

To: Scrutiny Committee
Date: 5th April 2016
Report of: Head of Direct Services
Title of Report: Graffiti Update

Summary

Purpose of report: To update Scrutiny Committee on the latest developments in Graffiti removal

Executive lead member: Councillor John Tanner, Board Member for Climate Change and Cleaner Greener

Report author: Doug Loveridge, Streetscene Services Manager

Policy Framework: Cleaner Greener Oxford

Appendices

None

Background

1. The Scrutiny Committee requested a report to update them on what progress has been made particularly in tackling graffiti on private property. The report includes some basic statistical information on the number of reports received, how quickly they were dealt with and some comparison with previous years. The Scrutiny Committee indicated that they would also like to know what barriers remain to removing graffiti on private property.

Introduction

2. Direct Services has had a dedicated Graffiti Removal Supervisor in post since June 2015. The remit of the post was to make things easier for the reporting of graffiti on both private and Council properties and have one focal point in the co-ordination of its removal.

Statistical Analysis

- Table A shows the private property statistics for the reporting and removal of graffiti in the Oxford City area. There are a couple of reports that fall outside the City but are still included in the statistics as they were dealt with by the Streetscene graffiti removal team and the customers charged accordingly.

Table A

| Owner | Reported | Cleared by Streetscene | Cleared or Passed by/to Owners | Passed to Community Response Team | Awaiting customer response within timescale |
|-----------------------|-------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| <i>Utilities</i> | 363 | 288 | 73 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>Private others</i> | 853 | 534 | 267 | 17 | 35 |
| Total | 1216 | 822 | 340 | 17 | 35 |

- Table A shows all of the incidences of graffiti reported to Streetscene between June 2015 and February 2016 and includes multiple incidences at any location.
- There are 35 reported graffiti incidents outstanding as at the end of February, the vast majority of which are either new reports or ones where we are awaiting the return of the waiver form from the property owner. As Committee will remember we are unable to move forward with the removal of graffiti from private property, until we are in possession of a completed waiver authorising us to remove the graffiti from that property. When we receive the completed waiver form authorising removal we normally complete the removal within 7 days.
- If we have received no response from private property owners after 7 days we issue a reminder waiver giving a further 7 days. If there is no response to this we refer the matter to the Community Response Team (CRT) who have enforcement powers around graffiti removal. They contact the property owners and find out why they have not responded to either letter and what they intend to do about the graffiti. They use enforcement as a last resort.
- There are currently 17 incidents that have been referred to CRT.

Comparison with previous years

- There are no statistics that relate to private properties in previous years, however Table B shows the total amount of incidents reported to Streetscene and these would include both private and Council-owned properties

Table B

| | 2010/11 | 2011/12 | 2012/13 | 2013/14 | 2014/15 |
|------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| Incidents | 699 | 962 | 880 | 350 | 1473 |
| Removed by Streetscene | 699 | 955 | 839 | 323 | 965 |

Challenges

- Understanding ownership of the property
 - No access rights to private property
 - Customers stalling because they are reluctant to pay
 - Health & Safety (work at height)
 - Environmental issues i.e. removal near watercourses
9. To overcome difficulties of access the Streetscene Graffiti Supervisor is actively working in partnership with bodies such as the County Council and Virgin Media to automatically remove graffiti from County owned underpasses and from Virgin Media utility boxes by means of an annual agreement rather than a case by case agreement. All Streetscene graffiti removal operatives have been trained to work at height to overcome physical access issues to some sites and ensure compliance with health and safety requirements.

Next steps

10. The Committee is asked to note the current position regarding the removal of graffiti from private properties.

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List of background papers: None

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