

## Agenda No 6

### ***AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET***

<b>Report Title:</b>	Review of Graffiti
<b>Name of Committee:</b>	Scrutiny Committee
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	18 July 2022
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Tom Kittendorf Chief Officer - Leisure and Wellbeing 01788 533749 or tom.kittendorf@rugby.gov.uk
<b>Summary:</b>	The Committee is asked to consider the Task Group's conclusions and findings as presented in the review report attached at Appendix 1.
<b>Financial Implications:</b>	There are no immediate financial implications arising from this report.
<b>Risk Management/Health and Safety Implications:</b>	There are no immediate risk management implications arising from this report.
<b>Environmental Implications:</b>	There are no immediate environmental implications arising from this report.
<b>Legal Implications:</b>	There are no immediate legal implications arising from this report.
<b>Equality and Diversity:</b>	There are no immediate equality and diversity implications arising from this report.

**Scrutiny Committee - 18 July 2022**

**Review of Graffiti**

**Report of the Chair of the Graffiti Task Group**

**Summary**

The Committee is asked to consider the Task Group's conclusions and findings as presented in the review report attached at Appendix 1.

**1. BACKGROUND**

On 22 September 2021, Full Council resolved to establish a task and finish group to investigate solutions and seek out extra funds for arts projects in the Borough of Rugby.

The review one-page strategy was agreed by Scrutiny Committee on 22 November 2021. A task group was appointed and began its work in February 2022.

**2. REVIEW REPORT**

Due to Member availability, the Task Group was not able to hold its final meeting but in the interests of bringing this piece of scrutiny work to a timely conclusion, the Task Group is submitting its draft final report to the Committee.

The review report has been prepared and circulated by email to members of the Task Group and officers involved in the review for comment. The Chair of the Task Group will provide the Committee with any further comments received on the content at the meeting.

**3. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Task Group completed its work in July 2022. The review report is attached at Appendix 1 for consideration.

An update on the progress of the Task Group's recommendations will be presented to the Scrutiny Committee in 12 months' time.

The Committee is asked to consider the review report and recommendations and approve its submission to Cabinet.

**Name of Meeting:** Scrutiny Committee

**Date of Meeting:** 18 July 2022

**Subject Matter:** Review of Graffiti

**Originating Department:** Leisure and Wellbeing

**DO ANY BACKGROUND PAPERS APPLY**  **YES**  **NO**

**LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

<b>Doc No</b>	<b>Title of Document and Hyperlink</b>
1	Graffiti Task Group 3 February 2022 <a href="https://www.rugby.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/1257/graffiti_task_group">https://www.rugby.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/1257/graffiti_task_group</a>
2	Graffiti Task Group 7 April 2022 <a href="https://www.rugby.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/1311/graffiti_task_group">https://www.rugby.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/1311/graffiti_task_group</a>
3	Graffiti Task Group 12 July 2022 <a href="https://www.rugby.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/1324/graffiti_task_group">https://www.rugby.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/1324/graffiti_task_group</a>



# REVIEW OF GRAFFITI



JULY 2022

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## TASK GROUP MEMBERSHIP

The Task Group consisted of the following members:

Councillor **Wayne Rabin** (Chair)  
Councillor **Tim Douglas**  
Councillor **Ramesh Srivastava**

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Task Group would like to thank the following officers who have supported them throughout the review process:

- Tom Kittendorf (Chief Officer – Leisure and Wellbeing)
- David Burrows (Chief Officer – Regulation and Safety)
- Henry Biddington (Environmental Health and Community Safety Manager)
- Democratic Services

## **CHAIR'S FOREWORD**

After bringing the notice of motion to Full Council for consideration I welcomed the consensus and the subsequent agreed actions to discuss practical actions for the challenges that graffiti presents to our Rugby communities. In this review I believe that we have found some real solutions, by providing proactive and effective enforcement action, by introducing support for empowering communities and by creating opportunities for collaborative art projects.

Focusing upon three key priorities, prevention, support and replacement; our task group we were able to produce a clear direction and form some specific recommendations. One challenge that is common to all Local Authorities is the issue of land responsibility and effective, efficient collaboration with other owners of public structures. Making progress in this area alone will lead to significant progress in maintaining cleaner environments for our residents.

By implementing the recommendations in this review, we have the opportunity to make lasting improvements through the provision of relevant public information, through practical collaborative processes with third parties, and through proactive involvement with community groups to create new sources of community pride.

I thank task group members for their contributions and our officers for their support.

Now we have to turn these recommendations into action.

**Councillor Wayne D J Rabin**  
**Chair**

## 1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Group proposes the following recommendations to Cabinet:

1.	<p>Begin public consultation for the installation of new graffiti walls:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whitehall Recreation Ground</li> <li>• Hollowell Way Play Area</li> </ul>
2.	<p>Submission of funding applications for the purpose of an overarching project called 'Street Art Rugby':</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whitehall Recreation Ground – skatepark mural</li> <li>• Hillmorton Recreation Ground – skatepark mural</li> <li>• Installation of graffiti walls as above</li> <li>• Invite communities to suggest graffiti hotspot areas for the creation of community art</li> </ul>
3.	<p>Publication of graffiti information support and subsequent update of the Council website subject to approval of content by relevant officers and advice.</p>
4.	<p>Consider establishing a paid graffiti removal service to residents private landowners and businesses while potentially generating an income for the Council was subject to resources available.</p>

### 1.1 Alignment with the Corporate Strategy

The review relates to the following corporate priorities:

#### **HEALTH AND COMMUNITIES**

Make sure that residents are proud of their community and their borough.



## 2. OBJECTIVES

### 2.1 Background

On 22 September 2021, Full Council considered a notice of motion on the topic of graffiti and resolved to establish a cross party task and finish group. The broad aim of the Task Group was to investigate solutions and explore funding opportunities aimed at reducing incidents of graffiti. To achieve outcomes set out in the one-page strategy, it was key to work in partnership with the Arts Council and others to produce an action plan with short, medium and long-term goals.

The one-page strategy for this review was agreed by Scrutiny Committee on 22 November 2021. A task group was appointed and began its work in February 2022.

### 2.2 The one-page strategy

The 'one-page strategy' is the name given to the scoping document for the review. It defines the task and the improvements being aimed for and how these are going to be achieved. The review's one-page strategy is as follows:

#### **What is the broad topic area?**

To investigate solutions and explore funding opportunities aimed at reducing incidents of graffiti.

#### **What is the specific topic area?**

To review the direct and indirect costs of graffiti and the impact on Council resources. Consider ways of reducing the level of unwelcome graffiti by looking at the data and information available and exploring possible solutions. The review will help identify the Council's role for graffiti removal and what preventative measures could be utilised, what part volunteer services, the community and external organisations can play in the reporting or removal of graffiti. What enforcement action or volunteer, art-led or community solutions exist?

#### **What should be considered?**

Financial aspects including cost of graffiti removal to the Council.

The impact on Council resources?

To assess the environmental and social impacts.

To identify arts-led funding or solutions.

Benchmark the current service provision. What enforcement activity takes place?

What preventative steps and proactive measures can be taken.

Clarification of the legal powers that exist.

What intelligence of the problem exists, including any data on the type and scale of graffiti?

How graffiti is reported and what the Council's role in removal is.

Definition of graffiti – art vs vandalism.

Examples of best practice, to compare the Council's policies with other similar local authorities, Police or community schemes.

The distinction between public and private land and the ability to signpost residents and businesses to agencies for support.

#### **Who shall we consult?**

To engage the wider public as a whole.

**How long should it take?**

The suggested timeline is four meetings:

- 1) Background and agree a programme of steps
- 2) Evidence gathering
- 3) Identify potential funding sources and solutions
- 4) Next steps, action planning and review recommendations.

**What will be the outcome?**

Recommendations that will result in the reduction of the level of unwelcome graffiti and the associated costs of removal.

Improvement to the local street scene and make affected areas more attractive.  
Service improvements for the reporting and removal of graffiti.

Successfully engage and involve young people previously involved in graffiti tagging reducing anti-social behaviour.

Contribute to developing local identity and generating community pride.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Overview

The Task Group met three times between February 2022 and July 2022.

Firstly, the Task Group received an introductory briefing to set the scene and agreed three areas of focus:

- Prevention (gang culture, tagging, intelligence, engagement and support)
- Replacement (collaborative, constructive activities to create welcomed and locally relevant art that develops local identity and generates community pride)
- Support (support and advice for communities wishing to tackle tagging, collaboration with third parties whose property is affected such as BT's green cabinets)

Secondly, the Task Group identified a gap in supporting information available on the council's website on reporting of graffiti, graffiti removal, distinction between public and private land, prosecution, etc. The content for an information webpage was drafted by Councillor Douglas, agreed by the Task Group and officers and would be further developed by the Communications Team.

Throughout the review, the Task Group was presented with the following additional information:

- graffiti cleaning costs (Works Services Unit)
- commercial cleaning costs
- examples of legal graffiti
- solutions for preventing graffiti
- incidents of graffiti reported to the council in 2021 and 2022
- examples of improvements to local street scenes
- potential project funding sources

### 3.2 Access to evidence

The task group review papers are available online at <https://www.rugby.gov.uk/meetings> in the section '*agendas, reports and minutes*', and can be found by selecting *Graffiti Task Group*.

## 4. FINDINGS

### 4.1 Introduction

“Graffiti is a type of art genre that means writing or drawings made on a wall or other surface, usually without permission and within public view.”

In England and Wales, graffiti is considered an act of criminal damage under the Criminal Damage Act 1971 and offenders can be punished with a prison sentence of up to ten years or fined if the damage costs more than £5,000. Offenders can also be punished under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, giving councils the authority to issue on the spot fines of £50 to anyone caught doing graffiti on public property.

Unwanted graffiti on walls or buildings can look unsightly and lower the value of properties and neighbourhoods. The difficulty with removing graffiti rests in how easy it is to damage the surface of a building or wall trying to remove it. Due to this, it is considered best to use professional services to remove graffiti where reported.

It is estimated that graffiti costs the UK over £1 billion per year to clean up.

### 4.2 Scene Setting for the Review of Graffiti

#### 4.2.1 Reported Graffiti in Rugby

Graffiti can be reported to the Council through the ‘Report a Problem’ online form on the Borough Council website and direct to the Community Wardens on 0800 096 8800.

Community Wardens who discover graffiti whilst on patrol will report incidents to Works Services Unit to add to the monthly job sheets for removal.

The Safer Neighbourhood Team also report graffiti to the Borough Council and liaise with Community Safety Wardens and Works Services Unit, gathering locations and potential gang tagging.

In the 2021, 90 incidents of graffiti were reported to Rugby Borough Council. This is an increase on previous years of 52 reports in 2018, 63 reports in 2019 and 75 incidents reported in 2020. Common locations of graffiti included playground equipment, green utility boxes, bus stops and litterbins.

Examples of graffiti reported:



Graffiti primarily occurred on public buildings, public spaces and corporate locations. Some towns and cities were replacing tagging and unwelcomed graffiti with informative graphics.

The Borough Council's process for dealing with graffiti was to identify and remove graffiti by instructing the owner if private land or Works Service Unit if Council-owned land.

#### 4.2.2 Most Popular Areas for Graffiti

The most popular areas for graffiti were green telecoms cabinets, bus shelters, traffic lights, traffic signal boxes and other street furniture. These areas were not the Borough Council's responsibility. The solution to issues around land responsibility was collaboration with third parties.

#### 4.2.3 Graffiti Cleaning – Works Services Unit

Works Services Unit have a responsibility for removal of graffiti for the Borough Council.

Projections for 'actual costs' of removing graffiti for a one-hour job

Itemised Expense	Cost
2 x staff + vehicle and jetter	£84.70 per hour
Material used i.e. paint, chemicals and detergents	£15

#### 4.2.4 Private Landowners

The Borough Council's policy on graffiti incidents on private land was informed by legislation. A key objective under the Council's Corporate Strategy was to work with communities and try to find solutions. Graffiti removal by the council was not a service currently offered to private landowners but could be explored subject to resources.

#### 4.2.5 Commercial Cleaning

Various options can be used to clean graffiti depending on the location and surface.

Commercial costs from external sources

Graffiti Removal Method	Estimated Cost	Time Required
Chemical Cleaning	£15 - £20 per square metre	1 hour per square metre
Steam Cleaning	£15 - £20 per square metre	1 to 2 hours per square metre
Sandblasting	£20 - £25 per square metre	1 to 2 hours per square metre
Anti-Graffiti Coating	£15 - £20 per square metre	1 hour per square metre

#### 4.2.6 Legal Graffiti

In United Kingdom there were examples of 155 legal graffiti walls that can be located at [www.legal-walls.net](http://www.legal-walls.net)

#### 4.2.7 Broken Window Theory

The Broken Window Theory stated that visible signs of crime and anti-social behaviour created an environment that encouraged further crime and disorder. If an area was improved, the less signs of disorder such as broken windows, graffiti and litter would be seen.

## **4.2.8 Graffiti Solutions**

Solutions posed for preventing graffiti include:

- Building lighting
- Anti-graffiti laminate coatings
- Landscaping – thorny bushes, etc
- Multi-coloured designs
- Security cameras
- Awareness campaigns
- Local watch groups for reporting and engaging local communities

## **4.3 Community Involvement**

### **4.3.1 Encouraging Example of Street Art in Rugby – Icarus and The Mermaid**

The iconic mural, created by Helga Windle, positioned on a pedestrian tunnel in Brownsover has remained untouched by graffiti and vandalism since its installation in 1995. In contrast, the other side of the tunnel, had been repeatedly covered by graffiti and cleaned.

In conclusion, the involvement and engagement of local communities, schools, colleges and others in street art such as the mural would encourage pride and respect for the artwork created. Opportunities with the Borough of Rugby might exist to create new murals.

### **4.3.2 Enabling Local Communities**

Similarly to litter picking groups, some communities might wish to take charge and deal with unwelcomed graffiti directly.

There was no fundamental reason why communities could not take charge with owner's agreement that could be obtained from the Borough Council. While there were practical issues of who would supply the paint, risk assessments, health and safety checks, these should not be a barrier. As the Council had limited resources, enabling local communities to act would be beneficial and the possibility of this happening should not be excluded.

Ward Councillors could be involved to act as community leaders.

### **4.3.3 Other Areas of Community Involvement**

Other areas of community involvement could include the Rugby Art Gallery and Museum with exhibitions on street, or with third parties such as Rugby College and the Arts Council.

## 4.4 Improvements to Local Street Scene – Opportunities within Rugby

### 4.4.1 Great Central Way

A recent project with the Rotary Club had seen the completion of large-scale murals on the Great Central (South) on railway bridges that had suffered from significant graffiti.

Thanks to the Rotary Club for their organisation and funding efforts to complete significant improvements to the popular walking route in the borough.

<https://rugbyobserver.co.uk/news/murals-depicting-rugbys-heritage-add-finishing-touch-to-transformation-of-nature-trail/>



#### 4.4.2 Legal Graffiti Walls in Rugby

Rugby Borough Council installed legal graffiti walls following community consultation for the refurbishment of Buchanan Road Park (Overlade Ward) in 2011 and subsequently repainted in 2015 to allow for fresh artwork to be produced.



These legal graffiti walls give opportunities for street art to be practiced without the fear of immediate removal except for obscene language or images.

Following discussion with the Green Space Officer, it has been identified that further potential locations could include:

- Whitehall Recreation Ground Skate Park
- Hollowell Way Skate Park
- Hillmorton Recreation Ground Skate Park
- Toilet blocks in open spaces (due to RBC ownership)
- Sports pavilion external walls in open spaces (due to RBC ownership)
- Underpass structures (would require WCC approval)

Large scale projects could be undertaken using Rugby Borough Council facilities particularly skate parks that are high volume areas for general graffiti, tagging and offensive graffiti.



There were a number of toilet blocks/service blocks in a number of play areas that would present “brick canvases” for murals if supported as an acceptable use.

In addition to current facilities, there was scope for the further installation of legal graffiti walls in parks and open spaces. It was suggested that this is subject to community consultation within each surrounding locality to both get community support and engage with those who may be contributing to illegal graffiti and tagging.

#### **4.4.3 120 Years of GE Energy**

In 2022, GE Energy were celebrating 120 years of existence in Rugby. To mark the occasion, GE Energy were investigating the possibility to use a large wall close to the Edison Place Play Area on Technology Drive to involve the local community in creating a montage of 120 years of GE Energy as a backdrop to the play area.

#### **4.4.4 Crowthorns, Newbold and Brownsover Ward**

Councillor Rabin held conversations with Mr James Bennett, an art teacher, and Reel People, a community arts group from Nuneaton, to refresh an area of Crowthorns in the Newbold and Brownsover Ward. This piece of work could serve as a future example of locally relevant art supported by the local community. A community mural created in 1995 has served to prevent incidents of graffiti and an example of the positive outcomes that can be achieved with the involvement of the community in the creation of art. The mural has remained untouched and has since become the subject of community pride.

#### **4.4.5 Celebratory Occasions as Themed Art**

The Queen’s Platinum Jubilee celebrations presented an opportunity for community engagement in creating long-lasting pieces of art beyond 2022.

The Whitehall Recreation Ground was a well-known hot spot for graffiti and was put forward as a suitable location to create and fund a project. The skate park was identified as a possible location for street art. Engagement with users of this facility was required to ascertain how naturally street art would fit with the skate park.

The existing plan of work for the Whitehall Recreation ground included the bandstand restoration, a plaque to acknowledge that the bandstand was refurbished in the jubilee year, and a footpath.

In 2023, the game of rugby will celebrate its 200th birthday. An important occasion for the Town of Rugby, the bicentenary will present an opportunity for community engagement and community art to mark the celebrations.

#### **4.4.6 Costs and Project Management**

Costs for community projects, artists heavily discounted their work. Fund could be secured through funding streams available or by community fundraising.

In terms of project management, the Council’s Social Inclusion Team, On Track, would assist with linking up the artist with the community, in particular young people. Interested parties could also form their own teams to coordinate the project with all the necessary information available on the graffiti webpage.

#### 4.4.7 Potential Project Funding Sources

The original motion to Full Council included identifying potential funding opportunities for the creation of new street art within the Borough.

Officers undertook a review of community funding and grant schemes to give appropriate eligible options. The Arts Council funding was specifically mentioned, however their grants were still prioritising organisations recovering from Covid and the scheme would be unlikely to meet grant criteria.

The following grants were reviewed, and officers believe a Rugby Street Art project would meet the individual criteria:

##### **National Lottery Awards for All**

[www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk](http://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk)

£300 to £10,000

Improve the places and spaces that matter to communities

Project idea: Secondary school graffiti project, students design murals, artist paints on identified locations

##### **Co-op Local Community Fund**

[www.coop.co.uk/causes](http://www.coop.co.uk/causes)

£1,000 to £3,000

Help to improve peoples mental wellbeing

Create opportunities for young people to be heard and make a difference

##### **Tesco Community Grants**

Up to £1,500

Charities and community organisations

Awarded every three months

Blue token scheme in store, three nominations, etc

##### **The Wesleyan Foundation**

£2,000 to £10,000

Promote health and wellbeing

Benefit local communities

##### **Severn Trent Community Fund**

[www.stwater.co.uk/about-us/severn-trent-community-fund/](http://www.stwater.co.uk/about-us/severn-trent-community-fund/)

Improve community wellbeing

£2,000 to £10,000

£10,001 to £75,000

##### **Cemex Foundation – Rugby Group Benevolent Fund**

[www.rugbygroupbenevolentfund.org.uk](http://www.rugbygroupbenevolentfund.org.uk)

Project dependent

#### 4.5 Graffiti Webpage

Members of the public needed additional support and guidance with how to report instances of graffiti.

Upon review, it was possible to report instances of graffiti through an online form on the council's website. However, there was no supporting information on how and where to report graffiti depending on the location, for example graffiti on private land.

Councillor Douglas took an action to review other councils' websites, information available to residents and businesses in terms of reporting and removal of graffiti, distinction between public and private land, prosecution, etc.

The suggested new webpage content was reviewed by the Task Group on 7 April and covering:

- Fines and prosecution
- Graffiti on Rugby Borough Council property and land
- Report graffiti
- What information should public provide
- Timescales
- Graffiti on third party property
- Private property – support for residents and businesses
- How to remove graffiti
- Stubborn graffiti
- Sites for art projects
- Graffiti Task Group
- Historic data
- Funding streams for community groups
- Links to the Council's Community Safety Partnership, the Police and the Council's Community Safety Wardens

The Council's Communications Team would consider the content for creation of an information page on the Council's website.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The Task Group drew the following conclusions from the evidence that was gathered:

- 1 *A gap in information available to public on the Council's website regarding reporting and removal of graffiti, distinction between public and private land, prosecution and other was identified.*
- 2 *Involving the community and engaging with gangs and youths related to gangs in creating urban art would serve as a way of replacing and preventing future graffiti in Rugby's hotspots.*
- 3 *To solve issues around land responsibility, collaboration with third parties was key.*
- 4 *The option to offer graffiti removal as a paid service to third parties such as BT, Canal and River Trust, Stagecoach was subject to further discussions.*
- 5 *The option to offer graffiti removal as a paid service to private landlords and businesses while potentially generating an income for the Council was subject to resources available.*
- 6 *Communities to form their own teams to coordinate projects with supporting information available on the Council's graffiti webpage.*
- 7 *The Council's Social Inclusion Team, On Track, to provide support with project management and linking up artists with communities, in particular young people.*
- 8 *Identify locations for locally supported street art and legal graffiti.*
- 9 *The Council's aim should be to reduce the number of graffiti incidents whilst engaging and supporting our communities to respond and improve areas.*