Cleaner, Greener” (SCG) initiative was adopted by Cabinet back in November 2007 alongside the corporate restructure which was being undertaken at that same time. The initiative was a response to residents’ concerns raised through a range of different media (e.g. Forester, BVPP resident questionnaires etc. Residents had expressed concerns about:

- (a) environmental standards (especially street cleansing);
- (b) levels of crime & disorder and anti-social behaviour;
- (c) the need to react to climate change and related issues; and
- (d) waste management

2. The corporate restructure resulted in the formation of the Environment & Street Scene Directorate, the intention being to better integrate street scene related issues, pulling together into the one Directorate (amongst other things):

- waste management
- environmental & public health
- safer communities
- grounds maintenance

It also established a new Environment and Enforcement Team, with its own manager, tasked with using the powers available to the Council to ensure that the district’s environment was protected and the street scene improved. As part of this team, a new Environmental Response Unit was formed, with a dedicated vehicle, to deal with minor environmental issues such as small scale flytips, overgrown vegetation, cleansing of street furniture – all the things which annoy residents and where a big difference could be made with relatively modest resources.

3. An enlarged Safer Communities Unit was also established, with two additional Antisocial behaviour officers and a new CCTV co-ordinator, under the management of a Safer Communities Manager.

4. In mid April 2008 the Audit Commission undertook an inspection of the Council’s waste service. One of the criticisms the Commission put forward was that whilst the Council

clearly had the intent, through the SCG initiative, to deliver environmental improvements, it could not demonstrate that intent through formal documentation and associated action plans. Whilst this criticism was considered unreasonable given the timing of the inspection against the corporate restructure, the need for a formal strategy was however recognised.

5. This overarching document is the first stage. It will be supported by individual service and action plans setting out in more detail what is planned for the future business. The strategy was endorsed (with some minor amendments) by the Council's Safer, Cleaner, Greener Scrutiny Standing Panel in February this year.

Reason for decision:

In order to put in place a strategy which describes the Council's approach to the Safer, Cleaner, Greener agenda.

Options considered and rejected: None

Consultation undertaken: Safer, Cleaner, Greener Scrutiny Standing Panel

Resource implications:

Budget provision: Existing

Personnel: Existing

Land: No change

Community Plan/BVPP reference:

Relevant statutory powers:

Background papers:

Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications:

Key Decision reference: (if required)