



Public Document Pack
STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council Offices • Ebley Mill • Ebley Wharf • Stroud • GL5 4UB

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ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE - 07 DECEMBER 2023

I am now able to enclose, for consideration at the next meeting of the Environment Committee, the following reports that were unavailable when the agenda was printed.

Agenda No Item

4. **Public Questions (Pages 3 - 6)**

Report of FIELD_AUTHOR

The Chair of the Committee will answer questions from members of the public submitted in accordance with the Council's procedures.

DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF QUESTIONS

Noon on Friday, 1 December 2023

Questions must be submitted to the Chief Executive, Democratic Services,
Ebley Mill, Ebley Wharf, Stroud and can be sent by email to

Democratic.services@stroud.gov.uk

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Members of the Public's Questions to Environment Committee

Questions from Eric Torrington

Question 1 - If this committee wishes to see a greener, cleaner, safer community and a future less impacted by litter pollution it must take back some control. Therefore in 2024, will the council take a more assertive approach with challenge, warning, and enforcement of business legislation as part of its duties. It is suggested that the supermarkets on the gateway roads into Stroud and the large retailers along the A46 Merrywalks area be first targeted. In 2024 litter volunteers will also identify other nuisance locations in and around private land settings, and where necessary provide evidence to meet CPN tests.

Reply

Reports from litter volunteers will be investigated and this will naturally lead to challenge, warnings and enforcement action where it is deemed necessary. Whilst nuanced to an extent, enforcement against businesses and their land, generally sits with the Environmental Health team. Offences related to public open space, including the land for which SDC have a mandatory duty to clean, sits with the Community Services and Neighbourhood Warden team.

Question 2 - What are SDC's strategy and plans going forward to increase fly-tipping prosecutions and FPN to incident ratio?

Reply

The new Anti-Social Behaviour policy due to be presented to Environment Committee in early 2024, will set out the firm policy stance on the use of FPNs and prosecutions across a range of offences. As already suggested, in response to the new policy, staff will receive the appropriate training, where necessary, to achieve the desired outcomes.

Question 3 - SDC is aware that some major retailers have a poor track record of litter management and compliance with statutory duties both nationally and locally. They can ignore reasonable requests for remedial action following a complaint. Can SDC confirm they will stipulate the anti-litter requirements expected of any retailers taking up units to reduce the litter impact on the community and environment at the outset? This must be included in the planning, consent, and licensing process. Thereafter, once operational SDC routinely monitors against national litter standards and enforces statutory requirements.

It is suggested that requirements be stipulated include that retailers taking units:

1. Comply with legislation and pledge to deliver the Litter Voluntary Code of Practice, as a minimum.
2. Accept the principle of 'collective responsibility' for keeping the local environment clean. To identify what part they will play in reducing litter arising from its activities, to lead by example, adopt national litter standards, and take ownership of litter around the outlet within a distance up to 100m, or otherwise agreed with SDC, reflecting litter maps and surveys.
3. Prepare a litter and waste management plan. The plan should set objectives, targets, and measures to reduce litter impact and comply with legislation. Following implementation, the plan is to be reviewed annually, and a report is submitted to SDC for review, agreement, and corrective actions, as necessary.
4. Apply practical actions to reduce litter and environmental impact including; a litter management checklist, maintaining litter and waste records, proposals for cleaning up litter, carrying out daily litter picks, provision of in-store and external bins, staff awareness training, and running litter prevention campaigns for customers, use of anti-litter displays, etc.
5. Review and agree on practical actions with SDC.



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6. Participate and support wider community clean-up activities and stakeholder programmes to enhance the immediate area, such as the ongoing Anti Social Behaviour workshops.
7. Promptly deal with litter complaints, feedback, and issues raised by SDC.

The above is also called for any other large food-on-the-go retailers proposing to locate in this area.

Reply

Often proposals for new retailers fall within the same use class (Class E – Commercial, business and service) as the existing store. Therefore, without a change of use, or any external physical alterations to the building, a planning application wouldn't be required.

The Licensing Act 2003 does not allow SDC to automatically impose conditions relating to littering onto a premises licence. If a valid representation is made by a responsible authority or any other person, then the application will go before a hearing panel who will consider the application and representation and may add conditions if they feel it is relevant. For a representation to be valid it must relate to one or more of the licensing objectives (prevention of crime and disorder, prevention of public nuisance, public safety and protection of children) and there must be some evidence to support the concerns in relation to the specific premises.

Questions from John Newton

Question 4 - Would SDC include the protection of canals and other local waterways (as potential pathways to the sea) from litter and waste in the 2030 Strategy and Master Plan?

Reply

The 2030 Strategy and Master Plan was adopted by SDC in Spring 2021 and includes commitments on protection of our natural environment and waste. The more recently adopted Council Plan 2021-26 also includes a commitment to reduce the environmental impact of resources discarded as waste (including litter). The canals and waterways are part of the fabric of the district and are already encompassed by these adopted strategies. The Council reports regularly on progress against these strategies, including activities undertaken with partners and community organisations. Future progress reports will highlight the forthcoming district-wide litter campaign to include general open space and the canal towpath.

Question 5 - Would SDC implement an educational campaign raising awareness of litter's environmental impact and encourage people to act positively on the canals?

Reply

SDC actively manages litter control across the District. Litter hot spots and issues can be raised on-line, via the Report It function.

Early in the new year, a District-wide litter campaign will be launched, relevant to both general open space and the canal towpath. The campaign will use Keep Britain Tidy promotional posters and banners, so canal side locations will be sought, in collaboration with volunteers.

SDC recognise the vital contribution of canal volunteers in both litter picking and maintaining the canal towpath for the community. The Cotswold Canals Connected project will be working with the Cotswold Canals Trust to recruit a team of volunteer 'Canal Ambassadors' to specifically focus on community engagement along the canal. Raising awareness around litter and environmental concerns could form a part of their activities.



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Question 6 - Can SDC engage with businesses in close proximity to the canals whose activities lead to customer littering or waste to participate with other stakeholders in anti-litter measures in and around their premises, and enforce litter legislation as necessary?

Reply

Officers have engaged with businesses in the past 12 months and this work is outlined in the recently published (Environment Committee) information sheet. Resources dictate that engagement will be prioritised based on inspection evidence and need. Going forward it may be that Canal Ambassadors are best placed to engage and work with businesses in close proximity to the canal, forging better links and a stronger sense of community.

However, SDC would welcome feedback from the canal volunteers on the litter hot spots, likely causes and suitable locations for additional litter bins, if required. In relation to the canal, these should be raised with the Canal Team in the first instance, who will seek support from officers around the organisation, as required.

Questions from Sonja Bates

Question 7 - How can I confidentially report untidy business land and what processes does SDC have in place to work with the land owner to resolve the issue?

Reply

The Information sheet published prior to tonight's meeting, provides updates on the related business engagement work SDC have undertaken in 2023. This has led to a number of commitments and upgrades, although ultimately if deemed necessary, SDC do have powers to compel improvements on business land in the most serious of cases.

"Untidy Business Land" can be reported to SDC via the Report It function on the website or via email, post or telephone. Each report will be assigned to the appropriate department for investigation and, where necessary, this would involve working with any responsible party.

Question 8 - How many tonnes of litter and fly-tips has SDC collected each year since 2020 and how much did it cost to clean it up?

Reply

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	April 2022- Aug 2023
Litter tonnage	103.74	93.60	63.60	28.32
Fly tipping tonnage	101.61	163.12	147.37	99.35

We do not have a break down for the specific costs relating to litter picking/fly tipping. However, to give a sense of scale, the overall street cleaning contract budget for 2023/24 is £853,000.

Question 9 - Does the council have any plans in place to reduce littering through education and awareness campaigns? For example, are there any plans to engage young people and the wider community to take part and take pride in their community?

Reply

Neighbourhood Wardens already undertake engagement with schools, to promote recycling and discuss littering and its impact on the community. They also facilitate litter pick events, particularly where communities identify litter as a key issue.

In addition the Council is recruiting a Waste Education Officer. Whilst the main focus of this work will be on kerbside waste collection, they will also increase the social media presence across all SDC environmental services and increase campaign support.



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Questions from Ann Trigg

Question 10 - Does SDC have a future campaign to address/reduce kerbside litter (specifically litter thrown from vehicles)?

Reply

The Council has recently upgraded a number of bins in laybys along the A38 corridor, removing simple wheelie bins that were attracting flytipping and replacing them with litter bins with the same capacity. The new bins have poster frames, within which we intend to display posters and information to discourage littering from vehicles. This will be supported by a wider campaign, utilising Keep Britain Tidy materials to further educate residents and raise awareness.

Staff training will be refreshed in 2024. In particular relation to littering from vehicles, this will better equip officers with the knowledge and skills to issue Civil Penalty Notices, where it can be evidenced that litter was deposited from a registered vehicle.

Question 11 - Does SDC have a training strategy to appropriately train staff and potentially increase the level of FPN, prosecution and enforcement in 2024?

Reply

SDC will continue to use enforcement cautiously, often educating, upskilling and warning individuals and businesses in the first instance. However, as will be presented in the new Anti-Social Behaviour Policy, currently in draft, enforcement will be an important tool in addressing persistent offenders. As such, officers across the authority will receive updated training in 2024, allowing a wider range of officers the ability to issue FPN's and other enforcements, where appropriate.

Question 12 - Have SDC administered any FPN's in regards to littering or fly tipping in 2023 and how much was the fine.

Reply

No FPNs have been served for either littering or fly tipping in 2023 to date.