
Meeting of the Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services and Advisory Panel

Report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services

York Neighbourhood Pride Update

Summary

1. This report summarises the work carried out to date under the York Neighbourhood Pride initiative. The report proposes a forward programme for the next 18 months.

Background

2. In September 2003 the York Pride initiative was launched to encourage residents to take pride in their city and to participate in achieving a better quality environment. The aim was to tackle the physical appearance and condition of the city's street, housing estates and public spaces in the suburbs, villages and city centre.
3. An Executive report in October 2006 detailed the development of a 'York Neighbourhood Pride' initiative. Members endorsed the initiative and an action programme was agreed. York Neighbourhood Pride built on the original initiative by:
 - o focusing on services that are a priority for residents.
 - o providing a cohesive and partnership approach to our environmental and community safety work in neighbourhoods and city areas.
 - o celebrating success across the council.
 - o delivering community capacity and ownership of issues that are important to residents on a daily basis.

The initiative means interacting with the public to address the issues that concern them, and long term success is measured mainly by BV199 (aspects of local cleanliness and environmental crime), and BV89 (% of residents satisfied with local cleanliness).

4. The work programme agreed in October 2006 has been completed. We have had a number of successes, and have learnt some practical lessons that have influenced the proposed forward programme.

Achievements

5. The next section describes the environmental campaigns that have been delivered:

6. November 2006: Back Lane Campaign. Streets in Clifton, Micklegate, South Bank and Westfield areas were targeted as areas where problems had been experienced with residents putting their refuse bags out incorrectly and too early. Over 900 properties received letters reminding them how they should deal with their refuse, and the action that would be taken if the problem persisted. Street Environment Officers monitored the areas during the campaign. There was a dramatic reduction in the number of bags left out in the back lanes at the wrong time. Prior to the campaign an average of 500 bags a month had been left out early in the targeted areas but as a result of the action taken, letters to all residents, monitoring and following up with individual properties, this reduced to less than 20 bags put out incorrectly by the end of the campaign. A number of people who persistently failed to comply with requests not to put their bags out early or leave them in the back alleys were served with formal notices under the Environmental Protection Act 1990. The majority of these residents are now putting their rubbish bags out at the correct time. Residents welcomed the improvement in their local environment. The initiative received national and regional media coverage.
7. The appointment of two Enforcement Officers in the Neighbourhood Pride Service allows us to closely monitor areas where refuse is presented in sacks, which is leading to continued improvement.
8. Overall the campaign led to a significant improvement in the hot-spot areas targeted, and raised the issue's profile across the city. Occasional problems remain in some areas, and monitoring is ongoing through the new Enforcement team.
9. January 2007: Graffiti Campaign. Street Environment Officers, with their knowledge of graffiti problems worked with other Neighbourhood Pride Service staff, North Yorkshire Police, private landowners, utility companies and other businesses to remove graffiti. Residents responded by highlighting areas where graffiti had sprung up. In addition to the normal ongoing programme of graffiti removal, over 100 individual pieces of graffiti were removed. The campaign also focused on ways to identify, catch and deal with offenders. During the campaign, two offenders were caught which allowed us to highlight the more proactive enforcement end of what the council and police do together.
10. May 2007. Dog Fouling Campaign. This campaign highlighted the problems of dog fouling and was run by Animal Health and Neighbourhood Pride teams. The teams targeted dog-fouling hot spots and asked residents to let them know about problem areas in the city or dog owners who persistently allowed their dogs to foul in public places. Information was received about a number of problem areas, which were then cleaned and patrolled. In addition officers spoke to a number of owners who were identified through the campaign. The campaign had a significant impact on a small number of areas and will have raised awareness.
11. June to July 2007: Yorkshire in Bloom. York achieved a silver gilt award for its Yorkshire in Bloom competition entry. A key aspect to this success was the high level of partnership involvement in organising the entry through the 'In Bloom' committee, and the significant community involvement in delivering a range of floral and landscaping

improvements. A report setting out the details was discussed at October's EMAP meeting.

12. July to September 2007: Feeling & Being Safe. This campaign focused on initiatives aligned to the Safer & Stronger Communities strand of the Local Area Agreement, looking at personal and property safety as well as enforcement activity to reduce actual crime. Throughout the three month period, the following planned initiatives were undertaken by the council and its partners:

July:

- Crime prevention and security 'give-aways' and advice at ward committees which saw over 978 residents attend meetings. 368 residents obtained property marking equipment, 246 had cycles tagged, 346 personal alarms were given away and 465 energy efficient light bulbs to use in time activated lamps once the dark nights started.
- Football coaching run by safer communities policing teams.
- Lock Em' Inn campaign focusing on the consequences of arrest and detention in custody for alcohol related disorder (North Yorkshire Police and Safer York Partnership (SYP)).
- Trading standards under-age sales test purchasing.
- Child car seat checking (North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue and CYC Road Safety).
- Operation Shadow (North Yorkshire Police, SYP, Probation & Youth Offending Team) – covert and overt surveillance of prolific and priority offenders.

August:

- Trading standards fake sales and raising the profile of issues around doorstep callers and identity theft.
- Community idol, talent competition as diversionary activity for young people run by Safer Communities Policing Teams & SYP.
- Child car seat checking (North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue and CYC Road Safety).
- Huntington and Acomb fire stations community safety events (North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue).
- Cycle theft "Five a Day" campaign (SYP).

September:

- Final of community idol talent competition (Safer Communities Policing Teams & SYP).
- Think Safe, Be Safe Cycle campaign (Road Safety).
- Cycle crime prevention event (SYP).
- Killing with kindness – tackling begging (SYP).
- Award of park mark secure parking award to CYC Car Parks (SYP).
- Launch of Clifton Moor Business Watch (SYP & Community Watch).

13. The summer is normally a high crime period because the city's population increases due to the number of visitors. To measure the impact of the Feeling & Being Safe campaign, we have used information held on the North Yorkshire Police Management Information Gateway that provides live information on all crime types. This suggests that

overall crime in these three months fell 7% on the same period last year. This suggests that the campaign was successful in focusing partners on proactive community and neighbourhood level crime and disorder reduction initiatives at a traditionally high crime time of year.

14. Throughout the campaign North Yorkshire Police have run a crime reduction focused campaign in conjunction with other Yorkshire forces (Operation Impact). This was linked to the Feeling & Being Safe campaign. Also, Operation Shadow focused on targeting prolific offenders throughout the duration of the campaign. Combined with a very focused and proactive approach through the Safer York Partnership task groups and initiatives driven through Neighbourhood Services the campaign has demonstrated the results that can be obtained through partnership working.

Litter Campaigns:

15. Five litter/cleansing campaigns ran over the year. Overall the five campaigns detailed below plus the street scene review's move to a different approach to street cleansing has reduced the BV199 score and we are hopeful that satisfaction will increase on the 2006/7 level. It is difficult to isolate the effect of the campaigns on the level of cleanliness and customer satisfaction, but taken together as a programme they have contributed to York being a cleaner city than this time last year.
16. December 2006: Clean for Christmas Campaign. Residents were asked to identify 'grot spots' in the city that needed cleaning. Over 70 residents sent a Christmas card (virtual or real) to the street environment service about areas that needed to be tackled. The majority of issues related to street cleaning with the remainder concerning graffiti, refuse, litter and highways. Neighbourhood Services teams cleaned up and worked with private land owners where the problem related to non council land. The use of postcards which involved the public made this a memorable campaign.
17. February to March 2007: Spring Clean campaign. This campaign built on the previous graffiti and Clean for Christmas campaigns by focusing a highly visible clean and tidy up of the city centre and residential areas. Residents again were asked to identify particular grot spot areas that needed attention.
18. June to July 2007: 'Its in Your Hands' litter campaign. This campaign aimed to raise awareness about the extent of litter in the city and the cost of cleaning it up. The campaign coincided with the introduction of SmokeFree legislation and officers worked with the SmokeFree Enforcement team to raise awareness that cigarettes were also litter. The council was chosen as one of ten councils to help Encams (Keep Britain Tidy) raise awareness of cigarette litter as part of a two week national campaign in September 2007. The Litter campaign was therefore extended to September 2007. During the period, a mail shot was sent to over 100 of York's largest employers, raising awareness of litter and encouraging joint ownership of the problem. Over 4500 portable ashtrays were given out to the public from a stand in the city centre over the two weeks of the Encams campaign. During the three

months of the litter campaign, 40 fixed penalty notices were issued for littering.

19. July to August 2007: 'Cleaner City' Campaign. This focused on cleaning the city centre at the height of the tourist season.
20. October 2007: 'Litter's out' Campaign. This campaign focused on working with young people, attending secondary schools and York College. A press release led to much publicity and media interest, including York Press accompanying officers on a litter patrol. Every secondary school received a pack containing a free Litter Pick kit for on-site campaigns and a DVD about the impact graffiti has in the community, which was aimed for upper school citizenship classes. The DVD was designed by Manchester school pupils and engaged school pupils in dialogue on their level. All nine secondary schools supported using the DVDs, all agreed to assist in helping educate on the wrongs of littering, and some planned to use the clean up kits on campus. FPN monitoring took place throughout the four week period including mornings, lunch times and leaving times.

Overall assessment

21. The programme of campaigns has successfully highlighted a range of environmental crime issues. We have raised the profile of these issues, and raised the council's (and partners) profile in enforcing legislation. In some cases the campaign has had direct impact while in other cases the campaign has and will contribute to longer term improvement.
22. The local environmental quality corporate priority is partly measured by BV199a which measures the proportion of survey areas that fall below acceptable cleanliness standards. BV199a has improved from 19.2% in 2006/7, to 8% over the first half of 2007/8. By tackling environmental issues and raising the profile of environmental enforcement, the campaigns will have played a part in helping achieve this improvement.
23. The experience gained from managing a year of campaigns has provided a number of lessons that have helped shape the proposed forward programme set out below.

Forward Programme

24. Local level community engagement and pride in one's neighbourhood is important to residents. Listening to communities, and promoting cohesive and inclusive communities are direction of travel statements in the corporate strategy. Residents have said what is important through their engagement in the Neighbourhood Action Planning (NAP) process. The issues highlighted consistently in the NAP documents by residents and their councillors are community safety and anti-social behaviour, local cleanliness, recycling, neighbourliness and community support.
25. As part of the council's response, we propose the following programme of York Neighbourhood Pride campaigns to support these initiatives until the end of the 2008/09 financial year. We could develop a number of the proposed campaigns (e.g. spring clean, York in Bloom) through the ward

planning meetings to ensure councillor and community engagement and to ensure buy-in from other directorates.

26. Each of the campaigns would run for 6-8 weeks. This change will allow us to address wider issues in more depth, to tie into the range of work done by partners and other council directorates, and to enable the campaigns to leave a more sustainable impact on the city. Marketing & Communications advice is that 6-8 week campaigns are likely to raise the profile of these issues more successfully than 4 week campaigns. The timescales within the timetable below are indicative and we would seek to ensure a gap between campaigns as part of coordinating and managing the programme. Leaving a gap between campaigns will allow us to introduce and conclude the campaigns without tripping over the previous/next campaign.
27. Project coordination and management will be improved through adopting a project steering group / project officer approach. This approach will help lighten the load on the project officer by supporting them and helping them deal with some of the higher level issues – e.g. to ensure a greater level of corporate buy-in to their projects. We will be clearer about how we will measure the success of each campaign. In planning campaigns, we will adopt the Yorkshire in Bloom criteria of community involvement and sustainability of improvement.

Issue	Timing	Comments/Issues
Recycling and sustainability awards	Feb & March 2008	This is an opportunity to raise awareness of the new recycling opportunities being made available to schools and businesses, and to highlight good practice examples. The campaign could be used as a launching board for an in-house business award for the duty of care compliance and best practice in waste management. The campaign could go wider and look at what communities are doing e.g. as part of Neighbourhood Policing Teams local action days.
Spring Clean	April & May 2008	This will gear the city up for the summer, by improving environmental quality across the city's neighbourhoods. Potential to positively cover the work of the Neighbourhood Pride Service crews and to link into the early stages of the York in Bloom campaign as well.
York in Bloom	June & July 2008	This provides an opportunity to improve the appearance of the city and to link to the many positive things that people and groups are doing across the city.
Community Safety	Summer 2008 (tbc)	Focus and timing to be worked up with partners through the SYP Executive. An initial suggestion is to develop a summer campaign.
Students	Sept & Oct 2008	The focus would be on helping students play their part within local communities. We would seek to

		work positively with the student bodies and to support work they are already doing. A campaign would provide an opportunity to support students in positive ways e.g. welcome pack, and to tackle issues they face e.g. crime, housing standards.
Reducing environmental impact of Christmas	Dec & Jan 2008	A range of activities would be developed to remind people of the environmental impact of the Christmas rush and to help people to recycle as much as possible at this time of year.

28. The success of the Feeling & Being Safer campaign suggests that we should include crime reduction in this programme. Residents see safety as a key priority, and it is a corporate priority as well. It is an SYP core function to raise the profile of crime reduction activities. We will work through the SYP Executive to develop a crime reduction campaign that partners can engage with in terms of timing and content. We will explore ways to build this around the 'days of action' that Neighbourhood Policing Teams are running.
29. In addition to the organised set of campaigns, each department already commits to raising the profile of its service area through press releases and articles. The project steering group will look to develop this area of activity to ensure that community engagement and education are being achieved through better coordinating press releases throughout the year on a smaller scale.

Consultation

30. Consultation in preparation of the proposals was limited to officers across the directorate.

Options

31. The options for members to consider are:

Option 1: To agree the proposed programme of campaigns for the next 18 months, subject to any comment at the meeting.

Option 2: To not agree the proposed programme of campaigns for the next 18 months.

Analysis

32. Option 1 would help keep the profile of environmental issues and our approach to tackling environmental crime high. This is a further piece of work (to be done alongside other ongoing work) that will help us to make and sustain improvement in local environmental quality.
33. Under option 2 ongoing work would continue, but the high profile helpful in raising environmental awareness would not be delivered. We would

lose an opportunity to focus on significant environmental issues that the programme provides.

Corporate Priorities

34. The Neighbourhood Pride campaigns support the following corporate priorities:
- Improve the actual and perceived condition and appearance of the city's streets, housing estates and public spaces;
 - Reduce the actual and perceived impact of violent, aggressive and nuisance behaviour on people in York;

Implications:

Financial. The reduced volume of campaigns will ensure the associated budget of £30k during 2008/09 will be adequate. Other service and staffing financial implications can be accommodated from within existing budgets.

Human Resources. There are no direct implications for staff.

Equalities. There are no equalities implications in this report.

Legal. There are no legal implications in this report.

Crime and Disorder. The proposed programme will raise the profile of how environmental crime is tackled in York.

IT. There are no IT implications associated with this report.

Property. There are no property implication in this report.

Risk Management

35. In compliance with the council's risk management strategy, the main risks that have been identified in this report are those which could lead to the inability to deliver the proposal (operational risks). This would lead to damage to the council's image and reputation and failure to meet stakeholders' expectations.
36. Measured in terms of impact and likelihood, the risk at this point needs only to be monitored as it does not provide a real threat to the achievement of the objectives of this report. The enhanced programme management arrangements will manage the level of risk associated with delivering the proposal.

Recommendations

37. That the Advisory Panel advise the Executive Member to approve option 1.

Reason: to support our tackling of environmental crime issues as part of the delivery of the local environment corporate priority.

Contact Details

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Report Approved**Date** 15/11/07**Specialist Implications Officer(s)**

Financial
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Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all***All****For further information please contact the report author****Background Papers:**

'Yorkshire in Bloom' report to Neighbourhood Services EMAP meeting 17.10.07

Annexes:

None