

Report To: Communities Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 18 April 2013

Joint Report Authors: Communication, Marketing & Leisure (CML) and Corporate Communications & Marketing Managers

Title: Progress report on Anti-Dog Fouling Campaign

1. What is the report about?

This report is to inform members of the progress to date of the Anti-Dog Fouling Campaign following the soft launch of the campaign on the 18th February and previous reports submitted to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Members.

Dog fouling is a persistent source of complaints for the Council. The issue has been raised in the local media with a regular call on the Council to address the issue. Dog fouling has also been highlighted in the residents' survey as one of the biggest issues that needs addressing. It has been identified that dog fouling is also an issue for community safety and a drain on corporate resources.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

As this is a new and modern approach to marketing campaigns for the Council, members and SLT have been provided with updates on the progress of the campaign via emails. This report will provide information about the campaign's progress to date and plans going forward over the coming months.

3. What are the Recommendations?

That Scrutiny:

- 3.1 consider the report, which highlights the progress and the impact of the approach to addressing the dog fouling issue in the County and comment accordingly, and
- 3.2 consider reviewing the position again in 6 months.

4. Report details.

This report advises the Scrutiny Committee of the current position of the campaign and considerations moving forward. It details the marketing activities that are currently taking place and plans for moving forward.

The report also highlights any issues so far and recommendations.

4.1 Activities to date:

The decision to deploy such a substantial and co-ordinated marketing approach, compared to what has been done before, uses the strengths of all the services involved to promote and achieve how the Council is listening and reacting to their communities. The Council has recognised the need to be more robust, co-ordinated and comprehensive in enforcing and educating about dog fouling issues in the County. The campaign has

allowed the Council to communicate how it is achieving key corporate priorities providing a clean environment across the County.

The campaign is now in the process of being launched with a soft approach. This will allow a number of channels of communication to be utilised over a period of time, reinforcing the message in the coming weeks and months that the Council is taking this seriously rather than one large launch and messages being lost. The strategic purpose of this new approach is to run a clearly branded multi-media campaign highlighting the following:

- To understand why this is a problem in Denbighshire.
- To raise the awareness of the dog fouling issues in Denbighshire.
- To educate people about the health dangers of dog fouling.
- To engage and consult with the local community and key partners to increase social responsibility to keep streets clean and reduce this anti-social form of behaviour.
- To reduce the number of incidents of dog fouling in the county.

To date, the following activities have taken place:

- 4.1.1 Communication – Website and Social Media
- 4.1.2 Marketing materials
- 4.1.3 PR
- 4.1.4 Collaboration and community involvement

Please see further details in the attached appendices (Appendix 1).

4.1.5 Analysis of statistics from 18th Feb to 20th March:

Statistics have been collated from the online survey and the customer services management system (CRM) to identify where the current key hot spot areas are. The statistics are monitored on a weekly basis.

To summarise, the top 5 hot spot areas are:

- Rhyl
- Ruthin
- Denbigh
- Prestatyn
- Rhuddlan / St Asaph

Please see further details in the attached appendices. (Appendix 2)

4.2 Activities moving forward:

There is a number of supporting activities to the campaign that need to be planned and implemented. These include:

- 4.2.1 Education Programme:
- 4.2.2 Consultation & Community Involvement:
- 4.2.3 Marketing Materials:
- 4.2.4 Social Media & Technology:

Please see further details in the attached appendices (Appendix 3).

4.3 Future Considerations:

The campaign is up and running but there needs to be consideration as to the longevity of the campaign and further resources available in supporting the delivery of this. The

primary ongoing costs are the replacement of promotional material, officer time and the 0800 number and how long this remains available. The current budget for the campaign has been allocated for 6 months.

5. Useful Background Information:

Committee members may wish to refer to the previous report submitted to the Scrutiny Committee in June 2012 (Effectiveness of Enforcement Action – Dog Fouling).

Previous activities undertaken to tackle the issue:

In 2009, Loggerheads Country Park undertook a scheme where they spray painted dog mess yellow as a shaming campaign. This was more of a visual campaign and did not see any long term benefits. They now have an informal dog walkers forum twice a year inviting dog walkers who regularly use Loggerheads to come along and have a chat about the park and any concerns they might have. So far, three meetings have taken place and been very useful.

In 2010-11, the county launched a dog fouling campaign, with the support of the corporate communications team and collaboration with Conwy County Borough Council, making four officers available in the county. 55 fixed penalties were issued as a result. In 2011-12, there was a reduction in fixed penalties across the county as more owners were picking up their dog mess. Due to the increase in public awareness, the county saw an increase of complaints coming forward. There was also a 20 week period where contractors issued fixed penalties but this dropped off. The activities for this campaign were a success but were not co-ordinated and driven to be sustainable. These activities have been included in this campaign but will be co-ordinated and planned. In 2012 the collaboration between the two counties broke down and there are now only two enforcement officers available across the county, who are supported by XFOR. The biggest problem that the enforcement team have is gathering reliable evidence and witness statements to support any fixed penalties or prosecution.

6. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?

Consideration of the issues highlighted in the report will assist the Council to deliver its corporate priority in a modern way, which is affordable and sustainable for the benefit of the local community, and without having a detrimental affect on the County's residents.

7. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

At this stage, ongoing costs have not been considered. Planning and Public Protection, Environment and Communication, Marketing and Leisure would be affected by ongoing costs of materials being produced and officer time in managing the campaign, enforcement and cleaning up hot spot areas.

8. What consultation has been carried out?

This report has been put together in full consultation with the following Heads of Services, : Communications, Marketing & Leisure; Planning & Public Protection and Highways and Environmental Services, members have been consulted, along with the Lead Member for Public Realm.

Consultation is taking place with Member Area Groups (MAGs) by the Community Engagement Manager discussing the Anti-Dog Fouling strategy. Once this has been agreed, a public friendly leaflet will be produced and available in key locations around the County to reinforce the campaign.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

The cost of the current campaign is funded within existing resources. Resource implications would have to be considered as part of any assessment to continue the campaign beyond the current term.

10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

Potential risks to the success and sustainability of the campaign is the support of the local community. It needs to be made clear that communities need to share the responsibility with the council in achieving our objectives. This will be achieved by getting local people & city, town and communities councils to support the campaign, to be our eyes and ears in the community and report problems correctly with relevant details of offenders. This would be achieved by effective consultation with MAGs and so on.

11. Power to make the Decision

Article 6.3 of the Council's Constitution

12. Supporting Documents

- Marketing activities to date
- Activities moving forward
- Statistics from online survey and CRM

The following documents will be presented during Scrutiny:

- Examples of press coverage
- Draft Anti-Fouling Strategy, to be released once consultation has been completed.
- Examples of promotional material used – posters, postcards, lamp post signs, banners and bin wagon sides.
- Marketing Plan for campaign

13. Social Media Articles:

- <http://northwalesextra.com/dog-fouling-denbighshire-says-enough-is-enough/>
- <http://www.denbighshirefreepress.co.uk/news/120406/hard-hitting-poster-is-to-target-dog-fouling.aspx>
- <https://twitter.com/DenbighshireCC/statuses/305974199904792577>
- <http://www.facebook.com/#!/denbighshirecountycouncil?fref=ts>
- <http://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Denbighshire-Free-Press/150777091689187?fref=ts>

There have also been a number of tweets on the Council's twitter account highlighting the issue <https://twitter.com/DenbighshireCC>

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