

COST OF VANDALISM TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Abstract

This report advises members of the estimated costs incurred as a result of vandalism to local authority properties in Scotland in the three year period 1999 - 2002 and recommends seeking the support of Cosla to establish more accurate data across Scotland with a view to establishing a partnership approach with the Scottish Executive to eradicate this menace.

1. RECOMMENDATION

The Council is recommended to

- a) note the contents of this report
- b) note the current estimated cost of vandalism to Scottish Local authorities.
- c) seek the support of Cosla to establish accurate data on the costs of vandalism across Scotland
- d) through Cosla, establish a working group to examine measures to eradicate vandalism
- e) through Cosla, establish a partnership with the Scottish Executive to adopt a policy of zero tolerance of vandalism.
- f) at the same time seek the support of communities in Angus to join with Angus Council in the campaign to combat vandalism through active citizenship.

2. BACKGROUND

Report 192/02 to the Policy and Resources committee on 5 February this year outlined the cost of vandalism to Angus Council properties over the three years to 2002. Since then, the Director of Property Services has circulated an enquiry to all Scottish local authorities to establish the cost of vandalism in their areas.

Vandalism was defined as the wilful damage to property and included:

- malicious damage
- damage by wilful fire raising
- deliberate wrecking of property by impact from vehicles etc
- deliberate flooding from burst water pipes, turning on taps or fire hoses, blocking drains etc.

It excluded damage as a consequence of burglary, accidental damage by fire, collision etc.

Information was requested in relation to property for which the local authority was responsible and included buildings, parks, play equipment, cemeteries (including

headstones if the authority meets the cost of restoration or repair), equipment within properties – schools, sports centres, libraries etc.

Vandalism to local authority housing held on the Housing Revenue Account was to be included in the survey.

The data required was the costs for the three year period, 1999/2000 to 2001/2002. The costs were to be the gross costs which the local authority incurred to make good the damage caused as a result of vandalism. Any recovered costs were to be ignored.

Analysis of returns from authorities

1. 19 out of 32 Scottish local authorities responded to the survey.
2. The data only relates to the local authority sector.
3. Some authorities could not give separate data on the vandalism costs for their council housing stock.
4. The estimated vandalism costs to the country as a whole across the local authority sector, was based on the average cost per head of population for those authorities which did make a return. This method will not reflect the true position but was used to establish an approximation of the national picture.

Vandalism Costs of all Scottish Local Authorities

1999/00			2000/01			2001/02		
Cost £	Population	Cost per head of population	Cost £	Population	Cost per head of population	Cost £	Population	Cost per head of population
£16,583,666	5,119,082	£3.24	£17,421,857	5,114,600	£3.41	£17,355,318	5,108,670	£3.40

3. CONCLUSION

It is clear that the costs incurred by local authorities in Scotland as a result of vandalism are immense and measures need to be put in hand urgently to establish an accurate assessment of the problem and develop an action plan at national level to eradicate this unnecessary and shameful waste of public resources.

To this end it is proposed that Cosla be invited to co-ordinate research across all authorities to establish accurate data on vandalism and a partnership with the Scottish Executive be established to develop a policy of zero tolerance of vandalism.

At local level it is proposed that Angus Council seeks the support of communities in Angus to join with the Council in the campaign to combat vandalism through active citizenship. Communities should be encouraged to engender a culture where vandalism is simply unacceptable and where it does occur every effort is made to support investigation by the authorities to ensure those responsible are held to account.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

5. CONSULTATION

The Chief Executive, Director of Finance and the Director of Law and Administration have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

6. HUMAN RIGHTS ACT IMPLICATIONS

There are no Human Rights Act implications specific to this report.

Any implications as a consequence of discharging recommendations detailed in this report, will be managed in accordance with the standing procedures and processes established by the Property Services department.

REFERENCES

<u>Committee</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Report No</u>	<u>Subject</u>
Recreation and Cultural Services Committee	17.1.02	49/02	Vandalism Costs
Policy and Resources Committee	5.2.02	192/02	Cost Of Vandalism To Council Properties

BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers, as defined by section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

M G Lunny
Director of Property Services