

# FBC – Revenue Growth Bid 2022/23

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## Scheme Title: Enforcement Team

### Description of Scheme:

#### Background

There are several Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs) in place across the borough for the enforcement of dog fouling and dog control issues, and the ban on BBQs in open areas. These have been enforced historically through a combination of in-house and external resources, utilising a mixture of educational and enforcement tools as a deterrent in responding to anti-social behaviour and environmental crimes, with varying degrees of success and mixed reception from residents and visitors to the area.

Fylde has experienced an influx of visitors and 'staycationers' over the past two summers following the lifting of the initial Covid-19 lockdown in 2020 and international travel restrictions. A proportion of these visitors exhibited anti-social behaviour and it became apparent that the traditional methods of education and enforcement were ineffective in combatting the increasing demands being placed on the coastal area. Prior to the pandemic, the coastal strip was also becoming more noticeably busier during peak periods.

Following the end of the enforcement arrangement with District Enforcement in November 2020, officers were requested to consider what alternative arrangements could be put in place, with a focus on an engagement and encouragement approach: arrangements should also be put into place for enforcement to be used as a final deterrent in responding to anti-social behaviour. Urgent powers were subsequently used to approve the establishment of a dedicated inhouse team of enforcement officers, working alongside CSP Security over the 2021 summer period, to promote environmental education, with enforcement action in respect of anti-social behaviour where appropriate i.e. as a last resort for repeat offenders. The intention was that these officers would respond to issues seven days a week, across all areas of the borough, and particularly within the summer months and on Bank Holiday and school holiday periods on the coastal strip.

The team comprised six enforcement officers in total, with three funded from existing budgets, and the remaining three funded from time-bound funding from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) which concludes on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.

The initial intention was that the Head of Environmental Services conduct a review of the Environmental Enforcement Team in the autumn of 2021, with a view to seeking a revenue growth bid for the 3 FTE posts previously funded from the COMF budget in future years or reduce the team accordingly to a more limited role.

However, as the team only became fully operational in September 2021, it has not been possible to undertake a meaningful review of their effectiveness.

#### 2. Proposal

It is therefore proposed that the three temporary posts are funded for a further 12-month period running to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023. This will allow a thorough review of their effectiveness to be undertaken by Service Head in September 2022 to be considered in the context of the 2023/24 budget setting round.

In order to achieve this, a revenue growth bid is requested in the sum of £41,329 with the remainder of the budget required for the three posts to be met from re-phasing of an underspend in the 2021/22 base budget as a result of utilising COMF funding.

### **3. Outcomes (including details of the broader benefits achieved - for example community or environmental benefit, health and safety compliance, or statutory obligations)**

The Enforcement Team allows the council to respond to anti-social behaviour within the community and gives it the opportunity to respond in the round by having the ability to enforce PSPO's through the issuing of fines where the agreed approach of engagement and encouragement fails.

It is also a key part of the response to the council's responsibilities as a key partner with the Community Safety Partnership by assisting to reduce the fear of crime by providing a front-facing and visible resource to complement other initiatives such as town centre CCTV.

As a part of the wider Environmental Protection Team, the enforcement resource also allows the ability to respond to other issues such as responding to problematic street beggars through the issue of community protection warnings and notices and assisting with wider issues such as the pandemic response.

It also allows the council to discharge its duty with respect to section 149 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. Under this duty the council has a statutory duty to appoint an officer/officers for dealing with stray dogs found in its area and this team also fulfils this role.

The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 also introduced additional duties for local authorities to provide an acceptance point for stray dogs outside of 'normal office hours' where practicable, a duty previously carried out by the police. Again, the enforcement team carry out this duty.

### **4. Contribution to corporate objectives (how does the proposal achieve or help deliver priorities within the Corporate Plan?)**

#### **Environment**

To reduce anti-social behaviour, crime and disorder

#### **Efficiency**

Champion and enhance the reputation of the council

#### **Tourism**

Provide high quality leisure, tourism, arts, sports and recreation facilities

The following table shows the estimated costs of the proposal as set out in paragraph 2 above including

all on-costs:

**Summary of revenue costs**

**£**

2022/23

41,329

**Any Other Information**

There has been positive customer feedback about the enforcement team, one example of which is set out below:

*I recently encountered two of your environmental officers and took the opportunity to report concerns about an increasing number of holes that have appeared on footpaths on the grassed area at Church Scar (between Ansdell Road North and Fairlawn Road). These are clearly created by dogs (paw prints evident), whose owners permit/encourage them to dig and enlarge the holes. These present a significant hazard to walkers who may be partially sighted or momentarily distracted, particularly in low light conditions. As the officers were currently at Granny's Bay, they immediately took the opportunity to inspect the holes and agreed with my concerns. The lead officer requested that I email him any photos that I had taken and advised that he would report concerns to the appropriate department. Within two days I received a text from Stephen Benson (the officer to whom I had reported my concerns) to advise that he had reported the matter to your Comms Team and was investigating how best to keep the pressure on to successfully resolve the matter. I therefore write to express my appreciation to the council for the proactive approach and prompt action taken by this officer, and to commend him to you. He is a credit to your organisation, and if he is representative of the commitment of your officers, to congratulate you on the calibre of your staff.*