

Present: Councillor McLaren (Chair)
Councillors Ibrahim, Iqbal, Moores and Williamson

Also in Attendance:
Councillor Goodwin – Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods
Nasir Dad – Director of Environment
Peter Thompson – Constitutional Services

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ghafoor and Hindle.

2 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of urgent business received.

3 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received.

4 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions for this meeting of the Scrutiny Board to consider.

5 **DON'T TRASH OLDHAM: YEAR END REVIEW AND NEXT STEPS**

The Scrutiny Board received a report of the Director of Environment reviewing progress of the 'Don't Trash Oldham' initiative. Clean streets and tackling issues of fly tipping and littering that blight the Borough's communities remained a priority for Oldham residents and for the Council. The second iteration of the Don't Trash Oldham (DTO) campaign had commenced in October 2022, and was in addition to community engagement, it also focused on betterment/transforming communities by working with ward members, which was supported by a limited budget for each area, which could be used to realise the requests of Councillors.

The Director's report therefore provided an end of year report and detailed the outcomes and achievements over the last twelve months; it examined the lessons learned (what has worked and what could be improved) and proposed some new measures/targeted interventions for the future which aimed to strike a balance between new ways of working whilst addressing the ongoing environmental challenges faced by the residents of Oldham and the Council's approach in tackling such challenges.

The Director of Environment reported that from October 2022 to October 2023, the DTO campaign had morphed into a betterment phase to transform neighbourhoods and build on the legacy work from year one of the programme (2021- 2022). This was backed up by intensive enforcement and clean up activity in

highlighted 'hotspot' neighbourhoods. The accepted aim of this programme was to 'make a difference' by undertaking work which was more than the first version of the DTO campaign. This included visibly improving areas, ensuring detailed attention and physical improvements that were not always deliverable as part of routine work.



The report also outlined proposals on how the legacy of DTO campaign would become embedded and what this would look like moving forward. There was a recognition that given the work completed over the last two iterations of DTO, a sustainable approach was needed to ensure previous gains would not be lost and a more durable model be adopted moving forward which would meet the needs of the borough, the residents and ensures a clean environment for all.

Integral to the option approved at cabinet in September 2022 was a targeted approach in the known hotspot locations with enforcement and a dedicated clean-up to influence a sustained behaviour change amongst residents.

The report looked at targeted 'hot spot enforcement and clean-up work. Focused activity involved consistent enforcement and clean-up work across five of the inner Oldham-town wards, namely: Alexandra, Medlock Vale, St. Marys, Waterhead and Werneth. Coupled with this work, the Council's Enforcement Officers and Environment Marshals served legal notices to ensure private yards were cleared and that any defects were resolved. Part of this work involved a range of visits, advice and enforcement actions undertaken, as follows:

- 4,996 service requests (average of 416 per month)
- 1,741 enforcement actions taken (average of 145 per month)
- 41 prosecutions taken to court or submitted to legal
- 166 FPNs served

The Don't Trash Oldham campaign was one of the Councils most high profile and successful communications campaigns of the last several years – both in terms of output and engagement. The campaign had attracted interest from other local authorities and has been replicated across the country. In 2022, it had shortlisted for a Local Government Chronicle Award.

In terms of options for the future, the Director of Environment reported advised that it is was clear that, over the last two years, both the DTO and Betterment campaigns had delivered significant improvements boroughwide, changed behaviours, and where necessary, secured legal action against individuals and businesses that were committing environmental crimes. It had also become clear that, in some areas, fly tipping remained a problem and although there have been some improvements, overall, the problem remained persistent.

In addition to the above, as the campaigns had delivered their priorities, additional issues have also been identified that require attention, with the main ones being unadopted/unregistered

alleys and gully cleaning (boroughwide). Given the above, and the need to consider additional/different options to build on the successes and to focus resources where needed the most, the report detailed six options which it was felt could deliver a longer lasting and effective approach and build on the successes of the last two years.



Option 1 – to continue to target known hotspot locations with focused enforcement and quick pick up to remove the waste as soon as possible to deter further fly-tipping. Option 1 was fully budgeted as part of the DTO/Betterment savings identified in 2022/23.

Option 2 – involved merging the Hot spot enforcement/fly-tipping team in the Environmental Health service with those already in place in Environmental Services to create one larger, more responsive team that combines enforcement and street cleansing/ pick up.

Option 3 – would aim to maximise opportunities to bid for extra resources from Government to tackle fly-tipping issues on the back of the success of the DTO/Betterment investment.

Option 4 – involved new borough-wide approaches to gully cleaning to address the persistent complaints regarding the Service. Based on a 15-month plan, requiring additional investment, which had already been requested as part of the 2024/25 budget options.

Option 5 – would see the District Teams continuing to work alongside Environmental Services to support Members and community groups to take part in social action within their neighbourhoods, including those people wishing to organise litter picks, enhance open spaces, or improve the condition of their alleyway.

Option 6 – this would see the expansion of the role of the team and undertake work on unadopted alleys. Expanding the role to unadopted alleys would significantly increase the workload and expectations would have to be managed. Option 6 was currently unbudgeted.

Members of the Scrutiny Board commended work that had been done thus far in terms of making Oldham a tidier and cleaner place and, in doing so, commended and endorsed Options 1 – 5 above, whilst feeling that Option 6 was probably not deliverable at the present time.

Members noted that paragraph 3.3 of the report noted the lack of resident engagement and compliance and it was evident that a considerable amount of fly-tipping was being generated by properties that backed onto empty spaces which would result in alternative models for enforcement, such as the use of CCTV where appropriate. Be considered. In this regard members sought clarification on the role of Landlords and whether the

Council's selective Licensing Policies could be used to get Landlords to show more responsibility.



Resolved:

1. That the Scrutiny Board notes the achievements of the Don't Trash Oldham Campaign across the borough over the last twelve months.
2. That the Scrutiny Board endorses and commends Options 1 – 5, detailed at paragraph 4 (Future Options) of the submitted report.
3. That the Committee request a further update report on the Don't Trash Oldham Campaign in approximately 12 months.
4. That the Committee request a report, to a future meeting, detailing the Council's work in terms of its Selective Licensing policies.

The meeting started at 6.00pm and ended at 7.30pm