

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

DOON VALLEY LOCAL COMMITTEE – 9TH SEPTEMBER 2003

METHODS AND COSTS INVOLVED IN GRAFFITI REMOVAL

Report by the Director of Community Services

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To advise the Local Committee on the methods and costs involved in attempts to remove graffiti.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At the meeting of the Local Committee held on 3^d June 2003, it was agreed to request a report from the Department of Community Services on the methods and costs involved in attempts to remove graffiti.

- 2.2 The Cleansing DSO has not traditionally had a responsibility for graffiti removal, but expertise has been gained through sub-contracts for the cleaning of bus shelters and through funding via the Better Neighbourhood Services Schemes. This work complements the removal of graffiti undertaken by Homes and Technical Services as part of normal property maintenance.

- 2.3 Although funding has always been limited since the Council formed, it has been the policy of Community Services Department to remove all graffiti of an obscene, racist or sectarian nature as quickly as possible. Where such graffiti has appeared on private property, the proprietors have been asked to sign disclaimer notices for any alleged damage caused by removal operations.

It is generally accepted that the sooner graffiti is removed, the longer the period before additional graffiti might appear.

- 2.4 The award of additional monies via Quality of Life Funding means that some additional work can now be carried out in the Doon Valley area. The extra funding will provide for an additional 'hit squad' to deal with litter and fly-tipping problems, and also deal with any graffiti reported.
- 2.5 The methods of removal include pressure washing with or without chemicals and with or without sand depending on the nature of the paint or ink, and the surface stone or brickwork. In some cases, it is often cheaper and more effective to paint over in a suitable colour.

3. DISCUSSION

- 3.1 It has to be recognised that the resources available for dealing with graffiti are finite and every effort will therefore be made to remove graffiti as quickly as possible.
- 3.2 Health and Safety legislation means that the existing Cleansing teams cannot operate where scaffolding is required and this limits the effectiveness to an approximately height of three metres (given the fact that pressure washing involves a lance). In most cases, however, graffiti is accessible to the Cleansing teams.
- 3.3 The Council has no legal right or statutory responsibility for the removal of graffiti from private property, if however the proprietor is prepared to pay and also sign a form disclaiming the Council from any liability arising from the graffiti removal operations, then the work can be done and the charge recovered.
- 3.4 As part of the Scottish Executive proposals for dealing with anti-social behaviour, it is proposed to ban the sale of spray paint to under 16's.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Cleansing DSO undertakes this work on behalf of Client Departments via a Service Level Agreement setting out an hourly rate. This hourly rate, coupled with the cost of materials effectively defines the final charge. At present, the hourly rate is £20 plus VAT.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Health and Safety at Work etc Legislation.

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6. Nil

7. CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 Over the years the Cleansing Department has built up a Graffiti Removal Service which can be accessed by Client Departments as required.
- 7.2 The methods of removal include pressure washing with or without chemicals and with or without sand depending on the medium used to execute the graffiti and the receiving surface stone or brickwork. In some cases repainting in a suitable colour might be more effective than removing the graffiti.

7.3 The allocation of additional monies via Quality of Life Funding will allow a Hit Squad to be allocated to the Local Committee on a part-time basis to deal with litter, fly-tipping and graffiti removal.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 The Committee is invited to note the report.

William Stafford
Director of Community Services

JFC/KH

21st July 2003

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil.

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