

## LEISURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

25 JUNE 2019

### GRAFFITI POLICY

#### **1.0 Purpose of the Report**

1.1 To Seek Members approval for a new Graffiti Policy for Newark and Sherwood.

#### **2.0 Background**

2.1 Recent months have seen an increase in the amount of Graffiti that has appeared across the district. This not only causes damage to the surfaces that it is sprayed on but also detracts from the appearance of the district.

2.2 Graffiti is the illegal or unauthorised defacing of a building, wall or other edifice or object by painting or otherwise marking it with words, pictures or symbols.

2.3 In some cases the graffiti can be racist, of a sexual nature or simply offensive.

#### **3.0 Introduction**

3.1 The quality of the local environment has a significant impact on people's perceptions of wellbeing and quality of life. The Council is committed to improving the environmental quality of its towns and villages and tackling crime and antisocial behaviour. The District Council does not have a duty to remove graffiti from property it does not own, however, it will work with property owners to offer advice and our graffiti removal services. This policy sets out the graffiti removal policy, timescales for removal and enforcement measures that could be used to manage graffiti.

3.2 The Council has an informal policy of removing graffiti that is racist, of a sexual nature or offensive within 24 hours. All other graffiti is left in situ.

3.3 Whilst the amount of graffiti has been at a low level this policy has worked well, however, with the rise in graffiti incidents and with the promotion of the Cleaner Safer Greener agenda a review of the current policy has been undertaken.

3.4 The spraying of graffiti is a criminal offence. The Council does have the option to serve a fixed penalty notice on anyone responsible for graffiti, however, the offence is often committed under the cover of darkness and is very difficult to witness.

3.5 A copy of the new Graffiti Policy is attached as **Appendix one**.

3.6 It is intended to use the Community Protection Officers to be the first point of contact for investigating reports of graffiti. There will be an extensive data gathering exercise that will include, the 'Tags' used, the owner of the property, the surface that the graffiti is on, the size and approximate cost of removal, the time that the offence took place and whether there is any CCTV footage of the incident or surrounding area. It is intended to collate this information in a data base which can then be used to monitor trends and patterns of

behaviour. Once this information has been gathered the incident will be passed over to the Transport and Waste Business Unit for removal.

#### **4.0 Proposals**

4.1 The Policy sets out the approach that the Council will take to new graffiti. As stated above the current informal policy has allowed for the removal of certain types of graffiti but this has left a certain level of residual graffiti. It is proposed that a dedicated team is assigned the task of removing the old residual graffiti from all areas of the district. Once this is complete (it anticipated that this will be a period of 3 months) the timescales for graffiti removal as set out in the Policy will become operation.

4.2 In order to facilitate the removal of as much graffiti as possible, subject to the receipt of owner approval, the Council will remove graffiti free of charge from both privately and commercially owned domestic premises up until 31 March 2021 when this will be reviewed.

4.3 In Addition, we will work in partnership with other organisations on diversionary art projects and workshops, particularly in relation to murals and public art which make a positive contribution to the area, reflect the community, and discourage tagging.

4.4 The estimated cost of back filling posts to allow for a dedicated team to operate is £10,000. It is proposed that the funding for this is allocated from the High Street Fund

#### **5.0 Equalities Implications**

5.1 All enforcement is taken with reference to the Council's Corporate Enforcement Policy.

#### **6.0 Financial Implications (FIN19-20/4938)**

6.1 In order to remove all existing graffiti a team of staff from the Transport & Waste Service will need to work approximately 3 months carrying out this work. As current staffs do not have spare capacity, the Business Manager will need to use agency staff to backfill them. The estimated cost is £10k. The Council received £21k government funding in March for the High Streets Community Clean Up. Some of this funding will be used to fund this extra cost of £10k.

#### **7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS that:**

**(a) Members are asked to approve the Graffiti Policy; and to,**

**(b) Approve the use of the High Streets Community Clean Up funding for backfilling the posts to allow a dedicated team to remove old graffiti.**

#### **Reason for recommendation**

To support the Cleaner Safer Greener agenda and to have in place a Policy for graffiti removal that reflects the current level of graffiti in the district.

**Background papers**

Nil

For further information please contact Andy Kirk – Business Manager Waste and Transport or Alan Batty Business Manager Public Protection.

**Matthew Finch**

**Director – Communities & Environment**