



Subject:	Update on Responsible Dog Ownership
Date:	8 January 2019
Reporting Officer:	Nigel Grimshaw, Strategic Director, City and Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Siobhan Toland, Director of City Services Valerie Brown, City Services Manager

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	Dog fouling remains a persistent problem in parts of the city and the purpose of this report is to provide the update required by Members at the August 2018 meeting on the work that is carried out by the Community Awareness Team and the Dog Warden Service to tackle the issue of dog fouling.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to <ul style="list-style-type: none">Note the contents of the report.
3.0	Main report
3.1	Dog fouling can impact neighbourhoods and whilst the majority of dog owners exercise responsible dog management there are a small number of owners who do not and this can have a detrimental impact on areas of the city. Dog fouling requires on going resources to address in terms of its removal from the streets, as well as providing a wide range of

education and awareness programmes together with the use of fines where infringements are detected.

The Dog Warden Service deploy routine monitoring patrols, to detect dog fouling incidents, however, it is widely recognised that the problem of dog fouling cannot be addressed solely by enforcement intervention. To encourage a change in behaviour, a wider programme supporting responsible dog ownership is an essential element of the Council's approach to reducing levels of dog fouling throughout the city. This report summarises the activities undertaken by the Community Awareness Team and the Dog Warden Service to address the issue of dog fouling.

3.2 **Community awareness**

The Community Awareness Team has a project plan detailing a range of activities through educational, promotional and community based programmes scheduled throughout the course of each year, which aims to highlight the problems of dog fouling and includes the following.

3.3 **Dog fouling advertising campaign**

The advertising associated with the dog-fouling element of the council's anti-litter campaign for this year commenced in July and will run in cycles through until 31 March 2019. A budget of £74,120 has been allocated to marketing the anti-dog fouling message. The campaign utilises general activity throughout the whole of the council area, e.g. bus T sides, commuter cards and radio. In addition, a targeted blitz was organised in four geographical areas, north, south, east and west, consisting of newspaper adverts, adshels, 48 sheets for billboards, etc. with the message "Dog Wardens are patrolling in (e.g. south) Belfast".

Targeted area based activity was undertaken during the following dates:

South Monday 24th Sept – Sat 6th Oct 2018

West Monday 8th Oct – Sat 20th Oct 2018

North Monday 22nd Oct – Sat 3rd Nov 2018

East Monday 5th Nov – Sat 17th Nov 2018

In addition, all cleansing vehicles have been branded with the current campaign graphics reinforcing the fine for dog fouling; this allows for a consistent campaign message to be delivered into neighbourhoods throughout the year.

3.4

Community outreach activities

The Community Awareness Team has attended 38 events throughout the summer months, in our parks and open spaces, reinforcing the anti-fouling message, this has included the use of our animated characters “Captain Clean Up” and “Scoop Dog” which have been very successful at engaging the community and encouraging responsible dog ownership.

The Community Awareness team deliver a supply of bags to all our community centres routinely throughout the year and direct requests for bags to the centres for local collection. In addition, dog bags can be collected from the Cecil Ward Building. We have provision to supply dog bags to specific community groups – e.g. Half Moon Lake requested bags for users of the park; we are able to extend provision of bags to other interested groups on request.

The team undertake a number of planned community targeted programmes throughout the year. “The Bill Board Challenge” is scheduled for early 2019, this encourages groups to design a billboard highlighting environmental issues which impact on their local area. In doing so the community takes ownership of their local area and as the winning designs are placed in the group’s own area they are given an opportunity to change behaviour in their neighbourhood. From previous projects, we anticipate that communities will use this opportunity to challenge their neighbours to be responsible dog owners.

3.5

Education provision

The risks and consequences of dog fouling is included in all our school’s workshops and specific projects. Last year the Team undertook 268 school visits.

3.6

Targeted enforcement by the Dog Warden Service

The Dog Warden Service operates from 08.00 hours to 20.00 hours seven days a week and undertakes a range of legislative duties relating to dog control including stray dogs, dog attack investigations, dangerous dogs and dog fouling. The Team is organised on a geographical area basis to ensure that resources are targeted efficiently and effectively. This approach enhances Dog Wardens’ local geographical knowledge of hot spot and problematic areas that can be targeted on a proactive basis, thus increasing opportunities to issue fixed penalty notices for dog fouling. In order to enhance the patrols undertaken by the Dog Wardens, the following operational arrangements have been introduced:

- The Dog Control Manager and the Dog Wardens liaise with the area cleansing management teams and other enforcement staff in their respective areas to discuss priority areas and hotspots.
- A structured area-working plan was implemented earlier this year to optimise resources to assist in improving targeted performance management. This involves a dedicated dog fouling patrol for the duration of each shift as well as other patrols in the mornings and evenings where resources permit.
- There has been an increased focus on signage throughout the city with all of the signage being updated and located in areas where dog-fouling hotspots are identified by the Cleansing Management teams.

3.7 **Dog fouling campaign evaluation**

Independent research undertaken by Kantar Millward Brown in March 2017 to evaluate the impact and awareness of the dog fouling campaign reported a very low incidence of individuals admitting to have allowed their dog to foul in the previous six months. In terms of awareness of advertising on the subject of dog fouling 72% of dog owners said they had heard or seen something. The key themes recalled were features of the recent campaign, in particular, pick up or pay up / £80 fine, demonstrating a strong cut through in current messaging. Recall of the correct fine amount was improved compared to that seen in previous evaluation undertaken in 2014 (45%, compared with 38%) and three-fifths (63%) said they thought the campaign was effective, again an increase from previous research. The success of the campaign and the increased awareness of the level of fines and the risk associated with dog fouling through our education provision appears to be having a positive impact on the increased level of responsible dog ownership observed by our officers. This is further evidenced by the reducing number of complaints of fouling received per month by the Dog Warden Service over the period of the campaign as set out in the table below.

Table 1: Number of complaints of dog fouling per month (average) received by Dog Warden Service since April 2016.

2016/2017	2017/2018	2018 (until Nov)
120	109	84

3.8 **Dog control in parks and cemeteries**

Members will be aware that dog fouling in our parks and cemeteries is also an issue and a phased approach to dealing with this was set out in a report to Committee in August of this

	<p>year. Planning for Phase 1 is ongoing and the anticipated timeframe is spring 2019. It will incorporate the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An education and awareness campaign targeted at hotspots, emphasising that our parks are shared spaces and that dogs need to be kept on leads ▪ That off lead dog enclosures are piloted in Falls, Orangefield and Clement Wilson Parks ▪ An enforcement campaign in City Cemetery to combat dog fouling and to raise awareness that dogs are not permitted in cemeteries. <p>3.9 Additional proposed community project for 2019</p> <p>The Green Dog Walkers scheme is a UK wide community-based campaign to change attitudes about dog fouling. The Community Awareness Team are researching the scheme with a proposed launch date in early 2019. Dog owners and dog walkers support the scheme by signing a pledge to clean up after their pets. They support other owners to do the same by giving dog bags on request. Participants in the schemes are identified by a tag or lead indicating that they are responsible dog owners demonstrating the importance of cleaning up dog fouling. Although this will be a city wide scheme it will tie in with the education and awareness campaign being planned for parks and cemeteries.</p> <p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>3.10 There are no additional financial implications associated with the programme of work already planned in the revenue budget aimed at reducing levels of dog fouling through behavioural change and enforcement. The financial implications in relation to the development of dogs off lead enclosures will, as far as possible, be met within existing resources.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>3.11 There are no implications associated with this report.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None