

Report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services

York Neighbourhoods Pride

Summary

1. This report provides a summary of the work undertaken as part of the Council's York Pride initiative, launched in September 2003. The report then details the proposed development of the next phase of this initiative titled 'York Neighbourhoods Pride' and seeks executive approval for implementing the actions. This work builds on the success of the original initiative whilst continuing to make real improvements for our residents at a local level and visitors to our city.

Background

2. The Council's York Pride initiative was implemented in September 2003. It sought to encourage residents to take pride in the city and to participate in achieving a better environment and quality of life for all. In particular Street Scene and Community Safety were seen as important aspects of the campaign whilst there was a general aim for residents to see a real difference in the quality of the environment and to feel safer in their own communities.
3. York Pride tackled the physical appearance and condition of the city's streets, housing estates and publicly accessible spaces in the suburbs, villages and in the city centre, through a phased approach. This has been achieved by prioritising the authority to improve key services and by seeking the engagement and active involvement of businesses and the community at large to improve the physical standards of private spaces within their control.
4. The initiative has been very successful and in the 2006 'End of Year Performance Report' it was stated "performance in most service delivery areas of York Pride continues to improve". The vast majority of York Pride actions set out in the Council Plan have been delivered as promised with notable successes such as York Business Pride which has continued to sponsor a number of improvement projects across the city.

What Has Been Achieved

5. York Pride has been responsible for many key initiatives that have improved the quality of the environment within our neighbourhood and city areas. The following are examples of what has been achieved:
- Implementation of Tidy Business Standards for City Centre Businesses;
 - Implementation of a Fly Tipping Policy agreed by Council in June 2004;
 - Delivery of a successful 'Junk Art' education project held in partnership with the Coppergate Centre;
 - Improved maintenance of the Council's Highways which has enabled 30% more output from existing budgets;
 - Enforcement of Section 46 of the Environmental Protection Act (EPA) on Waste presentation. Residential homes in 300 streets have had advisory letters about how to present their waste. Residents in 69 streets have had follow up letters which has resulted in 10 Notices being served up to the end of June 2006;
 - Partnership working with landlords associations and Higher Education establishments to ensure that the student population know when their waste is being collected and how to present this in the street;
 - Street Environment Officers have issued 110 notices to ensure that private drainage issues have been resolved by all affected parties;
 - Improvements to the appearance, safety and overall quality of service to the allotments on Bootham Stray and Wiggington Road leading to 90% uptake in these areas;
 - Grass cutting frequencies on urban highways have increased from 10 cuts to 14 per year;
 - Development of the York Business Pride hanging basket initiative that has resulted in 338 baskets being provided this year;
 - Provision of graffiti packs for all Ward Committees;
 - Joint enforcement operations have been held with North Yorkshire Police including the 'name that TAG' campaign;
 - Improvements at a local level from Ward Committee funding.
 - Rewired communal security lighting to communal areas in 983 dwellings;
 - Laid heavy duty vinyl flooring to communal areas of 951 dwellings;
 - Fitted new high specification security doors to blocks of flats serving 487 dwellings;

- Fitted burglar alarms to 45 dwellings;
- Renewed the external render to 854 dwellings;
- Made general improvements to communal areas serving 854 dwellings.

The Benefits of York Pride

6. York is a fabulous place to live, work and visit! We all benefit from the superb environment both in the city and within neighbourhood areas. However similar to most Council's within the UK we do suffer from relatively small amounts on environmental crime, which can impact negatively on the 'liveability' of areas.
7. The importance of providing a clean, safe and green environment for residents continues to rise up the national agenda. This is also a vital local issue as in all of the community surveys carried out by the Council, residents identified services involved with Cleaner, Safer, Greener activities as being one of their top priorities.
8. The York Pride initiative has focused on improving the local, natural and the built environment whilst celebrating everything that is good about our historic city. It is important that this work continues to find sustainable solutions to local environmental issues of concern whilst reducing crime and promoting everything that is good about our city to our residents and visitors so that the high levels of employment, satisfaction, investment and success can continue to be experienced.
9. Subject to Executive approval, it is proposed that a new 'York Neighbourhoods Pride' initiative be launched which will further develop the work of York Pride whilst working with our residents and partners who have a collective responsibility and interest in making this 'real' for all concerned.

York Neighbourhoods Pride

10. As detailed in paragraph 8 York Neighbourhoods Pride (YNP) will build on the work of York Pride by focusing on issues that cause significant concern to our residents and visitors such as the environment and feeling safe. The following activities will be delivered as part of the YNP initiative:

Launching of new Street Cleaning Integrated Operations

11. A review of Street Cleaning and Grounds Maintenance operations has been held during the summer. These services are key to providing a positive environment and for many residents clean streets and publicly accessible areas are their number one priority. Effective service delivery can result in residents feeling positive about their area and the Council whilst poorly maintained areas can create a feeling of negativity, negating other positive work carried out by the Council (ENCAMS 2003).

12. The review has tackled key issues that have an impact on the appearance of our neighbourhoods and City areas including: developing a customer charter that details service standards, targeting hotspots, developing a plan to manage detritus, monitoring performance, improving communications with residents, improving management arrangements, fully integrating street cleaning and grounds maintenance services and providing effective methods of work whilst being mindful of the financial constraints that we operate within.
13. Once the review has been completed it is considered that it would be beneficial to re-launch the service with a new brand that helps to promote the visibility of the service. In developing a brand that will assist the new service to maximise its public impact, the overriding principle will be to ensure that it is easily recognised and associated with the Council. As such it is perhaps easiest to consider the new service at the start of a new campaign and link this to the YNP campaign.
14. It is anticipated that the outcome of the review will result in improved Street Cleaning performance, which will have a positive impact throughout the City.
15. Before the roll out of the new service staff will be trained as to the standards of work and customer service expected of them.

Targeted York Neighbourhoods Pride Campaigns

16. It is proposed that a number of high profile campaigns will be held as part of York Neighbourhoods Pride initiative. These will focus on environmental and Safer York issues and will be held initially between November 2006 and October 2007 to support the new Street Cleaning service. A summary of the proposed campaigns are as follows:
 - **YNP 'Back Lane Campaign'** to be held in November 2006. There will be press releases issued, clean ups and enforcement activity undertaken in areas that have back lanes whilst there will be specific focus on areas where problems have been experienced with refuse bags being left out early. 'The Press' will be encouraged to take before and after photos whilst also publicising the problems we experience.
 - **YNP 'Clean for Christmas Campaign'** to be held in December 2006. This campaign will ask residents to identify 'grot spots' so that action can be taken to clear these before the Christmas festivities begin. 'The Press' will be encouraged to take before and after photos whilst also publicising the problems we experience.
 - **YNP 'Get Rid of Graffiti Campaign'** to be held in January 2007. This campaign will ask residents to identify areas where graffiti is prominent on public land so that it can be removed. Street Environment Officers will undertake inspections of city and ward areas whilst enforcement action will be taken against offenders.
 - **YNP 'Red Card for Dog Fouling Campaign'** to be held in February 2007. This campaign will be highly visual using posters featuring red

cards, which will be placed in areas known to be problematic for dog fouling. The campaign will also be supported by advertisements in the local media to maximise the main messages of the campaign.

Enforcement action will be taken and schools will be visited as part of the campaign where children will be issued with red cards to take home with them to promote the use of dog bins etc. The red cards will include some brief messages printed on them regarding the dangers of allowing dogs to foul in public areas.

- **YNP 'Spring Clean Campaign'** to be held in March 2007. This campaign will be a similar to the 'Clean Up for Christmas' campaign although it will include a highly visible clean up of city centre and residential areas which will include graffiti removal, gum busting, back lane cleanses and street channel cleaning in addition to asking for residents to identify areas of concern so that these can be cleaned.
- **YNP 'Street Champions Campaign'** to be held in April 2007. This campaign will result in the creation of street champions who will help the Council to identify hotspots, problem areas and generally help to create ownership within the community of environmental issues. As part of this campaign YNP 'Caring for your Environment' awards will be presented to individuals, groups, schools and organisations that help to make a difference in our community by supporting our work.
- **YNP 'Litter's Out Campaign'** which will be held in May and June 2007. This campaign will link with school's citizenship work. Officers and partners will visit primary and comprehensive schools throughout the city to talk about the importance of not committing 'enviro' crime whilst partners will contribute by discussing issues such as Anti-Social Behaviour and RESPECT. Schools will be encouraged to produce litter plans to help reduce littering inside and outside of school whilst YNP 'Caring for your Environment' awards will be issued to all who participate.
- **YNP 'Blooming City Campaign'** to be held in June and July 2007. This campaign will encourage individuals, groups, residents and organisations to help make our city beautiful by producing or purchasing floral displays in the city centre and residential areas in preparation for our participation in the regional 'In Bloom' competition. Awards will be presented by the Lord Mayor for a range of categories including best business, best school, best residential garden, best public house, most innovative display and all entries will receive a YNP 'Caring for your Environment' award.
- **YNP 'Cleaner City Campaign'** to be held in July 2007. This campaign will focus on the cleanliness of the city centre as we enter the peak of the tourist season. The campaign will include high level enforcement of fast food and commercial outlets whilst a marketing campaign in the local media will help to create awareness of the importance of keeping our city clean. This will be supported by ensuring that litterbins are regularly emptied and that there is a highly visual and effective cleaning service

operating within high footfall areas supported by partners in addition to our programmed work in neighbourhood areas.

- **YNP 'Feeling and Being Safe in York Campaign'** to be held in July, August and September 2007. This campaign will last for three months and will focus on a range of key issues that will promote personal safety in our city. The campaign will include work with public houses and commercial premises to reduce under age sales, a campaign on noise reduction during the peak summer months and a campaign to reduce assaults and violent crime themed on the successful Northumbria Police 'get drunk, get aggressive, get arrested' campaign. This work will be developed working with partners including the Safer York Partnership.
- **YNP 'It's in Your Hands, Don't Drop It' Campaign** to be held in October 2007. This campaign will focus on communicating the message of how much the Council spends on Street Cleaning whilst encouraging residents and visitors not to drop litter. The campaign will also work with the business sector to encourage them to clean up around their premises. Enforcement activities will be a key part of this month's campaign particularly in back lanes and in the city centre.

17. A communications strategy will be developed to support these campaigns whilst there will be an evaluation exercise at the end of the first twelve months which will be reported to members. This work will also include details of the next twelve months campaigns if the initial twelve have been successful.
18. It is intended to support the development of the York Neighbourhoods Pride initiatives by allocating £30k from the York Pride budget.

Safer City Initiatives

19. The Crime and Disorder Act Review Recommendations, implementation of Neighbourhood Policing through the Police and Criminal Justice Bill and the National Community Safety Plan all make reference to CDRPs becoming more citizen focused. York started ahead of the game in driving public service delivery at neighbourhood level through its ward-based structure for both local authority service delivery and community policing. The Audit Commission report: **Neighbourhood Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour** makes links between the need to tackle environmental issues simultaneous to tackling crime and disorder.
20. The relationship between Neighbourhood Pride and Community Safety will be key to increasing public confidence in neighbourhood service delivery and reducing fear of crime. We already know from the National Reassurance Policing Project and the York pilot of Neighbourhood Policing that quality of life is affected by both levels of crime and disorder (from minor nuisance to serious crime) and the appearance and cleanliness of the area in which people live.

21. Neighbourhood policing and the revised role of the Community Safety Partnership under the Crime and Disorder Act Review, provide the framework within which a multi-agency problem solving approach to tackling public priorities at neighbourhood level can be driven.
22. It is proposed that the development of Neighbourhood Policing and relevant initiatives to tackle crime and disorder are delivered under the York Neighbourhoods Pride banner, which should be instantly recognisable and accepted by residents whilst adding to the profile of this work.

Customer Focused Activities

23. Further improvements to the York Pride Action line have recently been amalgamated into the [easy@york](#) programme which is intended to provide a broad range of customer service and efficiency improvements. Street based services will in the future be accessed via the new York Customer Centre (YCC) or via a new transactional website.
24. The [easy@york](#) programme will deliver fundamental changes in some of the processes relating to both the customer contact (front office) and service delivery (back office).
25. Using new technology and new processes these improvements will:
 - Enable customers to log service requests on the phone or on the web;
 - Give the customer a clear indication of when their service request will be concluded;
 - Streamlined processes will improve the speed with which we respond to service requests (especially urgent cases);
 - Enable customers to pinpoint the exact geographical location of any street based problems using Geographical Information Systems (GIS) thus ensuring that we can deal with the problem more effectively when we make a visit;
 - Enable customers to deal with more than one service request at a time (YCC covers other services);
 - Give customers up to date information on the progress of their service request;
 - Enable customers to pay for services when they order them;
 - Provide customers with all the supporting information they need on street-based services;

- Enable customers to contact the council over a longer timeframe (earlier in the morning and later in the evening in the YCC and 24 x 7 over the web);
- Enable CYC to gather accurate information on street-based work, where and when problems arise, thus enabling us to plan the allocation of our resources where they are most needed.

26. As well as street based services, the YCC will also initially cover Planning and Building control, signposting of telephone calls income collection, customer feedback income collection. Revenues and benefits service will follow in the next phase.

27. As we move forward with the neighbourhoods' pride initiative, the YCC will have a large role to play in delivering work on many of our YNP initiatives as the customer contact will be channelled through the YCC. Further improvements to processes will happen over time as we are able to make our services as direct and customer responsive as possible and use information gathered via the YCC to identify problems and inform service planning.

Council Ownership of the York Neighbourhoods Pride Initiative

28. The YNP initiative recognises the importance of improving environmental and personal safety issues at a local level, making improvements real for our residents and customers.

29. In addition to this work there is an opportunity to celebrate and promote our work by having corporate 'buy in' of positive issues delivered by the Council. These could include the opening of a new play area, delivery of a campaign to target under age drinking, improvements and maintenance of gully's and roads and the delivery of leisure events throughout the year. It would be possible to deliver these activities as part of the YNP initiative which would help to generate awareness of the good things we do, improve the profile of the campaign and ensure that all directorates contribute to this work.

30. It is also planned to provide corporate customer service standards as part of this initiative to ensure that there is a consistent approach to delivering services and to ensure that our customers are aware of the service they can expect to receive from the Council. The service standards will be published on the Council's website and made available in Council buildings for customers to access.

Ward Action Plans and Community Development

31. As part of the York Neighbourhoods Pride initiative it is intended to develop Ward Action Plans for each Ward in the city. The Action Plans will identify opportunities to improve the local environment, link with the Neighbourhood Policing initiative that will be delivered in 2007, develop community capacity

and development so that there is ownership of local issues and help to create a 'sense of place' for residents living in these areas.

32. This work will also encourage residents to take a lead in improving their areas by identifying issues, developing projects to address these issues, sourcing external funding and then delivering this work. Another aim will be to strengthen partnership working with the voluntary and community sector to further empower residents in service delivery and improvement initiatives.

Performance Management

33. Targets have been developed relevant to the initiative so that progress can be monitored. A summary of the targets for York Neighbourhoods Pride are attached as Appendix 1. Performance will be reported via the Neighbourhood Services EMAP.

Summary

34. York Pride has been successful by improving the local environmental quality of neighbourhood and city areas. York Neighbourhoods Pride will build on this success by focusing on services that are a priority area for many of our residents, providing a cohesive and partnership approach to our environmental and Safer York work in neighbourhood and city areas, celebrating our success across the Council and by delivering community capacity and ownership of issues that are of importance to our residents on a daily basis.
35. York is a fabulous place to live, work and visit! York Neighbourhoods Pride will ensure that our environment is protected and that the 'liveability' of areas is maintained to meet the expectations and aspirations of our residents.

Consultation

36. Key Council partners such as the Police and Safer York Partnership have been consulted regarding these proposals.

Options

37. No other options are available to be considered.

Corporate Objectives

38. York Neighbourhoods Pride contributes to a number of corporate objectives including:

- Take pride in the city, by improving quality and sustainability, creating a clean and safe environment;
- Create a safe city through transparent partnership working with other agencies and the local community;

- Transform City of York Council into an excellent customer focused 'can do' authority.

Implications

39. Financial

A budget of £30k is available for the implementation of the initiatives falling within 2006/07 financial year. This is unallocated additional York Pride budget made available by the Executive on the 27th June 2006. The York Pride budget of £188k will be top sliced in 2007/08 by £30k to support the campaigns falling within the next financial year.

Where possible no cost and low cost marketing and communications options will be used to raise awareness of the campaigns, such as press releases and work with the media. The campaigns will result in action being taken by Neighbourhood services to remove fly-tipping, graffiti and litter, etc. These associated costs will be funded from base revenue budgets held within Neighbourhood Services.

- **Human Resources (HR)**

This important development signals a significant review of the way in which street level services are delivered by the council. It also indicates an intention to integrate more effectively the current range of services which impact directly on or contribute to, the quality of the physical environment as well as the safer city developments which continue to be the councils key priority.

In order to be fully effective, the campaigns in support of this programme will demand greater flexibility and more co-operation between complimentary services. This may lead to changes in roles and responsibilities and the need to review current terms and conditions of employment which may act as barriers to more flexible and integrated working practices. Where this is the case, consideration will need to be given to the implications for the grading of some jobs, which may be addressed through the wider job evaluation process. These changes will also require consultation with the Trade Unions and with employees affected, through the councils normal consultation routes.

It is noted that there is an intension to develop a comprehensive communications strategy for the programme. This is welcomed and should include internal communication so that employees understand the nature of and need for change, as well as develop a customer focussed approach to service delivery in those key areas.

- **Equalities**

Equality issues identified for the work detailed in this report will be incorporated in the York Neighbourhoods Pride initiative.

- **Legal**

There are no specific legal implications.

- **Crime and Disorder**

This report has considerable implications for the way in which crime and anti-social behaviour is tackled in York, these are outlined in paragraphs 19 to 22. In addition, the proposals within the paper demonstrate how the council intends to meet new policy and statutory responsibilities in response to, for instance, the broadening of the definition of Section 17. In addition to placing a duty on local authorities to do all they reasonably can to prevent crime, this now also requires them to take account of anti-social behaviour, behaviour adversely affecting the environment and substance misuse. The co-location of Safe City with responsibilities for neighbourhoods and environmental management, and the proposals to take this forward under the York Neighbourhoods Pride initiative, provide the necessary impetus to respond to such changes in a meaningful and co-ordinated way.

- **Information Technology (IT)**

New streetscene processes are being implemented in the York Customer Centre in November. These will use the new CRM and they will deliver an improved performance to customers. The proposals in this report may lead to further process changes which will need to be built into the CRM and the running of the service in both front and back office and this needs to be introduced in a measured way so that we can manage the changes effectively and so that we can analyse the impacts of the changes and see what effect they are having. The timescale for their introduction therefore needs to be considered.

Risk Management

40. There are no risk management implications associated with this report.

Recommendations

41. The Executive is asked to endorse the launch of the York Neighbourhoods Pride initiative and to agree to top slice the budget for 2007/08 by £30k to support the campaigns.

Reason: There will be significant environmental and Safer City implications that will benefit the City and its residents.

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Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Annexes

Annex A: York Neighbourhoods Pride Performance Targets