

<b>Report To:</b>	SCRUTINY PANEL B	<b>Date:</b>	19 JULY 2017
<b>Heading:</b>	INTRODUCTION TO PEST CONTROL		
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	ENVIRONMENT		
<b>Ward/s:</b>	ALL		
<b>Key Decision:</b>	NO		
<b>Subject To Call-In:</b>	NO		

### **Purpose Of Report**

Pest Control, with a particular focus on street vermin (rats) was added to the Scrutiny workplan 2017/18 following consultation. Members were interested in the type of service the Council provides, environmental impact and what preventative methods we use to reduce the amount of street vermin in the district.

This report provides an overview of the service, national picture and sets identifies the main information required to develop a clear terms of reference for discussion. In addition, the Environmental Health Manager will also be in attendance to provide further information, assist the Panel with their discussion and answer any questions.

### **Recommendation(s)**

Members of the Panel are asked to;

- Consider the information contained in this report
- Provide views and comments in relation to the topic
- Consider any areas for further development / improvement

### **Reasons For Recommendation(s)**

The topic was added to the Overview and Scrutiny Workplan in June 2017 to consider how the service operates, scale of the issue and what the Council does to improve environmental health in relation to street vermin.

## **Alternative Options Considered (With Reasons Why Not Adopted)**

This is the first meeting of the Panel considering this topic. Any options or considerations put forward at the meeting will be reported back in due course.

Scrutiny can put forward recommendations to Cabinet on any topic that it considers. Any recommendations submitted will be supported with sufficient reasoning to allow Cabinet Members to give full consideration to all options outlined.

## **Detailed Information**

This topic was placed onto the Scrutiny workplan to gain a more detailed understanding of the services provided by Pest Control, consideration of whether there is an increase in the reporting of street vermin and whether there are any improvements that could be made. To assist the Panel on this Topic, the Environmental Health Manager from Environmental Health will also be in attendance.

## **National Picture**

In 2017, the British Pest Control Association reported that rat numbers have increased to an estimated 200 million, from 160 million in 2014, with many now becoming increasingly resistant to poison and losing their fear of humans.

This is increasingly becoming an issue due to rats carrying diseases including Leptospirosis, Salmonella, Listeria, Toxoplasma gondii and Hantavirus – all of which can be fatal.

The Black Rat (*Rattus Rattus*) and the Brown Rat (*Rattus Norvegicus*) are the two main types of rats that cause concern to the public. They are common pests in both private and home businesses.

According to the BPCA National Survey 2016, Rats have continued to be the most popular pest call-out for UK Local Authorities to receive over the past six years. Overall, there were 186,192 rat call-outs across the UK LAs operating a pest control service (247 out of 325) for the 2015/16 financial period, accounting for 46% of total UK pest call-outs.

## **Reasons for Increased Rat Populations**

Primarily, the presence of rats is linked to poor and degraded environments. The English House Conditions Survey 1996 found a high correlation between widespread litter, vandalism, unkempt gardens and neglected and vacant buildings, and rat infestations. Neglected and derelict properties may allow rats to escape from sewers to the surface from dried out U-bends or broken drainage fittings and high density of housing properties can also be a factor.

Rats flourish where there is rubbish as this provides both refuge and food. Any increase in litter and fly tipping create perfect habitats for rats to live and breed, as does rubbish left in gardens.

Keep Britain Tidy reported recently that the rat problem has become more acute in recent years, coming in tandem with increased binge drinking which has led to countless takeaways being eaten and containers and leftover food dumped in the street.

They further added that fast food was not the only reason, It explained that although some people might believe dropping biodegradable fruit peelings was acceptable, that also encouraged vermin.

The group said this kind of litter often gets dropped on pavements at lunchtime, with the food breaking down into a mushy meal for rats.

## **Pest Control – Ashfield District Council**

Ashfield District Council offer a comprehensive, discreet and professional commercial Pest Prevention and Control Service and is “Which? Trusted Trader” endorsed, ensuring services are effective, safe with high levels of customer satisfaction. They offer a rapid response and can often visit within 24 hours.

This service is provided on a commercial basis to both residential and businesses, offering one off treatments, annual contracts or other service levels to meet individual needs. This includes;

- a thorough inspection of the affected property
- A consultation
- Creation of a plan which will minimise the potential for pests and the factors associated with them.

Current charges for rat or mice control are £60.00 for three visits. Where required, additional visits £18.00.

## **Customer satisfaction / needs**

The Environmental Health Section uses a number of customer satisfaction survey methods to enable its customers to rate the service. Gauging customer satisfaction allows the Council to identify customer needs, wants and expectations whilst providing a consistent mechanism to highlight customer satisfaction levels.

The Council’s Commercial Team currently collects customer feedback and satisfaction through paper questionnaires provided to pest control customers on completion of their treatment and with food hygiene inspection letters.

## **Next Steps**

To consider this issue effectively, Members are asked to identify the following to outline a clear terms of reference;

- Particular concerns / queries
- Potential outcomes / recommendations and added value
- Feedback from constituents (if any)
- Potential expert witnesses (if any)
- Any further information

As discussed in this briefing report, the Environmental Health Manager will be in attendance to assist Members with their discussion and questions.

## **Implications**

### **Corporate Plan:**

Communities and Environment - Ensure the foundations for a good quality of life are in place; reducing crime and anti-social behaviour and facilitating cleaner and more attractive neighbourhoods.

### **Legal:**

No Legal implications are identified arising from this report

### **Finance:**

Pest control is a commercially operated service. There are no financial implications arising from this report, Finance will be consulted fully should there be any financial implications raised during this review.

<b>Budget Area</b>	<b>Implication</b>
General Fund – Revenue Budget	N/A
General Fund – Capital Programme	N/A
Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Budget	N/A
Housing Revenue Account – Capital Programme	N/A

### **Human Resources / Equality and Diversity:**

There are no Human Resources / Equality implications arising from this report.

### **Other Implications:**

None

### **Background Papers**

Scrutiny Workplan 2017/18  
British Pest Control Association National Survey 2016

### **Report Author and Contact Officer**

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