

Decision Session - Executive Member for the
Environment

25 January 2016

Report of the Assistant Director (Communities, Culture and Public
Realm)

Working With Students & Landlords

Summary

1. This report informs the Executive Member of the wide range of work carried out in the city to help students to manage the waste they produce and to dispose of it responsibly.

Recommendations

2. The Executive Member is asked to consider the content of the report.

Reason: To ensure the services involved develop a co-ordinated programme of work to deliver in student areas.

Background

3. The students of York St John University and the University of York play an active role in the life of the city. The majority of them will, at some point during their time at university, live off campus in residential areas usually in privately rented accommodation.
4. When living in residential areas the students are expected to manage their waste in the same way that other residents would, but this does not always happen and regularly leads to problems such as:
 - rubbish and recycling put out at the wrong time/day/place
 - waste not properly disposed of at the end of term/end of year
 - complaints from other residents about waste issues
 - low levels of recycling
5. The problems exist within three wards: Guildhall, Fishergate and Hull Road and within a group of streets as set out in Annex 1.
6. The role of liaison between the council and students falls within the remit of three teams: Neighbourhood Enforcement (NE), Communities

& Engagement (CE, formerly Smarter York Officers) and Waste Services. All of these teams have recently restructured and roles have changed, so there is an added pressure on workloads within those teams. There needs to be a greater level of partnership working between the teams to offer both friendly advice on recycling and managing waste and also impart the more serious message about enforcement. At the busy times at the start and end of the academic year, the teams need to have a co-ordinated plan to ensure that this work is carried out.

The start of the academic year

7. Students typically arrive in their private accommodation during late September / early October. Currently the NE team are very active in the student areas and are the main advisors of how waste should be presented. Typically the students are provided with the following:
 - All households receive a letter advising the collection day, waste presentation point etc
 - General waste collection information is included in the “York Student Community Guide”
 - Where possible staff will attend events such as drop in sessions/road shows to offer advice and information about managing waste
 - Social media is used to communicate messages
 - Signs placed at the end of the street detailing the collection day and what will be collected next (these signs are changed after every collection and remain in place for a limited period of time).
8. Throughout the year the enforcement team will respond to reports of dumped rubbish, bags out early etc and investigate these occurrences and take enforcement action where necessary in line with Section 46 of the Environment Protection Act.
9. Other engagement activities which have previously taken place across the academic year including litter picks, Big Spring Clean events, York University Ground force event, St John’s Love Where You Live event.

The end of the academic year

10. Problems regularly occur at the end of term when students leave their rented accommodation and often leave large amounts of rubbish behind.

11. In 2014 and 2015 dedicated end of year clear out programmes took place in both areas of student housing, co-ordinated by the Smarter York and NE officers. These involved the following activities:
- Leaflets delivered to all affected student households in May detailing the options for recycling/reuse/disposal of waste
 - Extra rubbish and recycling collections organised on designated dates/times for both housing areas (in 2014 there were 4 extra dates, in 2015 there was one extra date)
 - Charity reuse banks sited in key locations and students encouraged to donate suitable items: Monk Bar Car Park corner of Kent Street and Barbican Road, corner of Garrow Hill Avenue, Jaipur Spice Car Park, Londis at Penleys Grove Street
 - Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) - students with student union cards are allowed take waste to Hazel Court using van/trailer without the need to apply for permits. Use will be monitored by staff at the HWRC to ensure that valid student union cards for the York learning establishments are only accepted and that the number of occasions each student uses the service is reasonable.

Other Activity

12. The NE and CE teams have been regularly involved in discussions with Higher York (a partnership between Askham Bryan College, City of York Council, the University of York, York College and York St John University) to engage regarding waste matters as part of their community strategy.
13. Landlords also play a key role by passing information onto their tenants. They will be encouraged to sign up to the Responsible Landlords scheme. For those who do, incentives such as free use of the HWRC, will be considered as part of the upcoming review of the HWRC permit schemes.

Waste Presentation (bags to bins project)

14. In November 2015 a report taken to the Executive Member detailed proposals for a bags to bins project which was approved. Most properties in York present residual waste in a wheeled bin but 10,309 present their residual waste in black sacks. It has been identified that 5,564 of these could potentially have a wheeled bin for storage and presentation of waste which could make collections more efficient and reduce problems such as bags out early, dumped bags and split bags.

15. Some of these households will be within the student areas which have been identified in Annex 1. The move from bags to wheeled bins will significantly help with enforcement work. A further report will be brought to the Executive Member in 2016 detailing how the bags to bins project will be taken forward.

Low Performing recycling areas

16. The waste team will be undertaking a programme of work to identify areas where recycling performance is low and greater encouragement is needed. The student areas may benefit from being included in this project which will seek to remove recyclable materials from the landfill waste and thus reduce problems of overflowing refuse bins and create greater levels of recycling.

Consultation

17. Consultation is undertaken at various points throughout each year involving landlords, student groups, relevant institutions and council officers, the first one this year will take place during January.

Options

18. There are two options available to the Council in order to improve the management of waste by students and Landlords. These are:
 - Option a - To utilise the arrangements detailed above.
 - Option b - To consider alternative arrangements to those detailed above.

Analysis

19. Option a) will respond to customer concerns regarding poor management of waste.
20. Option b) may delay and therefore worsen the management of waste, bringing about increased customer complaints .

Council Plan

21. The proposals in this report are in line with the Council Plan priority to Place a Focus on Frontline Services.

Implications

22. **Financial:** There are no specific financial implications to the report as further costed proposals will be drawn up dependant on the Executive

Members direction. Any work undertaken across the services related to this report will be undertaken within current resources.

23. **Equalities:** Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken in respect of each of the action areas proposed.
24. The report has no additional implications relating to: Human Resources, Legal, Crime and Disorder, Information Technology, Property.

Risk Management

25. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy the main risks that have been identified associated with the proposals contained in this report are those which could lead to the inability to meet business objectives and to deliver services, leading to damage to the Council's reputation and failure to meet stakeholders' expectations. The level of risk is assessed as "Very Low". This means that periodic monitoring is required of the operation of the new arrangements.

Contact Details

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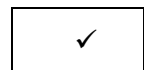
Report Approved



13.1.16.

Wards Affected: All

All



For further information please contact the author of the report.

Background Papers: None

Abbreviations

CE	Communities & Engagement (formerly Smarter York Officers)
HWRC	Household Waste Recycling Centre
NE	Neighbourhood Enforcement