

**CHEWING GUM LITTER REDUCTION TRIAL
(Report by the Head of Operations)**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Members with information about the trial of Gum Targets in Huntingdon and St Ives from August 2007 to August 2008. Advise Members of the continuation of the scheme in Huntingdon and St Ives and of an extension of the scheme to include St Neots.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A Gum Target is a specialist disposal device for chewing gum that fixes to posts, walls or railing. The front of the Gum Target is covered with a printed removable Gum Sheet on which the chewer deposits used gum. The Gum Sheets carry a campaign message that is changed regularly to maintain the interest and motivate the user to dispose responsibly. Unlike a bin that offers no real incentive, the Gum Target provides a topical, fun and involving way to dispose of used gum.
- 2.2 Chewing gum litter has been steadily increasing for a number of years but has seen more rapid growth recently due to the smoking ban and increased competition in the market. The Council currently spends £17,000 a year in removing gum from pavements in town centres to help maintain a clean and pleasant environment. The Council was keen to find ways to prevent the large build up of chewing gum on the streets and to help reduce the need for so much cleaning up of gum.
- 2.3 Gum Targets are provided by a company called Meteora Limited who has been assisting councils in the fight against the chewing gum for over 5 years.
- 2.4 The Council ran a trial of gum targets in Huntingdon and St Ives from August 2007 to August 2008. Fifteen Gum Targets were installed in each town. In Huntingdon, Church Manor Estates paid for a further five Gum Targets to cover the Chequers Court complex which they own and manage. The Gum Targets were located in gum hotspots in the main streets in the town centres, in particular near food outlets, pubs and night clubs.

3. EVALUATION OF THE TRIAL

3.1 The Gum Targets trial was evaluated in the following ways:

3.2 **The number of times the gum sheets needed to be changed by the Council's street cleansing team and how much gum was on them.**

This showed that Gum Sheets generally have to be changed twice a week and are usually covered in at least 10 pieces of gum. This means over a year approx 72,000 pieces of gum are being collected on the sheets which may otherwise have been dropped or trodden into the pavements.

3.3 **Anecdotal feedback from the street cleansing teams in the town centres.**

Reported they have less chewing gum to pick up from the pavements.

3.4 **Information from the cleaning company the Council employs to deep cleanse the pavements and remove gum.**

They reported that it took them less time to clean the pavements in Huntingdon and St Ives since the Gum Targets have been installed due to there being less gum on the street. Each piece of gum trodden into the pavement has to be removed by a special high pressure washing process.

3.5 **Feedback from the Town Centre Partnership.**

This has been very positive with the Town Centre Manager in Huntingdon reporting that some shops have mentioned that they now get less gum trodden in to their flooring.

3.6 **Feedback from the public.**

The Council has received many positive comments about the gum targets, including young people saying that the Gum Targets are "really cool" and they would like them in their school

4. CONCLUSION


4.1 On the basis of the evaluation, the trial has been a success. It is proposed that the Gum Targets in Huntingdon and St Ives remain and a further 15 Gum Targets are installed in St Neots town centre in appropriate locations. Gum Targets may also be installed in other gum hot spots around the district. The cost of the additional gum targets will be met from existing resources.

5. RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 That Members note the success of the Gum Target trial and the continuation and further extension of the scheme in the future.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

None.

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