



4 July 2022

## GRAFFITI TASK GROUP – 12 JULY 2022

A meeting of the Graffiti Task Group will be held at 5.30pm on Tuesday 12 July 2022 in the Committee Room 2 at the Town Hall, Rugby.

Mannie Ketley  
Executive Director

### A G E N D A

#### PART 1 – PUBLIC BUSINESS

1. Appointment of Chair.

To appoint a Chair of the Task Group for the 2022/23 municipal year.

2. Minutes.

To confirm the minutes of meeting held on 7 April 2022.

3. Apologies.

To receive apologies for absence from the meeting.

4. Declarations of Interest.

To receive declarations of:

(a) non-pecuniary interests as defined by the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors;

(b) pecuniary interests as defined by the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors; and

(c) notice under Section 106 Local Government Finance Act 1992 – non-payment of Community Charge or Council Tax.

***Note: Members are reminded that they should declare the existence and nature of their interests at the commencement of the meeting (or as soon as the interest becomes apparent). If that interest is a pecuniary interest the Member must withdraw from the room unless one of the exceptions applies.***

***Membership of Warwickshire County Council or any Parish Council is classed as a non-pecuniary interest under the Code of Conduct. A Member does not need to declare this interest unless the Member chooses to speak on a matter relating to their membership. If the Member does not wish to speak on the matter, the Member may still vote on the matter without making a declaration.***

5. Review Report – to consider the draft review report to Cabinet.

**Membership of the Task Group:**

Councillors Douglas, Rabin and Srivastava

*If you have any general queries with regard to this agenda please contact Veronika Beckova, Democratic Services Officer (01788 533591 or e-mail [veronika.beckova@rugby.gov.uk](mailto:veronika.beckova@rugby.gov.uk)). Any specific queries concerning reports should be directed to the listed contact officer.*



**Agenda Item 4**

# **REVIEW OF GRAFFITI**



**JULY 2022**

# CONTENTS

		<b>Page</b>
	<b>Chair's Foreword</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Methodology</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Findings</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Conclusions</b>	<b>17</b>

DRAFT

## TASK GROUP MEMBERSHIP

The Task Group consisted of the following members:

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

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Please contact:

**Tom Kittendorf**  
**Chief Officer – Leisure and Wellbeing**  
Tel: 01788 533749  
Email: [tom.kittendorf@rugby.gov.uk](mailto:tom.kittendorf@rugby.gov.uk)

**David Burrows**  
**Chief Officer – Regulation and Safety**  
Tel: 01788 533806  
Email: [david.burrows@rugby.gov.uk](mailto:david.burrows@rugby.gov.uk)

## 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 was 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.	Begin public consultation for the installation of new graffiti walls: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Whitehall Recreation Ground</li><li>• Hollowell Way Play Area</li></ul>
2.	Submission of funding applications for the purpose of an overarching project called 'Street Art Rugby': <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.	Publication of graffiti information support and subsequent update of the Council website subject to approval of content by relevant officers and advice.
4.	Consider establishing a paid graffiti removal service to private landlords and businesses while potentially generating an income for the Council was subject to resources available.

## 1.1 Alignment with the Corporate Strategy

The review relates to the following corporate priorities:

### **HEALTH AND COMMUNITIES**

Residents live healthy, independent lives, with the most vulnerable protected. Make sure that residents are proud of their community and their borough.

### **ORGANISATION**

Rugby Borough Council is a responsible, effective and efficient organisation.

## 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 four 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 was considered an act of criminal damage under the Criminal Damage Act 1971 and offenders could be punished with a prison sentence of up to 10 years or fined if the damage costed more than £5,000. Offenders could 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 could look unsightly and lower the value of properties and neighbourhoods. The difficulty with removing graffiti rested in how easy it was to damage the surface of a building or wall trying to remove it. Due to this, it was considered best to use professional services to remove graffiti where reported.

It was 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 could be reported to the Council through the ‘Report a Problem’ online form on the Council website and direct to the Community Wardens on 0800 096 8800.

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

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

In the 2021, 90 incidents of graffiti were reported to the Council. Common locations of graffiti included playground equipment, green utility boxes, bus stops, litterbins and other.

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 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 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 had a responsibility for removal of graffiti for the 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 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 could 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 sports that could 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 included:

- 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 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 within 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 by 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, third parties such as Rugby College and the Arts Council.

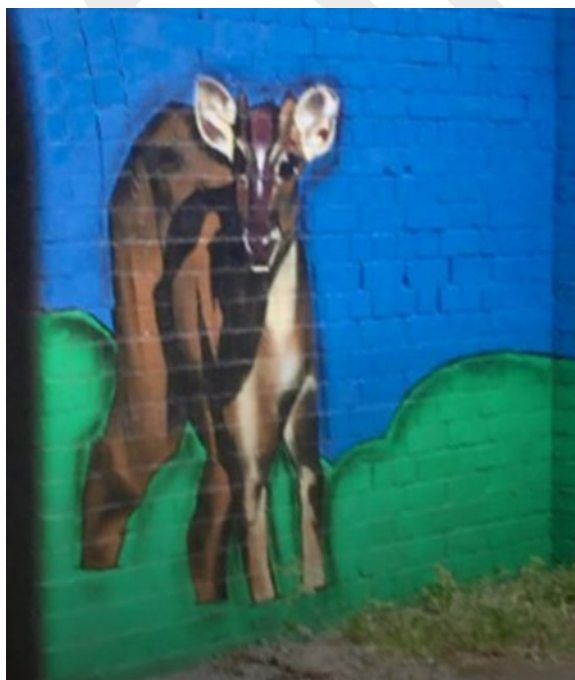
## 4.4 Improvements to Local Street Scene – Opportunities within Rugby

### 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 gave 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 was 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 were high volume areas for general graffiti, tagging and offensive graffiti.

There was 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 was in conversations with Mr James Bennett, an art teacher and founder of Reel People, a community arts group in Nuneaton, to save a community mural created in 1995 that has served to prevent incidents of graffiti when adjacent areas have suffered repeated daubing. Like examples across the country, this mural showed that where the community have been involved in its creation, it remains untouched and has become the subject of community pride.

#### **4.4.5 The Queen’s Platinum Jubilee Year**

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 to mark the jubilee. The skate park was 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. Funds 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 recovery through covid or the scheme would be unlikely to meet grant criteria.

The following grants were reviewed and officers believed 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 people's 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 required additional support and guidance on 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 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 findings 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 *Involvement of communities and engagement with gangs and youths related to gangs in the creation of 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.*