

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE AND SPORT

TO:	HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS & LEISURE COMMITTEE		
DATE:	17 JULY 2013	AGENDA ITEM:	6
TITLE:	LOVE CLEAN READING - REPORTING OF ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES USING 'SMART PHONE' TECHNOLOGY		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR LIZ TERRY	PORTFOLIO:	NEIGHBOURHOODS
SERVICE:	ENVIRONMENT AND CONSUMER SERVICES	WARDS:	BOROUGH WIDE
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JOB TITLE:	STREET ENVIRONMENT MANAGER	E-MAIL:	Chris.Camfield@reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 A key Council priority is 'To keep Reading Clean with a crackdown on Fly Tipping and Graffiti'.
- 1.2 Last year Reading Borough Council announced a 6 month trial of a 'Love Clean Reading App' for the reporting of issues such as graffiti, fly-tipping, refuse and abandoned vehicles. It was requested that for the period of the trial only 'Streetcare' related issues would be reported by its users.
- 1.3 The 'Love Clean Streets App' is a web based application that is freely available to anyone; the 'Reading' version is based on this. Once installed on an appropriate smart phone the 'App' makes the reporting and management of environmental issues easier, quicker and, importantly, it provides the means for us to feedback to users the actions taken. It will also enable us to publicise and provide evidence of the successful actions and works carried out by the council to resolve problems and complaints.
- 1.4 Typically a user would take a photograph using the 'App' loaded on a mobile phone and send it. Once received by the council, the report is allocated to the appropriate teams for action and published on the Love Clean Reading website. Officers are able to update the website with details of the completed work (including a photo) or with a progress report. Reports can also be made via the Love Clean Reading website <http://loveclean.reading.gov.uk> or by text or MMS message.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

That the Committee:

- 2.1 Note the results of the 6 month trial; and
- 2.2 Consider the options set out in section 6 with a view to approve 6.3 for the continued use of the 'App', increase the number of appropriate reporting categories for use by other council services and promote the 'app' to the wider community.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 The Council's priority is to 'Keep Reading Clean with a crackdown on fly-tipping and graffiti'.

4. THE TRIAL

4.1 Following the trial, which we believe has been a huge success, there are 127 registered users of the 'App' who have made over 500 reports. The cost to make these reports into the Contact Centre would have been £6000. It is also clear that response times for some of the more basic reports made during the trial have been reduced from an average of 3 days to an average of 1 day.

4.2 The information received through the trial has highlighted issues that affect residents the most. The table below indicates the top 3 issues.

Reporting Category	No of Reports
1. Fly Tipping or rubbish on road	138
2. Graffiti - non offensive	113
3. Dog fouling	50

4.3 The information has highlighted Wards where issues are more prevalent. The table below shows the number of those reports made from the top 3 issues within each ward:

WARD	No OF REPORTS
Abbey Ward	50
Battle Ward	78
Caversham Ward	14
Church Ward	7
Katesgrove Ward	27
Kentwood Ward	5
Mapledurham Ward	6
Minster Ward	13
Norcot Ward	25
Park Ward	19
Peppard Ward	2
Redlands Ward	23
Southcote Ward	6
Thames Ward	5
Tilehurst Ward	8
Whitley Ward	13
Grand Total	301

4.4 Using the information from these tables it would be possible for services to target key areas where there are high numbers of similar reports being made. This information could be used to encourage cross service working with a view to utilising resources for specific campaigns as well as the monitoring of the key issues being reported.

4.5 Additional information about the trial, what the 'Love Clean Reading App' is and how it works is attached in Appendix 1.

5. MAIN ISSUES HIGHLIGHTED DURING THE TRIAL

- 5.1 The 'App' is generally very easy to use. However those using their own smartphones (the majority) found it easier and quicker to use than those using RBC Blackberry devices because they did not have to enter a 7 character password before accessing the 'App'. Following the outcome of the pilot we will work with Corporate ICT to see if we can extend the range of RBC devices or find a solution which makes this easier.
- 5.2 It has been noted that 'users' expectations have increased when reporting issues via the 'App' with regards to response times. Whilst we work within current service standards we are looking to tailor the message that users receive after submitting a report to manage their expectations.

6. OPTIONS TO CONSIDER

- 6.1 Stop using the 'Love Clean Reading App'.
- 6.2 Carry on using the 'Love Clean Reading App' in its current format until its licence expires in 2015.
- 6.3 Carry on using the 'Love Clean Reading App' and increase the number of reporting categories to include other appropriate council services such as Highways, Drainage, Parks, Building Cleaning and Housing as well as promote its use including via the Reading Borough Council web site.

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 7.1 The 'Love Clean Streets App' is available to download and is free of charge to anyone with a suitable device. A 'Smart Phone' is not needed to make use of the services but access to the internet/email on a normal PC is required along with use of a digital camera if the user wishes to submit a photograph.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The principal environmental legislation enforced by the Council is the Environmental Protection Act 1990; other relevant provisions are in the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, and the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005. There are also provisions in the Highways Act 1980 and the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The Localism Act 2011 gave Councils additional powers relating to flyposting and graffiti.
- 8.2 Section 33 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 contains offences relating to waste and flytipping, while section 34 imposes a duty of care on those keeping, transferring or disposing of waste. Sections 46 and 47 contain provisions relating to waste receptacles (domestic and commercial); sections 86 to 98 contain provisions relating to litter. The Council has adopted Schedule 4 of the Act which contains powers to deal with abandoned trolleys.
- 8.3 The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 contains provisions allowing fixed penalty notices to be given for offences such as graffiti (under the Highways Act 1980) or fly-posting (Town and Country Planning Act 1990).
- 8.4 The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 contains powers to deal with abandoned vehicles.

- 8.5 The Council has made a Dog Control Order under provisions in the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005, which allows fixed penalty notices to be given for dog fouling offences.
- 8.6 Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 provides for notice to be served where the condition of land is detrimental to the amenity of an area, requiring the owner of the land to remedy the condition e.g. by removing rubbish, clearing overgrown vegetation etc.
- 8.7 The Council has a statutory duty under section 89 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to keep certain land such as highways clear of litter and refuse. Section 87 of the Act creates the offence of leaving litter, for which a fixed penalty notice may be given under section 88. Litter Clearing Notices under section 92A may be served requiring land owners to clear their land of litter, and Street Litter Control Notices may be served where there is recurrent defacement by litter on the street or adjacent land, which arises from certain types of premises.
- 8.8 Some of the above legislation contains powers for the Council to take action and recover its costs from those responsible; for instance the Localism Act 2011 amended the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, introducing powers to serve notices requiring occupiers of premises to remove graffiti. Where the graffiti is not removed the Council may remove it itself and recover its costs from the occupier; the Council may also remove graffiti on request and recover its expenses from the owner or occupier making the request.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The financial implications arising from the proposals are set out below:-

Revenue Implications

	2013/14 £000	2014/15 £000	2015/16 £000
'Love Clean Streets App' personalised to RBC Annual Cost.	7.5	7.5	7.5
Expenditure	7.5	7.5	7.5

Equality Impact Assessment Report		
Name of Directorate and Service <i>ENCAS - Street Environment</i>		
Name of function/policy and scope <i>Results of the 6 month trial for the 'Love Clean Reading App'.</i>	Date July 2013	
Summary		
<i>The introduction of a suitable branded 'App' would allow residents, businesses and partners to swiftly report local issues to the council using modern technology. It would also give Officers and local groups the ability to publicise the good work that has been carried out.</i>		
Background		
<i>Smart Phones and 'Apps' are now considered to be a part of everyday life. There are now over 500,000 apps available to down load and businesses worldwide are taking advantage of the technology to engage with their customers. Councillors have asked Streetcare to trial and look at the feasibility of adopting this type of technology.</i>		
Methodology & Sources of Data		
<i>Streetcare have met with representatives from Lewisham Council, other local authorities using the 'App' and have also carried out a trial of the 'Love Clean Streets App'.</i> <i>A small trial of the 'fix my street App' has been carried out on a personal mobile phone as the 'App' is not available for the Blackberry device.</i>		
Key Findings and conclusions		
<i>The introduction of a 'branded App' increases the number of ways that customers can contact the Council.</i> <i>The use of the 'App' allows customers who would not normally contact the council by email or telephone to report issues affecting their local area.</i> <i>Reporters are kept informed of progress through automatic notifications via email, text messages and device notifications.</i> <i>Having an additional tool for residents, customers, visitors, partners and staff to report issues efficiently allows the Council to respond more quickly and also to promote the good work that the council carries out.</i>		
Recommendations and Action Plan		
Recommendations	Key Activity	Progress Milestone
<i>Continue to use the Love Clean Reading App and increase the number of appropriate reporting categories as well as promote its use.</i>	<i>To ensure that the agreed chosen option meets the needs of the Council and its users.</i>	<i>Increase of the number of reporting categories.</i>

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE LOVE CLEAN READING TRIAL AND LOVE CLEAN READING APP

What is Love Clean Streets?

'Love Clean Streets' is a web based reporting tool used primarily for reporting environmental issues such as fly tipping, graffiti, abandoned vehicles, contaminated bins etc by members of the public, staff and partners.

The 'Love Clean Streets Apps' are available for iPhone, Android, Blackberry, and Windows Phone and are freely available from 'App stores'. Citizens can download them for free and begin sending reports straight away. The emphasis is on simplicity—anyone can use them!

Typically a user would take a photograph using the 'App' loaded on a mobile phone and send it. It will then be received by the council and allocated to the appropriate teams for action. The facility also allows the council to upload a photo and information of the completed works onto the web site which can be viewed by all.

The person who made the report also receives an update informing them that the work has been completed.

Issues can also be reported via the Love Clean Streets website or by text or MMS message.

The trial

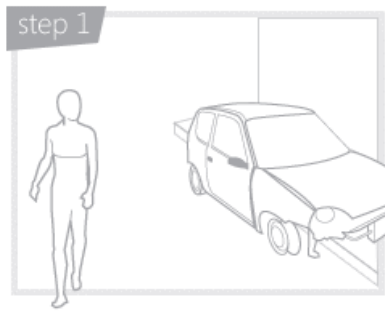
The trial of a Reading 'branded app', Love Clean Reading, was carried out by Councillors and selected Streetcare staff.

The reports came into the Streetcare office, were issued to the appropriate team and then published on the Love Clean Reading branded website. When the work request was carried out another photo showing the completed works was taken and the back office staff updated the record on the website. Occasionally an update / progress report was made for complex issues or where a third party was responsible.

As the website is accessible to everyone it is easy for staff and the public to monitor the progress of any reports made and see the resulting action taken by the Council. This system has enabled Streetcare to show-case the good work they carry out, which often goes unseen by the public. The 'App' also enables the public to upload images of areas or incidents they have cleared or cleaned themselves promoting social responsibility and community spirit. The 'App' has enabled staff to target workloads more effectively with the public as well as staff becoming our eyes on the ground.

It takes approximately 40 seconds to open the app, take the photograph, categorise the issue and submit the app.

Easy Guide



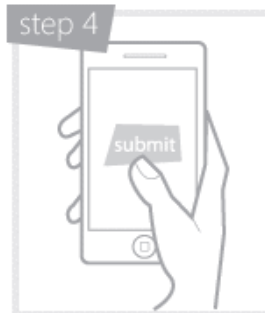
1. See a problem



2. Open the 'Love Clean Reading App'



3. Take a picture, your location is automatically detected



4. Enter some basic information and post the report - in 40 seconds!