

Community Action Pilot Scheme in Horden

17 September – 9 November 2012



Background

The Community Action Team (CAT) carried out a pilot scheme to tackle a range of environmental problems in the Horden area from 17 September and 9 November 2012.

The CAT worked alongside both the local community and partner agencies to deal with a range of issues including:

- improving housing standards and management of privately rented property
- dealing with empty properties
- removing rubbish that has been dumped in gardens, on streets and on waste ground
- helping with improvements to buildings and abandoned land
- investigating noise issues
- challenging under-age sales of alcohol/cigarettes
- implementing energy efficiency schemes



During our time in Horden, the CAT ran a number of events where local residents, landlords and businesses could be involved and have their say. There were also a number of informal drop-in sessions. These have given anyone interested the opportunity to help identify local priorities and issues.

Residents' meeting

Members of the community were invited to attend a residents' meeting to provide the CAT with their opinions on the pilot scheme and to give their views on the areas the team planned to target. There was a discussion with attendees about known issues, an outline of the proposed plans and an opportunity to ask questions and view a location map where problem areas were identified.

The priorities that were agreed with partners following this residents' meeting, meetings with community groups and input from the community through surveys were:

- the removal of rubbish dumped in back yards and security of the refuse bins
- improving housing standards and better management of privately rented property
- dealing with empty properties, commercial and private
- underage sales and proxy sales of restricted goods such as alcohol and cigarettes



Drop-in sessions

Residents were encouraged to attend drop-in sessions at Horden Social Welfare Centre throughout our visit to Horden to discuss progress and report any issues to the CAT. These sessions also gave residents the opportunity to talk to a Housing Solutions Officer who, along with the CAT, gave advice on housing options and healthy lifestyles.

At the drop-in sessions, health trainers were also present to offer one-to-one advice on healthy lifestyles and carry out mini health checks which consisted of:

- Blood pressure checks
- BMI (height and weight) checks
- Brief discussions on lifestyle issues
- Information about services and support

Evaluation

At the end of the scheme, an evaluation process was implemented, seeking feedback from local residents and those who attended the resident's meeting, and producing an exit plan to continue to deal with any identified issues.

In visiting Horden, the CAT carried out the following actions:

- Weekly walkabouts that identified 285 issues of concern

- Two drop-ins per week with CAT representatives, displays and health trainers
- Fire service carried out 27 home hire risk checks
- Joint visits between the CAT and the social-housing provider Accent to speak with tenants about dog fouling and rubbish in their yards
- Test purchasing of alcohol in nine local premises
- Reactive and proactive casework by partners: public health and housing, trading standards, planning, empty homes, environmental wardens, streetscene, accent, police and fire service
- Liaison with parish council regarding the green dog walkers initiative
- Home safety measures were provided to elderly residents living around Edenvale Estate/Roseby Road/Sunderland Road on Tuesday 6 November 2012 through a safer communities initiative in conjunction with East Durham Homes and Morrisons

Although the CAT have moved onto another area, the residual council services and partner agencies will continue to operate in the area and the CAT have put in place the following measures to continue to work on the areas of priority:

- Monthly patrols, organised by Accent, will be carried out by Wardens, Public Health team, the Police and local agents to check on the condition of properties, back yards and tackle any issues found
- Homes where contaminated recycling has been found will be visited as part of a countywide educational campaign
- Bins of empty properties will continue to be removed by streetscene (returned free of charge once reoccupied)
- Dog fouling patrols will be carried out by wardens at different times of the day. Residents are requested to report details of dog fouling e.g. date and time, where it happens, description of dog, dog owner and address
- Green dog walkers campaign will be implemented in Horden
- New housing advice line for empty homes, private sector tenants and landlords has recently been launched
- Regeneration colleagues will continue to pursue nine untidy sites, including the Jumping Jacks site on Sunderland Road
- Accent will make their handyman services available to private owners and landlords
- Fire and rescue service will continue to offer free home safety checks
- Further test purchasing of alcohol will be carried out
- Individual casework regarding property condition and rubbish accumulations will be seen to conclusion
- A multi-agency carousel will visit year eight pupils at Dene Community School in April. Alcohol abuse will be discussed as well as other issues
- Accent will speed up their processes to deal with rubbish in yards
- Health checks by NHS health trainers will be carried out at the food co-op
- Accent will organise quarterly meetings between partners working in the east coastal stretch to discuss ongoing environmental and housing issues.

Further information

For information on what and where the CAT are working currently, please visit our [Community Action Scheme – Current Project](#) webpage.

You can also find out what work the CAT have carried out in other areas of the county by visiting our [Community Action Scheme](#) webpage, or for more information on our pilot scheme, please visit the [Community Action Pilot Scheme](#) webpage.

Contact us

For further information on the CAT, or to report any issues of concern in your area, please e-mail us at CommunityActionTeam@durham.gov.uk or call the team on **03000 261 016**.