

Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C/121/2005-06.
Date of meeting: 6 February 2006.



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Community Wellbeing.

Subject: Additional Funding for Graffiti Removal.

**Officer contact for further information: Simon Ford (01992 – 56 4122).
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Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 – 56 4470).

Recommendation:

That, in order to enhance the graffiti removal services within the District, a CSB growth bid be made in the sum of £20,000 from 2006/07 onwards.

Report:

1. The budget for the removal of graffiti currently stands at £20,000 comprising £10,000 from the Council and £10,000 from the Safer and Stronger Communities Fund made available every year by the Home Office. The level of demand for the service remains high and the 2005/06 funding was fully utilised by the autumn of 2005 resulting in the service having to be suspended.
2. The removal of graffiti and fly posting have now been included within Best Value Performance Indicator 199 (condition of street scene) in recognition of the priority given to local environmental conditions by government. The Council's performance against BV199(b) is good and this is in significant part due to the Council's ability to deal with graffiti speedily.
3. Given the priority attached to this issue by Government and the local community it is clear that at the current spend the existing budget is not sufficient to meet the demand. It is therefore suggested that the budget be increase by a further £20,000 to enable the current level of service and response to be maintained throughout the whole of the next financial year.

Statement in support of recommended action:

4. Street scene is an important government and local priority, and the only way in which it is possible to maintain the council's present level of performance throughout the whole financial year is to provide additional resources. The Standing Scrutiny Panel on Planning and the Environment, in considering the Council's response to the Defra consultation on the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005, recognised the need for the Council to remain pro-active in dealing with such matters, including the use where appropriate of new enforcement powers and the need to properly resource services of this nature.

Options for action:

5. The only alternative options are:
 - (a) to increase funding but by a lesser amount;
 - (b) to maintain existing funding but reduce service levels so that, for example,

only offensive or racially motivated graffiti is dealt with; or

- (c) to maintain existing funding and service levels resulting in an inability to provide the service over a full 12 month period

Consultation undertaken:

- 6. No external consultation undertaken.

Resource implications:

Budget provision: CSB growth of £20,000.

Personnel: Nil.

Land: Nil.

Community Plan/BVPP reference: Keeping the district “safe, healthy and attractive” (medium term priorities).

Relevant statutory powers: The Environmental Protection Act 1990, the Clean Neighbourhoods & Environment Act 2005 and the Crime & Disorder Act 1998.

Background papers: None.

Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications: Speedy reaction to environmental crime such as graffiti.

Key Decision reference (if required): N/A.