

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee



*St Edmundsbury*  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Dog Fouling in West Suffolk</b>	
<b>Report No:</b>	<b>OAS/SE/15/011</b>	
<b>Report to and date:</b>	<b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>	22 July 2015
<b>Portfolio holder:</b>	Peter Stevens Portfolio Holder for Operations <b>Tel:</b> 01787 280284 <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:peter.stevens@stedsbc.gov.uk">peter.stevens@stedsbc.gov.uk</a>	
<b>Lead officer:</b>	Mark Christie Service Manager (Business) <b>Tel:</b> 01638 719220 <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:mark.christie@westsuffolk.gov.uk">mark.christie@westsuffolk.gov.uk</a>	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	An initial report to consider the general issue of dog fouling; why it is difficult to fine offenders; current Council initiatives; changes in legislation such as the requirement for dogs to be Micro-chipping by April 2016; and options available to the Council to combat dog fouling.	
<b>Recommendation:</b>	<b>It is <u>RECOMMENDED</u> that:</b>  (1) <b>Members note the report; and</b>  (2) <b>Members consider the additional actions that will be undertaken to help combat dog fouling in West Suffolk.</b>	

<b>Key Decision:</b> (Check the appropriate box and delete all those that <b>do not</b> apply.)		<i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i> Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/> <b>No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></b>	
		<del>(a) — A key decision means an executive decision which, pending any further guidance from the Secretary of State, is likely to:</del> <del>(i) — be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area in the Borough/District; or</del> <del>(ii) — result in any new expenditure, income or savings of more than £50,000 in relation to the Council's revenue budget or capital programme;</del> <del>(iii) — comprise or include the making, approval or publication of a draft or final scheme which may require, either directly or in the event of objections, the approval of a Minister of the Crown.</del> <del>(b) — A decision taker may only make a key decision in accordance with the requirements of the Executive procedure rules set out in Part 4 of this [the] Constitution.</del>	
<i>The decisions made as a result of this report will usually be published within <b>48 hours</b> and cannot be actioned until <b>five clear working days of the publication of the decision</b> have elapsed. This item is included on the Decisions Plan.</i>			
<b>Consultation:</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As set out within the report</li> </ul>	
<b>Alternative option(s):</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As set out within the report</li> </ul>	
<b>Implications:</b>			
<i>Are there any <b>financial</b> implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Subject to future recommendations</li> </ul>	
<i>Are there any <b>staffing</b> implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	
<i>Are there any <b>ICT</b> implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Need to develop an online dog fouling reporting form</li> </ul>	
<i>Are there any <b>legal and/or policy</b> implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introducing a PSPO across West Suffolk will require a period of advertising and consultation before being legally implemented.</li> </ul>	
<i>Are there any <b>equality</b> implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Risk/opportunity assessment:</b>		<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>	
<b>Risk area</b>	<b>Inherent level of risk</b> (before controls)	<b>Controls</b>	<b>Residual risk</b> (after controls)
	Low/Medium/ High*		Low/Medium/ High*

Public perception	Medium	Effective communication strategy	Low
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>		All wards across West Suffolk	
<b>Background papers:</b> <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>		None	
<b>Documents attached:</b>		None	

## **1 Introduction**

This paper aims to provide an overview of dog fouling within West Suffolk.

Reference is made to the results of national research and our current proactive and reactive work in West Suffolk, exemplified with recent case studies. This includes information relating to enforcement activity undertaken, the impact of enforcement activity across Suffolk and the scope of existing and new dog fouling legislation.

This report draws attention to the different tools available to manage dog fouling incidents and highlights both the difficulties associated with enforcement and the need to adopt a wide range of tools targeted to specific incidents.

A consideration of new ideas around the different approaches to combat dog fouling is also included.

### **1.1 Dog fouling - the issue**

Across West Suffolk there are a comparatively low number of dog fouling incidents when considered against the total number of environmental crime issues. The majority of dog owners are responsible and will clear up after their dog. Unfortunately it is a minority of dog owners who do not clean up but create an offensive issue in local communities. If this lack of responsibility is sustained it can soon lead to a localised issue. Consequently whilst total incidents are low, due to the offensive nature of the incident, when it happens it can prove problematic to the individual(s) affected.

Dog fouling is itself the result of a choice taken by the dog owner or dog walker. It is their responsibility to ensure that they control their dog and ensure that they are equipped to deal with a dog fouling incident. However, behaviours vary and certain owners weigh up the risks before they decide not to clear up and often habitually walk their dogs at times when there are few or no other people about.

Dog fouling itself is a criminal offence if not cleared up, However the burden of proof is on the enforcing authority to prove beyond all reasonable doubt that an offence has occurred. Local authorities are enabled to issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN's) for the offence of dog fouling but are not required to operate a FPN scheme, nor is there any requirement to provide bins specifically for the disposal of dog waste. The payment of an FPN allows the offender to discharge their liability as an alternative to prosecution.

In view of the circumstances above, enforcement can prove difficult and for this reason must be part of a wider strategy to combat the issue of dog fouling when it occurs.

## **2 Current Legislation**

### **2.1 The Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996**

This is the primary legislation for dealing with dog fouling. As part of the Act, FPNs were introduced as an additional layer of enforcement to deal with minor offences, as an alternative to the direct route of prosecution through the courts.

This Act allows a FPN to be issued for £50 for failing to clean up dog fouling on land which has been designated under the act. If a FPN is not paid then a case may proceed to prosecution where the maximum fine is £1,000.

In order to issue a FPN for a criminal offence such as dog fouling there is a burden of proof with the issuing authority, whereby we must be able to demonstrate sufficient evidence for a reasonable person to believe beyond doubt that an offence has been committed by the accused. In cases where a FPN is not paid or where a FPN has previously been issued to the accused, then prosecution at court would be the next stage.

The threat of a FPN or a prosecution will not necessarily be sufficient to change the behaviours of those causing the dog fouling problem particularly if the offender is disengaged and/or believes there is little likelihood of being caught. The likelihood of being caught is linked to the times and location of the incidents.

## **3 New Legislation**

New legislation has recently been introduced to support (1) the management of public space on a range of community issues and (2) to enforce responsible dog ownership in order to reduce the problem of stray dogs.

### **3.1 Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014: Public Space Protection Orders**

On 20 October 2014 new legislation came into effect that replaced Dog Control Orders with Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO).

Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) are intended to deal with a particular nuisance or problem in a particular area that is detrimental to the local community's quality of life, by imposing conditions on the use of that area which apply to everyone e.g. requiring dogs to be kept on a lead. They are designed to ensure the law-abiding majority can use and enjoy public spaces, safe from anti-social behaviour. The council can make a PSPO on any public space within its own area.

The definition of public space is wide and includes any place to which the public or any section of the public has access, on payment or otherwise, as of right or by virtue of permission. A local example would be a park or shopping centre.

Enforcement of a PSPO can be by the police, PCSOs or council officers. Non-compliance with an order is an offence which can be dealt with by a

FPN of up to £100 or prosecution if the FPN is not paid (The order can last for up to three years).

Two conditions need to be met before a PSPO can be implemented:

1. That activities carried on in a public place within the authority's area have:
  - i. a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality; or
  - ii. it is likely that activities will be carried on in a public place within that area and that they will have such an effect.
  
2. The second condition is that the effect, or likely effect, of the activities:
  - i. is, or is likely to be, of a persistent or continuing nature;
  - ii. is, or is likely to be, such as to make the activities unreasonable, and justifies the restrictions imposed by the notice.

The local authority must carry out consultation and publicity before making an Order, which has to include the Chief Officer of Police, the Police and Crime Commissioner and any representatives of the local community they consider appropriate. (The Kennel Club have a specific interest in any orders relating to dogs).

A PSPO lasts for a maximum of 3 years unless extended; they can be varied or discharged during this period.

### 3.2 **The Microchipping of Dogs (England) Regulations 2015**

This legislation requires that all dogs over the age of 8 weeks in England are microchipped by 6 April 2016 and registered with their keepers' contact details. The purpose of the Act is to promote responsible dog ownership and specifically to combat the costs involved in lost and stray dogs.

All keepers, including breeders, must keep their details up-to-date, with the only exemption being where a vet has certified in writing that a dog is unfit to be microchipped.

Before the new requirements come into effect, pet owners or keepers can get their dog's microchipped free of charge in a number of places. Many vets also offer free microchipping as do other animal welfare organisations and some local authorities.

Once the new rules come into effect, if a dog without a microchip comes to the attention of the authorities, its keeper may be served with a notice requiring the dog to be microchipped, and may face criminal prosecution and a £500 fine if they don't comply.

An authorised person, police officer or PCSO will be empowered to enforce this legislation.

#### 4 **A national perspective on dog fouling**

Keep Britain Tidy research estimated the UK dog population at between 6.5 and 7.4 million, producing 1,000 tonnes of excrement per day in 2004. More recent research from the Pet Food Manufacturers Association has put this figure at 9 million in 2014 or 24% of UK households.

Despite a significant dog population, the vast majority of dog owners and walkers are responsible. A recent investigation into barriers to behavioural change in dog walkers categorises five distinct 'Dog walking typologies':

- **'Proud to pick up'** – happy to be seen carrying dog waste, will pick up in all locations and take it home if no bins are available.
- **'It is the right thing to do'** – will pick up in public places but will seek to dispose of the waste as soon as it is practical.
- **'I have done my job'** – if there is no bin available will leave the bagged waste to be dealt with by others.
- **'Only if I have to'** – will only pick up in the presence of other people – likely to discard when no one is looking.
- **'Disengaged'** – will not pick up in any situation even if they are aware of the environmental consequences of their actions.

Research has also demonstrated that dog fouling offenders:

- Are from all social classes but more likely to be male than female.
- Include all age groups with just a slightly higher proportion being between the ages of 18 and 24.
- Only admit that they allow their dog to foul in a public place when pressed.
- All know that they could be fined, but the majority did not believe they would ever be caught.

The targets for influencing behaviour change will undoubtedly include the last three 'typologies' listed above.

The 'I have done my job' can be through continued education of being able to use all litter and dog bins as a disposal option and new signage where necessary on bins.

The 'only if I have to' and 'disengaged' it will be harder to influence a change in behaviour but with targeted campaigns and more community involvement to report offences, the threat of being caught will increase. It is important to recognise that the success of our activity should be measured by a reduction in dog fouling issues rather than

the amount of enforcement activity undertaken. This distinction is important because:

- The people in England fined for failing to pick up after their dog has fallen by almost 20% last year.
- There were 73,824 complaints about dog mess in 2014-15 but 103 councils did not issue any fixed penalties. One council spent £134,000 employing 22 dog wardens on a 12 week trial period but they only issued 26 fines raising £2,080.

The actions undertaken by councils will vary depending upon their specific issues and be a recognition of proportionality, value for money and effectiveness.

## **6 A West Suffolk perspective**

West Suffolk has two Waste Advisors who investigate and manage a range of environmental crime issues including fly tipping, abandoned vehicles, littering, dog fouling, graffiti and waste collection. Actions taken include a range of options from educational activity to enforcement.

Complaints regarding dog fouling are considerably lower than those for fly tipping and abandoned vehicles however one irresponsible dog owner can create a disproportionately high problem (2 piles incidents per day, usually in roughly the same place).

The number of complaints received by both authorities in the last three years for dog fouling, fly tipping and abandoned vehicles are listed below:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Complaint</b>	<b>FHDC Incidents</b>	<b>SEBC Incidents</b>	<b>Total Incidents</b>
2012/13	<b>Dog Fouling</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>62</b>
	Fly Tipping	280	239	519
	Abandoned Vehicles	91	122	213
2013/14	<b>Dog Fouling</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>67</b>
	Fly Tipping	292	206	498
	Abandoned Vehicles	87	114	201
2014/15	<b>Dog Fouling</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>57</b>
	Fly Tipping	237	227	464
	Abandoned Vehicles	116	111	227

Within current resources, a range of activities are implemented in an attempt to change the behaviours of those irresponsible dog owners and to deal with incidents that have occurred. This includes reactive and proactive activity.



## 7.1 **Proactive work**

A range of prioritised actions are taken to resolve dog fouling issues which has traditionally included the use of signs, stickers and posters to educate and remind members of the public of the penalties for not cleaning up. More recently, pavement stencils have been used in 'hot spot' locations to remind dog owners to 'clean it up'.

There are also currently 561 dog bins and 907 litter bins across West Suffolk. A new combined dog and litter waste bin is being introduced as part of a replacement program for old or vandalised bins. This new bin is labelled to accept both litter and dog waste; it is more robust, has a larger capacity and eliminates the need for two separate bins to be installed often at the same location. These bins are clearly labelled on all four sides and promotion of these bins will be a part of campaigns and press releases regarding the dog fouling issue.

West Suffolk wide and targeted education is used to reinforce positive behaviours and encourage responsible dog ownership, such as 'No Excuses', 'The Poo Fairy' and the Dogs Trust 'Big Scoop'. These campaigns are supported with the sale of over 500 packs of dog bags at council offices.

## 7.2 **Reactive work**

When a complaint is received the investigating officer will visit the location to gather information from the complainant and other local residents through door knocking, letter deliveries and engaging with passers-by.

The location will be assessed for the appropriate warning signs, stickers and posters and if needed arrangements made for stencils to go on pavements. The number and location of litter and dog bins in the area will also be checked to assess if there is a need for better signage or to relocate any bins if absolutely necessary.

If a complainant knows the identity and address of an alleged offender but does not wish to make a formal statement then a warning letter is sent. If no potential offender can be identified then advisory letters are delivered to nearby houses to ensure local residents are aware of the dog fouling issue and to provide them with the necessary contact details if they see an offence taking place. To issue a FPN we have the burden of proof to be able to prove beyond all reasonable doubt that an offence has taken place.

Patrols of 'hot spot' locations take place if intelligence is received about a particular time period when it is believed that an offence is likely to take place. Officers will patrol on foot, sometimes in hi visibility jackets and if possible with the assistance of the local police or PCSOs monitoring the location and engaging with any members of the public encountered. However these patrols have not been effective in catching offenders to issue any FPNs, a problem which all Suffolk local authorities are encountering when trying to enforce dog fouling legislation.

We encourage the use of social media with complainants and parish

councils to discuss and highlight dog fouling issues; Forest Heath dog foulers and Red Lodge community page are active sources of discussion. Parish councils are also provided with assistance and advice including template articles for publication in local magazines or websites.

### 7.3 **Case Studies**

Different techniques have been used to reduce and resolve several dog fouling issues at the following locations without the need to issue any FPNs:

#### 7.3.1 Chalkstone Estate, Haverhill

Haverhill was the trial location in 2013 for a different approach in highlighting the issue of dog fouling 'hot spot' locations. A stencil was developed to spray a temporary message on a footpath reminding dog owners to 'clean it up'.

This followed work with a local neighbourhood police officer who assisted us in investigating a complaint of persistent dog fouling along Chalkstone Road (an issue which at this location has now been resolved).

Since then the stencils have been used in numerous locations of persistent fouling where our standard notices and signs have been ignored and have been noted to have an impact in raising the issue and reducing incidents.

#### 7.3.2 Great Whelnetham

In February 2015 a concerned resident reported the extent of dog fouling on the footpaths outside several residents' houses and along the route to the local primary school.

Initially increased warning signs and stickers were placed around the village as the provision of bins seemed adequate with a total of 4 dog bins and 3 litter bins throughout the village.

Posters were displayed to promote considerate dog ownership and a letter drop to all residents was undertaken over the course of several weeks to inform them of the issue and giving them details of how to report any offences witnessed.

Although no residents have yet to identify any potential offenders the blatant fouling on the footpaths has been reduced through highlighting the issue to the whole of the village.

#### 7.3.3 St Mary's Academy, Mildenhall

Pupils at St Mary's Church of England Academy in Mildenhall approached the council in July 2013 about an issue they were having on their school grounds.

The issue concerned inconsiderate dog owners throwing bags of dog waste over the school fence and onto the playing fields. The children wanted this stopped so that they could enjoy their playtimes again.

Officers responded by speaking with the children and agreeing to install warning notices and a new dog bin. The children also took part in the launch of that years 'Big Scoop' communication campaign run in conjunction with the Dog's Trust.

## **8 Suffolk wide activity**

There is a similar approach to the issue of dog fouling across Suffolk with the main focus being concentrated on non-enforcement based activities aimed at changing behaviours.

In Suffolk only three Local authorities have issued any FPNs for dog fouling in the last three years (Ipswich BC, Suffolk Coastal DC and Waveney DC).

- Ipswich BC only issue FPNs if officers witness an offence, they have issued one this year, two in 2014 and six in 2013.
- Suffolk Coastal DC have issued six since 2011, none have been issued as a result of enforcement patrols.
- Waveney DC has issued none this year, one in 2014 and two in 2013.
- Only Ipswich BC has prosecuted for the offence, one prosecution in each of the last three years.

Suffolk councils are in a similar position to other local authorities throughout the country who cannot rely solely upon enforcement to resolve dog fouling issues. Dog fouling is a problem which requires proactive work and education in the first instance to alter behaviours backed up by enforcement and the possibility of prosecution if required.

## **9 Alternative enforcement options**

### **9.1 DNA Testing**

Barking and Dagenham are set to be the first council in the UK to trial DNA testing in an effort to trace the owners of dogs mess which is not cleared up. A pilot scheme is being planned and if successful the scheme will be rolled out across the borough from September 2016.

A non invasive and painless cheek swab captures a dogs DNA, the result is recorded and an individual profile is created for that particular dog. In the event of offending mess being left behind a small sample is taken and sent for DNA analysis that can be matched with 99.9% accuracy to a registered dog. There is a 1 in 4,000,000 chance that another dog matches in addition to the reported match.

The cost of initial DNA registration is from £29.95 per dog depending on the size of the program and number of dogs registered, the cost for waste matching is £69.95.

A PSPO would need to be in place to designate an area as a location

where only DNA registered dogs were allowed. Using a microchip reader, an officer of the council would be able to identify any microchipped dog within a protected public space to confirm that it was DNA registered as required by the PSPO.

If such a check revealed that:

- the dog was not microchipped, the owner could be served with a notice requiring the dog to be microchipped.
- the dog was not DNA registered; the dog's saliva could be sampled on the spot for registration for which the owner could be charged.

Regular patrols of designated PSPO locations would be required to ensure compliance, potentially in pairs subject to a risk assessment of the activity. These locations would also require adequate signage to inform members of the public that any non DNA registered dogs are excluded from using the designated area.

Unfortunately, DNA testing is completely reliant on the offending owner having submitted their dog's DNA onto a register, therefore if the dog's DNA is not registered, no enforcement measures can be taken. The cost for dog owners to register their animals could be particularly prohibitive if an owner has several dogs. There is a £69.95 fee for DNA sampling which will not trace an owner if they are not registered; several samples may also be needed if there are several incidents which could increase costs with no chance of increasing enforcement.

Other limitations include:

- Dedicated officers would be needed to enforce any PSPO location to ensure compliance which would also restrict access to anyone with unregistered dogs.
- Dog owners may also not be happy to have swabs taken from their dogs for testing which would also require the officers to be trained for on the spot sampling.
- With numerous visitors from outside of the borough or on holiday this may prove detrimental to the number of people choosing to visit a location with such an Order imposed on it.

## **10 Options and actions**

The majority of dog owners are responsible and those that need to change their behaviour can be influenced through education or if necessary enforcement.

Existing methods have had an impact on changing these behaviours although the issuing of FPNs is not a successful enforcement tool due to the difficulty of witnessing an incident.

More partnership working and engagement within the community will prove most effective moving forward supported by the threat of

enforcement if appropriate. A targeted approach will be required for some activities focusing on 'hot spot' locations so that our actions are proportionate to the incidents reported.

There are a range of options and actions available to us that can be developed in order to challenge behaviours through:

- Communications;
- Partnership working;
- Campaigns; and
- Enforcement methods.

#### 10.1 **Communication**

We will continue to increase awareness that dog waste does not have to be put in a red dog bin, any general litter bin or the black household bin can be used. Where necessary new logos will be placed on bins stating that they are for both litter and dog waste disposal. This will ensure that dog owners who do clear up but cannot find bins are aware they can use general litter bins.

Information packs will be sent to parish councils with template articles on dog fouling for local newsletters and/or websites with contact details for reporting any witnessed incidents and other helpful guidance on disposal of dog waste.

We will also to continue to sell dog bags at council offices and other outlets to those customers who prefer to buy their bags from the council.

Guidance for reporting incidents will be developed for all council staff but especially frontline services such as park rangers.

#### 10.2 **Partnership working**

##### 10.2.1 **Paws on Patrol**

We will investigate the possibility of the police introducing their 'Paws on Patrol' scheme to West Suffolk, an initiative for dog walkers to report crime and promote responsible dog ownership. This would include the reporting of dog owners that are witnessed not clearing up.

The following partnership opportunities will have associated resource implications for West Suffolk if implemented.

##### 10.2.2 **Suffolk FA**

We will investigate working with the Suffolk FA to promote football pitches free of dog's mess which we may require joint funding for the cost of advertising materials (approximate cost of £500 per site).

A similar scheme was run in partnership with the Staffordshire FA and Stafford BC; a number of banners were placed between the goal posts and on corner flags with a keep our pitches clean message.

We will investigate the trial use of banners at a local playing field ready

for the start of the new season by liaising with the Parks Department and Suffolk FA.

### 10.2.3 **Green Dog Walkers**

The Green Dog Walkers (GDW) scheme which was developed by Falkirk council as a non-confrontational, friendly way to change attitudes about dog fouling. Volunteers wear a GDW armband (or their dogs wear the green GDW collar) to show they have "taken the pledge" to always:

- Clean up after their dog
- Carry extra dog waste bags
- Be happy to be approached to 'lend' a dog waste bag to those without
- Be a friendly reminder to other dog walkers to clean up after their dogs

There is license fee of £500 for the artwork and further set up costs dependant on what promotional materials are supplied for this initiative to be developed further in its current format.

We will investigate the use of the scheme in villages or where local community groups exist but this scheme is not viable for widespread use.

## 10.3 **Campaigns**

### 10.3.1 **Clean it Up**

We will develop a campaign to be launched in the lead up to the end of daylight saving time in October when the number of incidents increases with the dark mornings and evenings. This will encourage members of the public to report any incidents they see and remind dog owners of disposal options and FPNs for not clearing up after their dog.

An example of a similar campaign is the Dogs Trust yearly 'Big Scoop' campaign which is run during June to raise awareness of the need for dog owners to clear up.

The following campaigns have additional resource implications.

### 10.3.2 **'We Are Watching You'**

Keep Britain Tidy have developed a 'we are watching you' campaign through the use of glow in the dark posters which have seen a 46% decrease in incidents per site where the posters have been placed.

Suffolk Coastal and Breckland councils have just joined the campaign so no feedback is yet available on the local success of this campaign.

Joining the campaign costs £1,500 which includes the supply of forty A3 glow in the dark posters.

We will review the progress of the campaign at Suffolk Coastal DC and investigate the impact of the campaign. However implementation of the campaign will have a high cost.

## 10.4 **Enforcement**

### 10.4.1 **DNA Testing**

The use of DNA testing is not considered a viable option at this moment as they would significantly restrict public access to any designated locations and would require significant additional resources to implement and enforce.

There may be more benefit for housing associations to make use of this method if they have a specific issue at a specific location and suspect a particular resident. The DNA testing on a smaller scale would be able to confirm or deny suspicions when used specifically to target a localised issue.

It should be noted that success of the scheme is totally dependant upon dog owners registering their dog on the DNA database. If they are not registered there will be no record.

### 10.6.2 **PSPOs**

PSPOs can be introduced for specific measures such as keeping a dog on a lead but any such specific Order would need to be backed up by patrols for it to be visibly enforceable.

Without increasing current resources it is recommended that currently the only PSPO which should be introduced across West Suffolk would be for dog fouling. This would be a transition from the current arrangements through the old legislation and would enable the introduction of the higher level of FPN (£100) instead of the current £50.

This would not require additional resources to respond as it is something we currently enforce (subject to evidence); there would be minimal costs in the initial implementation of the legislation through advertising and consultation.

There would also be do restrictions placed on residents or visitors to public open spaces in West Suffolk.

We will progress the implementation of a PSPO across West Suffolk for dog fouling offences only.

### 10.6.3 **FPN Reward Scheme**

Some local authorities have introduced a 'reward scheme' offering the amount of a paid FPN as a reward to any person reporting someone not clearing up after their dog. There is no cost involved apart from administrating the payments as the fine becomes the reward.

The witness of any dog fouling incident has to be willing to make a statement and go to court if a FPN is not paid. The witness would only receive the reward if the FPN had been paid or for a successful prosecution.

It is recommended that the Council's procedures are amended so that a

reward can be offered for successfully paid FPNs for dog fouling offences. The positive effect is to encourage vigilance. However the issues faced by Officers to identify offenders will still apply and those claiming a reward they will not be able to remain anonymous as they must be prepared to go to court as a witness if necessary.

We will investigate the implementation of a FPN reward scheme for dog fouling offences only.

## **11.0 Summary**

In the context of other environmental crimes, dog fouling is not a significant issue in West Suffolk in terms of the number of occurrences and the majority of West Suffolk dog walkers and owners demonstrate responsible actions on a daily basis. However, dog fouling is an antisocial issue that is particularly offensive to those impacted by it.

There are a number of tools available to and used by the council to change what is in essence a behavioural issue. This includes an extensive network of bins and signs supported by both educational and enforcement activity.

However dog fouling is a localised issue and tends to be dealt with through targeted actions and working with the local community. In order to support this moving forward, the following additional actions will be taken.

1. Investigate introducing 'Paws on Patrol' in West Suffolk;
2. Produce reporting guidance for staff;
3. Investigate a banner campaign for football pitches with Suffolk FA;
4. Launch a 'Clean It Up' campaign in October 2015;
5. Introduce a PSPO for dog fouling offences across West Suffolk; and
6. Consider a FPN reward scheme across West Suffolk for reported dog fouling offences.

It should be recognised that enforcement activity will continue to be applied where appropriate, although reliance on this approach is limited by having sufficient evidence to take action. The nature, timing and location of incidents makes enforcement activity difficult and at this stage it is too early to determine if the introduction of new methods such as DNA testing will improve this.