
Meeting of the Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services and Advisory Panel

6 December 2007

Report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services

Cold Calling Controlled Zones

Summary

1. The purpose of this report is to update Members on the introduction of Cold Calling Controlled Zones in the City of York and to seek approval for a staged approach in widening the adoption of zones across the city.

Background

2. Cold Calling Controlled Zones are an initiative aimed at preventing 'doorstep crime' – particularly distraction burglaries and crimes associated with cold calling. They also help reduce the fear of crime felt associated with criminals targeting people's homes. Residents within a designated zone agree that they do not wish to deal with cold callers, and report anyone breaching their wishes to trading standards or the police. Attached at Annex A is an example of the sign which is displayed at all entry points to the zone and at Annex B is an explanatory leaflet about a resident's rights when dealing with a cold caller. The signs warn uninvited callers that they are 'not welcome' in the area.
3. Working with North Yorkshire Police and Safer York Partnership, officers from trading standards identified five potential areas to become the city's first zones. The areas identified as suitable were based on police statistics for distraction burglary and complaints to trading standards about cold callers.
4. Officers from trading standards and the neighbourhood police teams delivered letters and visited the residents of the identified areas explaining that their area was considered appropriate. Residents were asked to sign a form indicating whether or not they would like to participate. All of the residents who returned a form said that they wished to participate. In addition, residents were asked 'how concerned are you about doorstep crime?', 87% of respondents replied that they were either 'concerned' or very concerned about about the issue.
5. The five zones were officially launched on 30th October 2007 at the Mansion House. The event, hosted by the Lord Mayor, was attended by the Chief Constable of North Yorkshire Police amongst others.

6. The location of the five zones are as follows:-
 - Huntington – Southdown Road area
 - Acomb (Holgate Ward) – West Bank area
 - Beckfield Lane – Runswick Avenue /Melander Close areas
 - Fulford – Heath Moor Drive area
 - Dunnington – Greenside area

7. At the time of writing this report (6 days after the launch), there have been four further requests for zones from residents including some areas Age Concern York have identified as suitable. Trading standards officers will be assisting residents in those areas to be designated as a Cold Calling Controlled Zone.

Options

8. Option 1. Trading standards officers will respond to requests from residents, the police and other interested parties to set up additional zones. However, the impact of the existing zones will be assessed by measuring doorstep crime and residents' concern about doorstep crime. Before initiating additional zones in the city. Should further zones be needed then they will be introduced in a phased and prioritised basis over time within the existing work programme. .

9. Option 2. Officers will respond to requests to establish zones and trading standards will proactively establish zones before the full impact of the pilot zones has been evaluated.

Analysis

10. Option 1. Enables officers to respond to demand for additional zones in a controlled and co-ordinated manner by evaluating the success of the existing zones before dedicating further resources at the expense of other regulatory functions.

11. Option 2. Will accelerate the growth of the zones. However, there will be a negative impact on the ability to deliver other key enforcement functions and initiatives currently within the trading standards work programme. Directing resources from other areas will mean key performance measures may not be achieved. These measures impact upon the City of York Council's Comprehensive Performance Assessment.

Corporate Priorities

12. The establishment of Cold Calling Controlled Zones directly supports the corporate priority 'to reduce the actual and perceived impact of violent, aggressive and nuisance behaviour on people in York'.

Implications

13. **Financial:** There are no financial implications associated with this report. Activity will be undertaken within existing budgets and funding from Safer York Partnership (Burglary Task Group).
14. **Human Resources:** There are no Human Resources implications associated with this report.
15. **Equalities:** There are no equalities implications associated with this report.
16. **Legal:** There are no legal implications associated with this report.
17. **Crime and Disorder:** The establishment of Cold Calling Controlled Zones are intended to reduce the fear of crime by residents.
18. **Information Technology (IT):** There are no IT implications associated with this report.
19. **Property:** There are no property implications associated with this report.
20. **Other:** There are no other implications associated with this report.

Risk Management

21. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy. There are no risks associated with the recommendations of this report.

Recommendations

22. That the Advisory Panel advises the Executive Member to approve Option 1 in relation to the development of Controlled Calling Controlled Zones.

Reason: The option enables officers to develop the zones in response to demand, in a prioritised and controlled manner within the existing work programme. Additional Cold Calling Controlled Zones will be extended once the impact of doorstep crime and residents' concerns about doorstep crime has been assessed.

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Report Approved



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Specialist Implications Officer(s): None

Wards Affected:

All



For further information please contact the author of the report.

Background Papers

There are no relevant background papers.

Annexes

Annex A: Example of street sign.

Annex B: Explanatory leaflet.