

Community Action Pilot Scheme in West Cornforth

23 July – 14 September 2012



Background

The Community Action Team (CAT) carried out a pilot scheme to tackle a range of environmental problems in the West Cornforth area from 23 July and 14 September 2012.

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

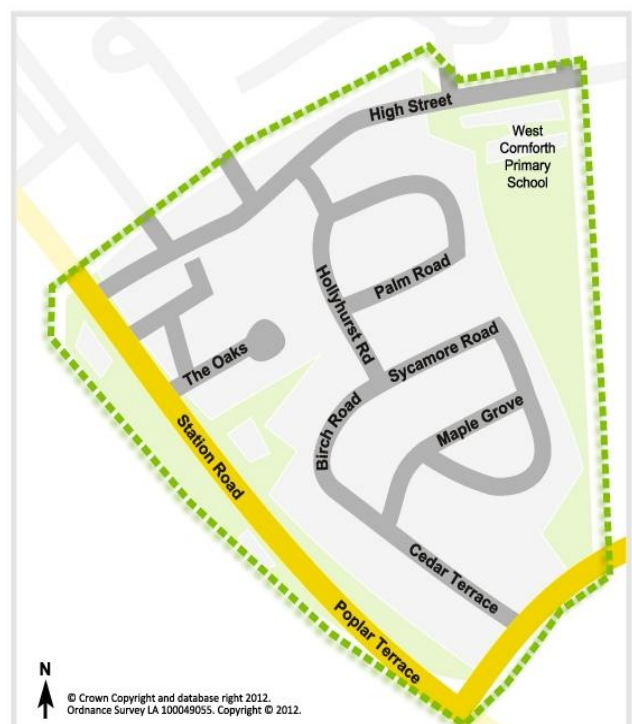


- improving housing standards and management of privately rented property
- dealing with empty properties
- removing rubbish that has been dumped in gardens, on streets and on waste ground
- helping with improvements to buildings and abandoned land
- investigating noise issues
- challenging under-age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

During our time in West Cornforth, the team 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



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was a discussion with attendees about the issues identified through initial research, 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 prioritised with partners following this residents' meeting were:

- the removal of rubbish dumped in gardens, streets and on waste ground
- improving housing standards and better management of privately rented property
- dealing with empty properties.

Drop-in sessions

Residents were encouraged to attend drop-in sessions at West Cornforth Community Centre throughout our visit to West Cornforth to discuss progress and report any issues to the CAT. These sessions also gave residents the opportunity to talk to a Housing Solutions Officer and an Energy Efficiency Officer who, along with the CAT, gave advice on housing options and healthy lifestyles. The Local Beat Officer and Police Community Support Officer also attended several sessions.

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 West Cornforth, the CAT carried out the following actions:

- Weekly walkabouts that identified 70 issues of concern
- Three drop-ins per week with advertised talks and health trainers
- Weekly case conferences to discuss complex cases with partners
- Fire service carried out 46 home hire risk checks
- Waste carrier checks in the wider area by wardens and police resulted in two fixed penalty notices being served and one warning given
- Test purchasing of alcohol in two local premises
- Cold calling zone to re-refresh the existing zone and extend the area of the zone

- Reactive and proactive casework by partners: public health and housing, trading standards, planning, building control, empty homes, wardens, streetscene, 'livin', police and fire service
- Liaison with parish council regarding improvement of the High Street

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

- Wardens and police will carry out regular patrols of the streets where frequent dumping of rubbish was found
- Improvements are planned by the parish council to improve the appearance of properties on the High Street through grant funding
- Planning colleagues are continuing to pursue 6 properties which are detrimental to the amenity of the area
- Empty home colleagues are tackling 6 long-term empty properties with a view to bringing them back into use
- The police will be carrying out a speedwatch survey in the village
- There will be talks to the local school by partners on alcohol and antisocial behaviour
- Further test purchasing of alcohol will be carried out
- 'Livin' plan to improve the car parking facilities around Palm Road and Maple Grove
- Individual casework regarding noise and property condition will be seen to conclusion
- All residents are requested to report details of dog fouling to enable this to be tackled



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 we 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**.