

Report on	Dog Fouling across Mid Ulster Council District
Date of Meeting	8 th January 2018
Reporting Officer	Fiona McClements

Is this report restricted for confidential business? If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	Yes	
	No	X

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	The purpose of this report is to update Members on actions taken and proposed in response to recent complaints with regard to dog fouling in a number of areas across the district.
2.0	Background
2.1	Dog fouling is both unsightly and a nuisance. It is an offence to allow a dog to foul in a public place without removing the mess. Dog Owners observed allowing this to happen can receive a £50 Fixed Penalty in relation to this matter and a maximum fine of £500 for the subsequent non-payment of this.
2.2	Dog fouling can also generate a severe public health risk. Faeces can contain a harmful parasite called <i>Toxocara canis</i> , which is commonly known as roundworm. <i>Toxocara</i> live in the digestive tracts of dogs and is highly zoonotic which means it can be transmitted to humans with severe consequences.
2.3	Dog owners should clean up after their dog, and should always carry a poop scoop or a bag to carry the mess to a nearby bin. All waste bins in the Mid Ulster area can accept dog foul, and there is no need to use bins specifically designated for this purpose.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>Further to reports of dog fouling the Environmental Health Service has undertaken the following actions.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There has been leaflet drops in the areas identified as being particularly problematical. The leaflet warns dog owners about the issue of dog fouling and the potential fines that can be imposed for failing to remove dog foul. 2. Several signs are being erected in selected hotspot areas on a short-term basis. These feature 'watching eyes'. Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful piloted signs of this type in 2016. They reported a 46% reduction in areas where these were piloted. The posters build on the fact the dog fouling has become stigmatised. When people consequently feel like they are being watched, they are more likely to pick up the dog mess. While the effect is likely to be short lived, it reinforces the psychology that people know someone is paying attention. 3. The Enforcement Officers gave a 'Responsible Dog Ownership' talk to local primary schools part of which concentrates on dog fouling.

3.2	<p>4. There has been targeted monitoring of areas of concern on a rotational basis to determine the extent of the issue and to take Enforcement action against any members of the public allowing their dogs to foul, and failing to clear up the mess.</p> <p>5. The Environmental Health Service would encourage people who are concerned about such problems to contact the Enforcement Officers regarding these issues. The information required would include information such as what dogs or owners are thought to be a problem, and what times the problematical dog walking is taking place. Any information provided will help target resources and put in place proportionate monitoring.</p> <p>Dog fouling can be reported online via the 'Report It' section of the 'Binovation App', or at Environmentalhealth@midulstercouncil.org. Alternatively, the Enforcement Officers can be contacted via telephone at Tel: 030000 132 132.</p>
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	<p>Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications</p> <p>Financial: Purchase of 20 posters at a total approximate cost of £365.</p> <p>Human: Staff costs involved in the additional monitoring and leaflet distribution. There is also the inclusion of an extra school on the planned list of educational visits for the year.</p> <p>Risk Management: N/A</p>
4.2	<p>Screening & Impact Assessments</p> <p>Equality & Good Relations Implications: N/A</p> <p>Rural Needs Implications: N/A</p>
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	It is requested that Members endorse the response taken by the Environmental Health Service in dealing with the issue in question.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Appendix 1 – Dog Fouling leaflets to homes in fouling area.
6.2	Appendix 2 – 'Watching Eyes' signage.
6.3	Appendix 3 – Locations of the 'Watching Eyes' signage in pilot locations.
6.4	Appendix 4 – "Keeping an eye on it" – Final report