

ABANDONED SHOPPING TROLLEYS

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to propose the introduction of a scale of charges for abandoned shopping trolleys. The Council has the option to adopt powers under Schedule 4 of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005. These powers would give the Council authority to seize abandoned shopping trolleys and to charge the owners of the shopping trolleys for their return.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Schedule 4 of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 gives the Council the opportunity to adopt powers to seize abandoned shopping trolleys and charge for their return. These powers can only be adopted by the Council after it has taken into consideration the views and opinions of local stakeholders. In September 2008 the Council consulted local supermarkets, Parish Councils and other interested parties about abandoned shopping trolleys. The deadline for responses to this consultation was 5 December 2008. A report to the Environment Review Panel on 10 September 2009 (Report C – Abandoned Shopping Trolleys) gives details of the consultation exercise, lists the organisations consulted, and gives a summary of the responses to the consultation questions.
- 2.2 The Environment Review Panel considered the problem of abandoned shopping trolleys and the results of the consultation on 10 September 2009 (Environment Review Panel – 10 September 2009, Minute ref.24). The Panel were concerned about the problem of abandoned shopping trolleys, particularly in the Ringwood and Totton areas. The Environment Review Panel made the following resolutions:
- (a) That the Cabinet be commended to adopt the powers set out in Schedule 4 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to allow abandoned supermarket trolleys to be seized and a charge levied upon the supermarket for their return or destruction; and
 - (b) That the Cabinet be advised to adopt a scale of charges similar to that used by Eastleigh Borough Council, but with additional flexibility to allow the full recovery of the Council's costs where the trolley is in a more inaccessible location.

3. ABANDONED SHOPPING TROLLEYS

- 3.1 In view of the results of the consultation and the resolutions of the Environment Review Panel it is suggested that the Council should proceed with the adoption of powers under Schedule 4 of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005. Abandoned shopping trolleys are not a major problem in the New Forest, but there are occasional problems, such as those in Ringwood earlier in the year. The new powers will give the Council authority to seize abandoned shopping trolleys as a last resort, when other measures have failed.

- 3.2 One particular feature of the problem caused by abandoned shopping trolleys in the New Forest is that the majority of local supermarkets do not have their own car park. Except at the larger superstores, customers of the supermarkets in the New Forest generally park in Council car parks or on-street. This means that there is more potential for shopping trolleys to be abandoned on the pavement or in Council car parks.
- 3.3 The Council needs to consider the best approach to abandoned shopping trolleys in the New Forest. It is important to work in partnership with the local retailers to tackle local problems as and when they occur. The Council may now introduce a regime of seizing abandoned shopping trolleys and charging the supermarkets for their return. This does not mean that the Council will start to seize every shopping trolley found abandoned in the New Forest. The Council will aim to maintain a dialogue with local supermarkets and only use the new powers as a last resort.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Abandoned shopping trolleys can be a blight on the local environment. Where there are accumulations of abandoned shopping trolleys they can attract litter and detract from the amenity of open space areas. Where shopping trolleys are abandoned in water courses they can attract litter and cause blockages, leading to a risk of flooding.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The use of powers under Schedule 4 of the Environment Protection 1990 would have financial implications for the Council. There would be a cost in seizing and storing abandoned shopping trolleys, plus the administrative cost of contacting the supermarkets and arranging for their return. Any financial penalty for abandoned shopping trolleys should reflect at least the actual cost to the Council of seizing the trolleys, so that the costs are passed on to the supermarkets.
- 5.2 Following a review of other authorities in Hampshire Local Authorities who have adopted these powers, a scale of charges is proposed that will reflect the actual cost of dealing with abandoned shopping trolleys.
- £25 per trolley if collected by supermarket
£35 per trolley if returned by Council
£55 per trolley destroyed
- 5.3 A further charge is proposed for the recovery of shopping trolleys from inaccessible locations such as water courses. In these cases the actual cost of recovery to the council will be charged.
- 5.4 It is suggested that charges should be reviewed annually as part of the Council's Expenditure Plan process.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Although not a crime, irresponsible abandonment of shopping trolleys can be a cause of anti-social behaviour. Abandoned shopping trolleys can be a target

for vandalism and mis-use. There is also a potential for shopping trolleys to be abandoned at locations where they are a danger to the environment (such as in watercourses) or a danger to the public (such as footpaths).

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Abandoned shopping trolleys can be a nuisance to the elderly and to those with limited mobility. Abandoned shopping trolleys can block pavements and footpaths making it difficult for elderly people to pass or making it difficult to manoeuvre wheelchairs or mobility scooters.

8. CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 Abandoned shopping trolleys are a nuisance that can harm the local environment and be a hazard to pedestrians. The Council has consulted local stakeholders on the introduction of legal powers to deal with abandoned shopping trolleys. The Council may now proceed with the adoption of powers under Schedule 4 of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005. These new powers may be used a last resort, when other measures to deal with abandoned shopping trolleys have failed.

9. PORTFOLIO HOLDER COMMENTS

- 9.1 I support the recommendation however I would emphasise that it is our intention to continue to work with supermarkets and other trolley providers in a constructive manner to ensure that abandoned trolleys do not become a nuisance, these powers are intended to be used only where providers have failed to work with the Council to resolve problems with abandoned trolleys. It is hoped that by adopting these powers the Council will further encourage trolley providers to be mindful of their responsibility to deal with abandoned trolleys.

10. RECOMMENDATION

- 10.1 It is recommended that Cabinet implement powers under Schedule 4 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to seize abandoned shopping trolleys.
- 10.2 It is recommended that the scale of charges for abandoned shopping trolleys shall be as described in Section 5 of this report, to be reviewed annually as part of the Council's expenditure plan.

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Background Papers:

Environment Review Panel – 10 September 2009
Report C Abandoned Shopping Trolleys
Environment Review Panel – 10 September 2009
Minute Ref. 24