

ANGUS COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – 18 AUGUST 2015

UPDATE ON LITTER PREVENTION PROJECTS

REPORT BY STRATEGIC DIRECTOR – COMMUNITIES

ABSTRACT

This report presents the results of two litter prevention projects that were carried out this year involving Forfar Academy and the West Links area of Arbroath, and sets out proposals to replicate the projects elsewhere in Angus. The projects were developed by the Pride in Place Member Officer Group and funded by Zero Waste Scotland.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee

- (i) Notes the report and;
- (ii) Agrees to the phased roll-out of secondary school litter prevention projects as set out in section 5.3

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS COMMUNITY PLAN/SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT/CORPORATE PLAN

2.1 This report contributes to the following local outcomes contained within the Angus Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement 2013-2016:

- Angus is a good place to live in, work and visit
- Individuals are involved in their communities
- Our communities are safe, secure and vibrant
- Our natural and built environment is protected and enjoyed

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The Pride in Place Member Officer Group was established in 2013 to help facilitate and co-ordinate community and council efforts to develop and foster pride in place in communities all across Angus. One of the key issues that the group considers is litter and it was identified during 2014 that there was the opportunity to apply for funding from Zero Waste Scotland's Litter and Fly-tipping Innovation Fund to carry out litter prevention projects in Angus.

3.2 An application to carry out two litter prevention projects involving Forfar Academy and the West Links area of Arbroath was submitted to Zero Waste Scotland and were successful. The funding enabled the Council to commission Nicki Souter Associates to co-ordinate the projects with the support of relevant Council officers. Summaries of the two litter projects are provided below.

West Links 'pick up 3' and Litter Prevention Campaign

3.3 The Prevent and Pick Up 3 Campaign aimed to encourage the whole community (local businesses, schools, young people, visitors, tourists and residents) to actively reduce the incidence of litter. The Project Area was defined as the West Links area of Arbroath and the adjoining cycle/walk path between Arbroath and East Haven. The aim of the project was to encourage a shared responsibility to prevent the incidence of littering, reduce the costs of clean up and improve the quality of the local environment.

3.4 The campaign worked on the premise that people using the area for any purpose would be educated about the impact of litter on the area including the effect on the local environment, wildlife, community and businesses. In addition people were invited to pick up any three items

of litter when they used the area, and deposit them in litter and/or new recycling bins depending on the litter type. 5 new litter/recycling bins were introduced within the project area and 10 notice boards were installed at prominent locations showing graphic images of the impact litter can have e.g. photograph of a hedgehog caught in plastic packaging.

Forfar Academy Litter Prevention Campaign

- 3.5 This project was run with Forfar Academy and the wider community including local businesses, residents and community organisations located on and around the main arterial routes to and from the school. Similar to all other secondary schools in Angus, there is an ongoing and significant issue of daily littering associated in and around the school. This litter is cleaned up on a daily basis by staff at a substantial cost to the Council. The aim of the project was to encourage a shared responsibility to prevent the incidence of littering, reduce the costs of clean up and improve the quality of the local environment.
- 3.6 An advisory group was set up within Forfar Academy with the remit to develop and implement a Litter Prevention Charter. Membership of the group included the Depute Head Teacher, staff, pupils, an elected member and Council officers. The Litter Prevention Charter was developed and was launched week commencing 2 February 2015. School assembly presentations were delivered to raise awareness among the whole school community and the launch was supported by a press release, photo call and social media. 100 copies of the Charter were distributed throughout the school, in every classroom and in the littering hot spots within the school. Council staff also distributed 16 copies of the Charter to participating local food businesses. A series of other litter prevention activities were also carried out by the school such as poster competitions, inter-house competitions and lunch time litter picks.

4. CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 Both projects were carried out over a four month period in three phases (Pre-Intervention, Intervention and Post-Intervention) and were completed during March 2015. Monitoring of litter and behavioral surveys were carried out pre and post intervention for both projects. The results for each of the projects are summarised below.

West Links 'pick up 3' and Litter Prevention Campaign Results

- 4.2 The post intervention monitoring showed that the project had been successful by reducing littering levels of 33% overall across the project area. The campaign had been effective at reducing the incidence of different litter types, with decreases recorded for each litter category. Only the levels of smoking related litter did not substantially reduce.
- 4.3 Approximately 200 surveys were carried out pre and post intervention. Overall 27% of people thought that the campaign was an effective way to reduce litter but awareness of the campaign varied by area, from 7% at the retail park to 46% at the skate park. The new litter/recycling bins were considered a success with one third of people interviewed aware of the new bins and 20% of people indicating they had used them. Again awareness was highest at the skate park. There was a mixed response to the installation of the new notice boards. Overall 23% of people were aware of the new boards but again this varied between areas.
- 4.4 To help sustain the campaign, the notice boards and recycling/litter bins within the project area will continue to be maintained.

Forfar Academy Litter Prevention Campaign Results

- 4.5 The cost to the council of cleaning up litter around Forfar Academy significantly reduced after the project had been completed. It was reported that street cleaning operatives were now spending approximately half the time on litter picking around the school than before. It was also noted that the use of the litter bins on the main arterial routes in Brechin Road, Taylor Street and Robertson Terrace had increased. The post intervention school monitoring indicated there had been an overall reduction in littering levels of 17% and a 33% reduction in fast food packaging litter.
- 4.6 In total 304 and 279 surveys were carried out pre and post campaign. There was no change in the self-reporting pupil littering behaviors pre and post intervention with approximately one third of the pupils still admitting to littering. Awareness of the Litter Prevention Charter was

higher among the staff than pupils with 90% of staff and 28% of pupils indicating they were aware of the charter.

- 4.7 In order to sustain and further develop the campaign within the school the school has indicated that they will maintain the Litter Prevention Advisory Group, and maintain the pupil litter warden litter picking activities.

5. PROPOSALS

- 5.1 Whilst the West Links 'prevent and pick up 3' project delivered benefits and successes in term of reducing the amount of litter, the project was both time and labour intensive for everyone involved and was only made possible through funding from Zero Waste Scotland to fund the purchase of new bins and signs and to commission Nicki Souter Associates to co-ordinate the project. It is therefore proposed that consideration should only be given to repeating the project in similar parts of Angus if further funding becomes available or if an urgent need is identified at a particular location. It is also proposed that ideally any such project should be carried out during the busier summer months rather than winter months but this would be dependent on availability of funding.
- 5.2 Litter in and around secondary schools is a long established problem that affects every town in Angus and requires a significant amount of staff time and resources deployed every day to clean up. The Forfar Academy project shows that a school with the support of other Council departments and local businesses can significantly reduce the problem – it is estimated that the time spent by waste operatives in Forfar cleaning litter from around schools has reduced by 50%.
- 5.3 It is proposed that the Forfar Academy project is replicated at other schools in Angus but the approach adapted and improved upon based on the lessons learned from the project. Given the level of school involvement and general staff time/resources required to carry out the project, it is proposed that only one school is targeted each year so that efforts can be focussed into making that project a success. The selection and general implementation of the project would be overseen by the Pride in Place Member Officer group in partnership with the schools involved.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications directly associated with this report.

7. CONCLUSION

Overall the two litter prevention projects can be considered a success and delivered some significant benefits. There were some parts of the projects that were more effective than others and lessons can be learned from these when delivering similar projects in the future. Delivery of the projects was both time and labour intensive and only made possible via funding from Zero Waste Scotland. It will therefore not be possible to roll them out widely elsewhere in Angus, however, it has been identified that similar projects with other secondary schools in Angus can be implemented on a phased basis.

NOTE: No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

REPORT AUTHOR: Alan McKeown, Strategic Director - Communities
EMAIL DETAILS: communitiesbusinesssupport@angus.gov.uk