

## STREET LITTER BINFASTRUCTURE & DRAFT PROJECT STRATEGY 2021

Cabinet - 18 March 2021

**Report of:** Deputy Chief Executive & Chief Officer, Finance & Trading

**Status:** For information

**Also Considered by:** Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee - 16 March 2021

**Key Decision:** No

**Executive Summary:** This report provides an update about a street litter bin project and litter strategy and funding application.

**This report supports the Key Aim of:** Making Sevenoaks District to be a place where people can enjoy clean and high quality urban and rural environments.

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr. Margot McArthur

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**Recommendation to Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee:**

That the Draft Project Litter Strategy as set out at Appendix A is noted.

**Recommendation to Cabinet:**

That the Draft Project Litter Strategy as set out as Appendix A is noted.

**Reason for recommendation:**

The draft Litter Strategy is still being developed, however it is a requirement of the Binfastructure funding application, which is why it is included within this report. However, a full Litter Strategy will be considered by Cabinet at a later date.

### Introduction

- 1 The Litter Strategy for England 2017 has been designed to apply best practice in education, enforcement and infrastructure to deliver a substantial reduction in litter and littering behaviour, so that in the coming years demonstrable improvements are seen.

- 2 Street cleaning cost local government over £900m in 2018/19. A significant portion of this will have been avoidable litter clear-up and the money could have been better spent on vital public services.
- 3 The National Crime Survey has found that 28-30% of people perceive “litter and rubbish lying around” to be a problem in their area with 81% of people feeling angry and frustrated by the amount of litter lying all over the country.

### **Purpose of this Pilot & Draft Litter Strategy**

- 4 The purpose of this pilot is to upgrade, improve and smarten collection services to our binrastructure in the most remote locations across the district. The draft litter strategy is to set out our ambition and the steps necessary to achieve it. To help explain the actions we feel we need to take to affect change, this strategy identifies the scale of the problem in the district and the challenges we face in making those changes.
- 5 The draft Litter Strategy is still being developed and is only included within this Binrastructure report as it is a requirement of the funding application. A full Litter Strategy will be presented to Cabinet for further consideration and adoption at a later date.
- 6 The Department of Food & (DEFRA) through the waste charity Waste & Resources Action Programme (WRAP) have offered a funding opportunity to bid for between £10,000 and £25,000 for local authority to improve their Binrastructure.
- 7 Our funding application for £25,000 will enable a pilot to replace fifty street litre bins at our most rural locations with wood cladded larger bins with sensors. This will enable bins to tell us when they need emptying instead of us visiting weekly un-necessarily. The pilot would also provide special recycling bins at Eynsford Riverside.

### **Our Litter Ambitions**

- 8 Put simply, our ambition to make littering unacceptable behaviour and to seek new smart and innovative ways to reduce littering and to clear it promptly where it turns up.

### **The Causes of Litter**

- 9 The causes of litter are diverse and complex with compounding factors such as a lack of or fragmented data on the impact or importance of each cause and the effectiveness of different approaches to dealing with them. This strategy aims to highlight what the council understand to be the key causes of litter. The causes of litter outlined will not be ranked for importance or priority as we do not have evidence on which are the most important. The

strategy will also set out to identify gaps in knowledge and which issues the council has the structures, resources and authority to tackle.

- 10 Where the council are not in a position to act directly the strategy will outline in what ways it needs to focus on partnership working and community action to secure progress.
- 11 Public understanding of the impact of litter: Despite the high profile publicity of the impacts of litter on the environment, particularly around plastics, there is still a large disconnect between individual actions and collective impact.

### **Spending on litter collection in Sevenoaks**

- 12 Considerable financial and staffing resources are dedicated to collecting litter in the streets, emptying litter bins and litter picking in urban centres and along country lanes. It is difficult to quantify the actual cost of litter collection as it is combined with a wide range of direct services within Sevenoaks. However our annual street cleansing budget is approximately £1.4m.
- 13 The clearance of litter is an avoidable cost but to reduce this requires significant culture change alongside well designed and planned infrastructure and services to meet current and future needs. Changing culture is challenging and requires ongoing investment in education, engagement and, occasionally, enforcement. Given that much of our infrastructure is old and designed and planned for a different time, updating this to meet current and predicted need in the current economic environment will be a challenge and new and smart innovative ways to deal with this will be necessary.

### **Our Approach**

- 14 Sevenoaks District Council will adopt a positive collaborative approach to tackling litter in the district. In response to views from our stakeholders and partners, the council has identified five thematic areas of work to tackle the many and diverse causes of litter that build on current best practice.

The five thematic areas of work are:

- Education & Awareness
- Enforcement
- Infrastructure
- Service design
- Partnership and stakeholder working

## **Education & Awareness**

- 15 Sending a clear message - delivering a first class anti-littering campaign. A compelling communications campaign will be a common feature of almost all of our approaches to tackling litter. In Sevenoaks, we will work with organisations such as Keep Britain Tidy and WRAP on high profile campaigns, which use a range of initiatives to encourage the public to stop dropping litter.
- 16 Campaigns will be evidence based and use a combination of “awareness-raising” and “behaviour change” approaches with some targeted media.
- 17 Education and work with young people will be a consistent theme in our approaches to reducing littering. Education and engagement with young people across Sevenoaks as part of a strategic approach to tackling litter. This strategy will help us work with partners to seek to try and ‘make every school... sustainable and to bring about behaviour change in young people and those connected to them so that good habits learned in schools are followed through into homes and communities”.

## **Enforcement**

- 18 We will always look to educate people on improving their behaviours when it comes to litter. However we will target enforcement resources to hot-spot locations and areas that suffer from consistent litter dropping.

## **Infrastructure & Service design**

- 19 This strategy sets out our recommended approach to the provision of litter disposal infrastructure (binrastructure) by our council. Good binrastructure is a key element of this Litter Strategy, as part of a strategic approach which also incorporates education and awareness-raising campaigns/signage, and is supported by proportionate enforcement when appropriate.
- 20 The following aspects of infrastructure design and deployment are important in avoiding litter:
  - Bin design, to make them attractive to use and easy to service
  - Siting of bins, to maximise the chance they are actually used and assure access for emptying
  - Shared space design and maintenance to discourage littering. Because litter lying on the ground encourages more litter to be dropped, good binrastructure is a key factor in keeping the environment clean and free from litter

- 21 A detailed street litter and dog bin review has been completed, mapping out the location, type and collection schedules of all of the street litter and dog bins across the district. The district currently has over 1,200 street litter and dog bins across the district.
- 22 The collection schedule currently in place accounts for over 2,500 visits by staff per week to the 1,200 street litter and dog bins.
- 23 This strategy looks to utilise smart technology and container management to improve the type and capacity of our bin infrastructure and with the introduction of sensors allow us to understand which bins are full and trends year-on-year as to which bins need servicing more frequently.
- 24 This approach will lead to measurable savings and better use of staff resources.

### **Partnership & stakeholder working**

- 25 This strategy will help us set clear direction for meaningful engagement with our communities across the district. The council will look at initiatives, such as adopt a street, organised community litter picks, by providing help and equipment and participation in National campaigns, such as Keep Britain Tidy's Spring Clean.
- 26 The council will also work in partnership with our Parish and Town Council's to enhance street litter reduction and collection services.

### **Strategy Action Plan**

- 27 A detailed action plan will be developed with stakeholders and partners to ensure delivery of the bin infrastructure pilot and a comprehensive operational plan, with further pilots to test concepts is in place to help deliver this litter strategy.

### **Key Implications**

#### Financial

The Council already spend around £1.4m per annum on street cleansing services, however external funding opportunities will be explored for capital projects to improve our existing Binfastructure and to fund this project.

#### Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

The Environmental Protection Act 1994, as amended places a statutory duty on Sevenoaks District Council as the Litter Collection Authority and Waste Collection Authority. Duties placed upon the Council include, the removal of waste and litter and the enforcement of the offence of litter across the district.

## Equality Assessment

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

### **Appendices**

Appendix A - Draft Litter Strategy for the Binrastructure Project

### **Background Papers**

None

**Adrian Rowbotham**

**Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer - Finance & Trading**