

REPORT TO: Cabinet Member - Environmental

DATE: 30th June 2010

SUBJECT: **GRAFFITI REMOVAL PARTNERSHIP WITH VIRGIN MEDIA**

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

REPORT OF: J G Black
Operational Services Director

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**EXEMPT/
CONFIDENTIAL:** No

PURPOSE/SUMMARY:

To inform the Cabinet Member, Environmental of the arrangements agreed with Virgin Media to tackle anti-social graffiti on Virgin Media cabinets / boxes.

REASON WHY DECISION REQUIRED:

For information only.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Cabinet Member, Environmental notes the report and acknowledges the partnership arrangement with Virgin Media.

KEY DECISION:

FORWARD PLAN:

IMPLEMENTATION DATE:

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:

Do nothing or attempt to use enforcement powers.

IMPLICATIONS:**Budget/Policy Framework:****Financial:**

<u>CAPITAL EXPENDITURE</u>	2010 2011 £	2011 2012 £	2012/ 2013 £	2013/ 2014 £
Gross Increase in Capital Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton Capital Resources				
Specific Capital Resources				
<u>REVENUE IMPLICATIONS</u>				
Gross Increase in Revenue Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton funded Resources				
Funded from External Resources (Future Jobs Fund & Virgin Media)		113k		
Does the External Funding have an expiry date? Y/N	March 30 th 2011			
How will the service be funded post expiry?	Service will cease			

Legal:**Risk Assessment:****Asset Management:****CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN/VIEWS**

WNF external steering group / Merseyside Cleaner Greener Safer Partnership

CORPORATE OBJECTIVE MONITORING:

<u>Corporate Objective</u>		<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1	Creating a Learning Community		✓	
2	Creating Safe Communities		✓	
3	Jobs and Prosperity	✓		
4	Improving Health and Well-Being		✓	
5	Environmental Sustainability	✓		
6	Creating Inclusive Communities		✓	
7	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening local Democracy		✓	
8	Children and Young People		✓	

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS RELIED UPON IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT

Nil

Background

1. In 2008 the Merseyside Cleaner Greener Partnership (MSCG), comprising of the 5 Merseyside District Councils and Keep Britain Tidy Group, in determining programmes for the next 3 years (2008 to 2011) agreed to approach Virgin Media to seek to establish a 'Merseyside' wide arrangement / partnership over a fixed term of 2 or 3 years, to remove graffiti from or paint-over graffiti affecting Virgin Media cabinets / boxes in an effort to improve cleanliness as reported under NI 195 (c) 'graffiti' in each Council area.
2. A number of meetings were arranged and facilitated by Keep Britain Tidy with Virgin media representatives. However an MCSG/Virgin partnership arrangement stalled due to a lack of agreement regarding 'responsibility', 'payment per cabinet/box' and 'indemnity issue concerns'.
3. With the partnership effectively failing to reach any conclusion to these discussions, officers within the Operational Services Department decided to meet with Virgin Media directly to explore a 'partnership' with Sefton. The other Councils were informed of this decision, were invited to the initial meeting and have been informed of the outcome.
4. On 27 April 2010, following a final discussion with Virgin Media, the basis of a partnership arrangement was established between the Council and Virgin Media. This has subsequently been approved via a 'Chief Officers Report' and this report is to formally acknowledge the partnership arrangement.

Details of Partnership Arrangement with Virgin Media

5. The Council has agreed, with Virgin Media, to paint over graffiti affecting Virgin Media cabinets, at its discretion, up to a maximum of 600 cabinet visits per annum. This represents approximately 35% of the 1,590 Virgin Media cabinets in Sefton. The Council will ensure that the cabinet identification numbers remain legible and that the locks and hinges are not painted over.
6. Virgin Media will indemnify the Council against any damage to the cabinets, as a direct result of painting by the Council, as long as this is carried out with due care and attention.
7. Virgin Media will make a financial contribution of £5 per cabinet visit, up to a maximum of £3k during the period of the arrangement.
8. The paint is water based and requires no COSHH risk assessment. It is fast drying and opaque and requires only one coat to cover graffiti. Virgin Media will also be providing the paint at no cost to the Council.

9. The Council and Virgin Media have agreed to work together to tackle the root causes of graffiti by, for example, identifying and prosecuting graffiti vandals.
10. Virgin Media will also give future consideration to the application of an anti-defacement coating to a limited number of cabinets, which suffer from repeated graffiti vandalism in high profile areas, however this would be on a match-funded basis. If Virgin Media confirm, in future, that they are willing to pursue this proposal the Cleansing section will take a further report to the relevant Area Committee(s) to gauge whether they would be willing to contribute (match-fund) to such an arrangement, under this partnership approach, on an area by area basis. If subsequently agreed and established the Cleansing section of the Operational Services Department would act as the 'conduit' for delivery of this service.
11. Cleansing are using staff employed via the externally funded 'Future Jobs Fund' (FJF) to carry out activity associated with this partnership arrangement. This FJF initiative aims to help unemployed local residents, who have lost employment status for longer than 6 months, to be re-trained and re-skilled for entry into the local jobs market. This will involve a total of 18 persons being afforded an opportunity to be re-trained and re-skilled over a 12-month period, subject to continuation of external funding.
12. The partnership with Virgin Media is initially for 12 months, until 30th April 2011, and has an option for a one-year extension if both parties agree.
13. Work, under this partnership arrangement, has commenced in the south of the borough with activity in the north scheduled for September 2010 onwards.

Anticipated outcome of partnership with Virgin Media

14. The partnership arrangement with Virgin Media should make a positive contribution in relation to cleanliness surveys, undertaken to report against National Indicator 195 (c), on observations of 'graffiti' within Sefton's boundary
15. The partnership arrangement with Virgin Media may, if successful, form the basis for future partnership arrangements with other organizations, utility companies and/or private businesses.