

## **Report to the Cabinet**

**Report reference:** C-029-2009/10  
**Date of meeting:** 7 September 2009



**Portfolio:** Environment

**Subject:** Safer, Cleaner, Greener Strategy

**Responsible Officer:** John Gilbert (01992 564062).  
Jim Nolan (01992 564083).

**Democratic Services Officer:** Gary Woodhall (01992 564470).

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### **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

**To adopt the “Safer, Cleaner, Greener” strategy document.**

### **Executive Summary:**

The “Safer, cleaner, greener” (SCG) initiative was adopted by Cabinet in February 2008 as part of the corporate restructure which was being undertaken at that same time. The strategy was endorsed (with some minor amendments) by the Council’s Safer, Cleaner, Greener Scrutiny Standing Panel and Overview and Scrutiny Committee earlier this year.

This report asks Cabinet to formally adopt the Safer, Cleaner, Greener Strategy which outlines the approach of the Council to the initiative

This is a key decision.

“A safe, healthy & attractive place” – *“create safer communities”*  
*“maintain the special character and advantage of the District, and address local environmental issues”*

Council Plan 2006-2010 “Homes & Neighbourhoods” – *“We want to continue to improve local environmental standards through the use of locally based cleansing teams and the new enforcement powers available to local authorities” (Action HN6)*

### **Reasons for Proposed Decision:**

In order to put in place a strategy document which sets out the Council’s approach to its “Safer, Cleaner, Greener” strategy.

### **Other Options for Action:**

Not to adopt the strategy. This cannot be recommended since it is critical to have in place an overarching strategic document setting out how the Council is to approach the SCG initiative

Further amend the Strategy and refer back to Scrutiny – will cause further delays in publication, and put back beyond the formal launch date for the service.

## Report:

1. The “Safer, Cleaner, Greener” (SCG) initiative was adopted by Cabinet in February 2008 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.), where concerns about the following had been raised:

- (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; and
- grounds maintenance.

3. 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 fly tips, overgrown vegetation, cleansing of street furniture – all the things which annoy residents and where a big difference could be made with relatively modest resources.

4. 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. All sustainability and bio-diversity issues were grouped together within the newly formed Directorate of Planning & Economic development

5. In mid April 2008 the Audit Commission undertook an inspection of the Council’s waste management service, which also included broader environmental issues. 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. 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. Progress against the strategy will be reported back regularly to the Safer, Cleaner, Greener Standing Scrutiny Panel.

6. The Strategy document has been considered in detail by the Safer, Cleaner, Greener Standing Scrutiny Panel and the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. The document appended to this agenda incorporates all the suggested changes put forward.

**Resource Implications:**

There are no resource implications, all being contained within present revenue and capital budgets.

**Legal and Governance Implications:**

There are a range of powers available to the Council to enable it to undertake the work required in support of its Safer, Cleaner, Greener strategy. These include the Public Health Acts, the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and the Crime & Disorder Act 1988. The strategy can only be delivered through partnership working with the Local Strategic Partnership and the Safer Communities Partnership.

**Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:**

The strategy document sets out the Council's overarching approach to its Cleaner, Safer, Greener initiative.

**Consultation Undertaken:**

Safer, Cleaner, Greener Scrutiny Standing Scrutiny Panel and Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

**Background Papers:**

Strategy document  
Reports to the Safer, Cleaner, Greener Scrutiny Standing Scrutiny Panel and Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
Reports to cabinet on the SCG initiative and corporate restructure

**Impact Assessments:**

There are no financial risks associated with the recommendation.

The Strategy will embrace the newly adopted Environment & Street Scene Enforcement Policy which when implemented will ensure openness and fairness to all in the community when they come into contact with the Directorate's officers undertaken enforcement action as part of the adopted Strategy.