1.0 Purpose

1.1. The purpose of this report is to advise Committee Members of the implications arising from the forthcoming National Litter Strategy together with an update on the recent Dog Watch Initiative.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1. It is recommended that the Committee consider and comment on the emerging National Litter Strategy, the outcome of the recent local Dog Watch Initiative and the proactive approach being taken by the Service to reduce these problems.

3.0 Considerations

3.1. During 2012 the Scottish government issued a consultation and draft national litter strategy: Towards a Litter-Free Scotland with the aim of launching a National Litter Strategy in mid 2014. The responses to the consultation have not yet been released however key issues for local authorities highlighted in the CoSLA response to the consultation were as follows:

- The need for consistent communication messages at national and local level with common branding used across the range of partners involved in tackling Scotland's litter problem.
- A future review of the code of practice on Litter and Refuse.
- Support for an increase in the fixed penalty for littering from £50 to £80
- Recognition of the sensitivities of enforcing litter actions on under-16’s

3.2. The Environmental Protection Act 1990 sets out the criteria for both dog fouling and litter offences. The two offences are quite distinct and both handled principally by the Community Wardens.

3.3. The costs associated with littering extend beyond the Council's daily operational input to remove its obvious visual impact to areas such as indirect tourism cost, litter-related flooding, attractiveness to vermin, road traffic
accidents, playground accidents from broken glass and discarded drug-related litter in our communities.

3.4. Litter is measured and benchmarked using the nationally adopted LEAMS system (Local Environment Audit Management System) to calculate an index of street cleanliness. Recorded incidents of dog fouling are identified and incorporated into LEAMS scoring.

3.5. LEAMS scores are reported as a statutory Performance Indicator relating directly to National Outcome (12) 'We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations', and incorporated into Community Planning priorities as:

- Clackmannanshire has a positive image and attracts people and business
- Clackmannanshire's environment is protected and enhanced

3.6. The Clackmannanshire LEAMS results for the period 2010-2013 are shown in the table below with comparisons to other local authorities for the period. The figures highlight urban areas score a lower street cleanliness index than rural areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comparative LEAMS Index Scores</th>
<th>2010/11</th>
<th>2011/12</th>
<th>2012/13</th>
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<tr>
<td>Clackmannanshire</td>
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<td>Dumfries &amp; Galloway</td>
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<td>Scottish Borders</td>
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<td>74</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Rural Average</strong></td>
<td>79</td>
<td>77</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Urban Areas</strong></td>
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<td>71</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Urban Average</strong></td>
<td>71</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>71</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Neighbouring Areas</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Neighbour Average</strong></td>
<td>73</td>
<td>75</td>
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A graph showing the summary of LEAMS index scores for the period 2000/01 to 2012/13 is shown in Appendix 1 with comparison of Clackmannanshire to the Scottish average index score.

3.7. Keep Scotland Beautiful (KSB) administers the national LEAMS programme and conducts annual LEAMS verification inspections. KSB commented in
2011/12 that the majority of Clackmannanshire streets recorded a small presence of litter which, under the Code of Practice guidelines is still an excellent standard. Improperly disposed of cigarette ends continue to impact in high priority areas with a significant amount of streets examined showing this litter type as the only problem in the area.

3.8. KSB also reported: ‘Overall statistics mask some localised issues, predominately in high priority areas and in the towns of Alloa and Sauchie, in contrast, litter standards in low density residential areas were found to be excellent.’

3.9. The LEAMS inspection reports conducted by Council officers score consistently in-line with those of KSB, supporting the evidence that areas habitually littered are town centres with the type of litter being predominantly smoking related and food packaging.

3.10. These two main litter types blighting our community are the result of deliberate and wilful acts of littering rather than the accidental escape of waste from domestic or commercial premises. This is a behavioural issue to be tackled via a number of closely linked initiatives.

3.11. Improvement in the cleanliness of our environment, as measured by the absence of litter, will not on its own be brought about by increasing the resource to collect litter without having regard to education and enforcement resources.

3.12. The Waste Education Officer regularly visits schools to deliver waste awareness and anti-litter messages. The officer also coordinates community litter picking events throughout the year and supports community groups in making applications for grant funds accessible via Zero Waste Scotland when the opportunities arise.

3.13. Awareness raising anti-litter messages will be given a high priority by Zero Waste Scotland with the launch of the forthcoming National Litter Strategy. The Scottish government has signalled that there will be an opportunity to link with the proposed national campaign by using a dedicated anti-litter resource toolkit being developed for local authorities and their partners in time for the national strategy launch. At this point it is unclear if any additional funding will be provided to local authorities to support the initiative.

3.14. The launch of the forthcoming National Litter Strategy will be an opportunity to harness the publicity associated with a high profile campaign and reinvigorate Clackmannanshire’s anti-litter message with national brand and campaign support and to raise awareness of littering, particularly in the known hot-spots, and to re-focus awareness, enforcement and cleansing resources in a coordinated way in the areas that habitually have been problematic through low LEAMS scores and the behaviour of litter offenders.

3.15. In terms of enforcement, none had been undertaken prior to 2012 at which time the Community Wardens were trained and authorised to issue litter fixed penalty notices. Following that, in conjunction with a campaign to tackle litter, more than 20 fixed penalty notices have been issued by the Community Wardens and currently, they continue to issue litter fixed penalty notices on a reactive basis as and when litter offences are witnessed.
Dog fouling

Nature and extent of problems in clacks.

3.16. The results of the most recent survey of Clackmannanshire Citizens Panel show that 38% of residents particularly dislike or have problems with dogs. This features as the highest dislike factor equalling the percentage of those who also dislike litter and rubbish. The problems being experienced can't all be attributed to dog fouling as some of the "dog problems" could be in relation to stray dogs, dangerous dogs or dogs barking. Analysis of the requests made to the Animal Welfare Officer reveals that around 18% of calls relates to dog fouling, 6.5% to dangerous dogs, 15% to barking dogs and 20% to stray dogs. Significantly however is the increase in the percentage of residents who have problems with dogs, rising from 30% in 2012 to 38% in 2013. This trend is reflected in the numbers of complaints to the service about dog fouling.

3.17. The most recent tenants satisfaction survey found that dog fouling was the biggest neighbourhood problem with 45% of tenants expressing this. It ranked higher than other issues such as noisy neighbours, disruptive children/teenagers, drunk or rowdy behaviour and drug use or dealing.

3.18. The above surveys demonstrate the levels of concern residents have about dog fouling, however the results of audits conducted as part of the Local Environmental Audit and Management System (LEAMS) show that the majority of streets are free of dog fouling. Analysis of data from 24 LEAMS audits carried out over the period February 2010 to December 2013 found that 1,225 (94.3%) out of 1,299 areas surveyed were free of dog fouling i.e. only 74 (5.7%) of areas over that period had the presence of dog fouling. Further examination of these results show that when dog fouling was present it tended to be a single event i.e. it was rare to find multiple incidences of fouling. This level of fouling would indicate that dog fouling is occurring as a result of a small number of irresponsible dog owners.

Information - Education and awareness

3.19. The Animal Welfare service over the years has taken every opportunity to encourage responsible dog ownership, including a high visibility presence at local gala events, the running of dog training classes and the giving of talks and presentations to various groups, in particular to schools. In addition to this every opportunity is and has been taken to send messages out to dog owners, via press coverage, to highlight the need for owners to clean up after their dog.

3.20. Currently with the exception of attendance at local gala events the Animal Welfare Officer continues to raise awareness via these channels. Whilst these channels are essential to getting the message out to the wider community the main educative approach is through directly targeting dog owners. This is achieved through patrolling the area, focussing on parks and open spaces, and engaging directly with dog owners to ensure they are aware of their duties, in particular to ensure they are equipped to clean up after their dog.
Local Dog Watch Initiative

3.21. In May 2013 the Dog Watch Initiative was launched to help tackle an increasing number of complaints about dog fouling. The campaign involved a mixture of actions targeting specific areas where dog fouling has been particularly problematic. These actions were designed to educate dog owners, elicit the support of the community and punish offenders where appropriate.

3.22. The first geographical area targeted was an area in the centre of Clackmannan followed by an area within Tillicoultry. Each area was targeted intensely for a period of five weeks, involving high visibility patrols, a significant publicity campaign and community engagement. Although the initiative was being led by the Community Wardens team it was being delivered as a coordinated approach involving a number of services including Housing services, Environment services, Animal Welfare, Community Planning and Communications.

3.23. The results of the initiative in the Clackmannan area were very positive with significant reductions in the levels of fouling being observed by the end of the five week period. Disappointingly since that time there has been a gradual increase in the levels of fouling, although not returning to the levels experienced before the initiative. It is too early as yet to tell if the initiative has had any lasting effect. A similar level of improvement was also achieved in the Tillicoultry area and again it is too early to tell if there has been any lasting improvement.

3.24. Moving ahead, as is indicated in paragraph 3.33 below, further analysis of the impact of the initiative will be undertaken. It is unlikely that such a broad and intensive resource could be continued across Clackmannanshire, but sustaining an increased level of enforcement at this stage would be important, particularly as it is clear that the problem is arising from a small number of offenders. Targeting enforcement at those individuals rather than at all dog owners would be more a more effective use of resources.

Infrastructure - Street cleansing, bin provision, poop scoops.

3.25. The Council currently provides free poop scoops to all dog owners at a cost of £6,000 per year. Almost 2 million scoops are now issued per year, having risen from under half a million in 2003. The main message, through all the education and awareness raising undertaken by the service, has been to encourage the use of scoops and it is clear by the increased uptake of scoops that this approach has been working. It also reflects that the vast majority of dog owners within Clackmannanshire act responsibly to clean up after their dog.

3.26. There are approximately 276 dog waste bins, 256 litter bins and over 20 recently introduced recycling-on-the-go waste bins distributed throughout the county. Dog waste bins are progressively being replaced with dual purpose dog-waste/litter bins and litter bins re-branded as dual purpose dog-waste/litter bins to increase the functionality of the bin provision.

3.27. Work is underway to introduce a bar-coding system to these bins allowing street cleaning operatives to record bin emptying date, time and bin condition.
This will build up an accurate data set to include a history of emptying and frequency of use to further inform a more efficient servicing schedule and use of resources.

Enforcement.

3.28. In 2003 when the Dog Fouling (Scotland) Act 2003 came into effect a number of Council officers were trained and authorised to enable them to issue fixed penalty notices under the Act. However despite this investment very few fixed penalty notices were issued in the subsequent years, that is up and until recently when 14 fixed penalty notices were issued as part of the Dog Watch Initiative.

3.29. The Council in 2012 set a Corporate Priority action of "Adopting a proactive approach to reducing litter, fly tipping and dog fouling by thorough use of existing legislation, increased staff training, patrolling and enforcement". Prior to this there was no specific priority in this area and equally there was no strategic approach to the tackling litter, fly tipping and dog fouling.

3.30. The Dog Watch initiative was developed with a view to meeting the Council's priority to proactively tackle dog fouling and as part of this training took place to enable officers to issue fixed penalty notices, albeit primarily in relation to litter.

3.31. Currently enforcement continues to be delivered by the community wardens but on a reactive/complaint led basis. This team is well placed to conduct enforcement activities, in particular the ability for offences to be witnessed combined with a work pattern that provides the best opportunity to target offenders. The community engagement role of the wardens also offers the ability for intelligence to be gathered on offenders.

3.32. On 27th December 2013 the Scottish Government launched a consultation in regard to promoting responsible dog ownership, focussing primarily on the use of micro-chipping for dogs. The consultation also seeks views on how effectively dog fouling legislation is being applied as well as general comments on measures that might reduce dog fouling and help make our communities safer. The responses to this consultation will help inform any proposed approach this authority takes to continue to tackle dog fouling. The consultation runs until the 31st March 2014 and therefore any comments made by the committee will be included in the response to the consultation.

3.33. Looking ahead the service will record and identify the areas affected by dog fouling to permit targeting of resources against irresponsible dog owners and further analyse the success of the Local Dog Watch Initiative. The findings of this together with the emerging National Litter Strategy and the outputs from the current Scottish Government consultation on promoting responsible dog ownership, will enable the service to subsequently develop a proposal for how the service will deal with litter and dog fouling in the future.

4.0 Sustainability Implications

4.1. There are no sustainability implications arising out of the recommendations of this report.
5.0 Resource Implications

5.1. Financial Details

5.2. There are no financial implications arising from the report that are not already included within the currently approved capital and revenue expenditure budget. Yes ☑

5.3. Staffing

5.4. There are no staffing implications arising from this report.

6.0 Exempt Reports

6.1. Is this report exempt? Yes ☑ (please detail the reasons for exemption below) No ☐

7.0 Declarations

The recommendations contained within this report support or implement our Corporate Priorities and Council Policies.

(1) Our Priorities

The area has a positive image and attracts people and businesses ☑
Our communities are more cohesive and inclusive ☐
People are better skilled, trained and ready for learning and employment ☐
Our communities are safer ☐
Vulnerable people and families are supported ☐
Substance misuse and its effects are reduced ☐
Health is improving and health inequalities are reducing ☐
The environment is protected and enhanced for all ☑
The Council is effective, efficient and recognised for excellence ☐

(2) Council Policies (Please detail)

None

8.0 Equalities Impact

8.1 Have you undertaken the required equalities impact assessment to ensure that no groups are adversely affected by the recommendations? Yes ☐ No ☑

9.0 Legality

9.1 There are no legal implications arising out of the recommendations contained in this report.
10.0 Appendices

10.1 Please list any appendices attached to this report. If there are no appendices, please state "none".

Appendix 1: Comparison of Clackmannanshire LEAMS Index Score

11.0 Background Papers

11.1 Have you used other documents to compile your report? (All documents must be kept available by the author for public inspection for four years from the date of meeting at which the report is considered)

Yes ☑ (please list the documents below)  No ☐

i. LEAMS validation report 2013/14

ii. Towards a Litter-Free Scotland: Consultation on a strategy to tackle and prevent litter and flytipping.  
   http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/07/6925

iii. CoSLA Development, Economy and Sustainability Executive Group item 27th September 2013 National Litter Strategy response messages  

Author(s)

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<td>Environment Manager</td>
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Approved by

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<tr>
<td>Garry Dallas</td>
<td>Director of Services to Communities</td>
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Appendix 1: Comparison of Clackmannanshire LEAMS Index Score