



Report of the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods

Inner North West Area Committee

Date: 13th September 2007

Subject: Student Accommodation 'Changeover': Feedback from activities

Electoral Wards Affected:

ALL



Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Council Function



Delegated Executive Function available for Call In



Delegated Executive Function not available for Call In Details set out in the report



Executive Summary

This report provides detailed feedback from the recent student accommodation 'changeover' initiative. The project aimed to reduce the environmental impact of the annual changeover, as well as enhancing the community safety of both transient and permanent residents across the affected area during a period which has historically seen heightened levels of criminality.

There have been positive results with regards to street cleaning of key hotspots, partnership working and communications, however there continued to be considerable challenges across the student areas due to the large quantities of waste being cleared from properties. The challenge posed by this volume of waste is considered to merit further resources for both Streetscene Services and Enforcement.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

- 1.1 To provide Area Committee with an overview of the increased services in operation across the student areas from 17 June to 15 July 2007.
- 1.2 To provide feedback from partners, residents and landlords regarding the effectiveness of our response.
- 1.3 To make recommendations for future development of this project.

2.0 Main Activities and Issues

2.1 Communications:

2.1.1 Additional work was undertaken to communicate with students and landlords regarding responsible disposal of waste and the council services being provided, including:

- ‘Leave Leeds Tidy’ – A dedicated website for students created by Leeds University Union in partnership with the North West Area Management and Leeds Metropolitan University Union;
- An educational leaflet, designed by Leeds University Union, which was distributed to 10,000 households in the area. The leaflet was distributed with About Leeds;
- The Accredited Landlord Team undertook a series of communications to landlords regarding extra services and an amnesty on commercial waste for accredited landlords during the changeover period; and
- An advert was included in the UNIPOL newsletter, which was sent to all UNIPOL tenants.

2.2 Streetscene:

2.2.1 The information below details the additional services that were provided over and above the level of core service activities:

- 950 tonnes of domestic waste collected from the servicing of wheeled bins, equating to 82 vehicle loads;
- 24 extra refuse collectors;
- 328 tonnes of side/bulky waste cleared;
- 5 additional bulky waste crews, totaling 97 staff days; and
- 100% of the Streetscene Area Manager’s time was dedicated to the area.

2.3 Enforcement

2.3.1 Summary of activity :

- 8 officers worked over the main weekend, equating to 21 officer days
- 129 streets were inspected;
- 16 properties were targeted for monitoring to ensure land cleared;
- 11 fly tipping investigations undertaken in respect of waste found on the street where non-student residents are suspected of offending;
- 2 abandoned cars were found and reported to Highways Enforcement;
- 1 serious waste fire was found and extinguished;
- Kirkstall Road Waste Site was visited by officers to ensure compliance with the accredited landlord amnesty;
- 7 vehicles were checked and asked to produce licences and proof of legal waste disposal;
- 57 properties received targeted monitoring or received enforcement activity in the form of litter clearing notices; and
- 10 prosecutions arose as a direct result of work over the changeover period.

3.0 Neighbourhood Wardens

3.1 Both Neighbourhood Wardens currently in post worked over the main changeover weekend, providing additional support to the environmental enforcement work being undertaken.

4.0 Other

- 4.1 Leeds Met Student Union held their annual bargain hunt event in May on Woodhouse Moor. The event aims to promote students from both universities to recycle their unwanted items by selling them rather than throwing them away. The event has been running for a number of years now, with this year continuing to be a success.
- 4.2 The police, while not able to input significantly into the changeover work, did arrange to have a few additional PCSOs on patrol over the main changeover weekend. This provided extra coverage of the area, with PCSOs able to liaise with wardens and enforcement officers, reporting any issues.

5.0 Issues

- 5.1 Although considerable effort had been made to promote responsible disposal of waste by students and landlords alike, there remained significant issues across the area in terms of volume of waste being disposed of within this peak time.
- 5.2 The take up of the landlord amnesty at Kirkstall Road site was disappointing, this is despite a notice in the Accredited Landlord newsletter, a presentation at their April forum and e-shots through the Accredited Landlord scheme. The main issue flagged up by landlords has been the limited items covered by the amnesty, these include:-

- Cardboard
- Glass
- Scrap metal e.g. washing machines, microwave ovens, food and drinks cans
- Household waste

Items that are not covered by the amnesty and would be charged for include:-

- Mattresses
- Carpets
- Sofas
- Televisions
- Fridges and freezers

Landlords expressed that the main items they find left by students are the ones that are not covered by the amnesty.

- 5.3 The widespread activity of 'bag slashers' across the area exacerbated the scale of the challenge and highlighted the need to either remove waste immediately, or provide secure storage until collection.
- 5.4 A number of hotspot neighbourhoods within the Area of Housing Mix were specifically targeted, in these the clearance of household waste and bulky items was effective in the main. However, due to limited resources being available other areas affected were not dealt with as efficiently, with an increased number of complaints being made to both the Council's customer services and ward Members.

6.0 Recommendations

- 6.1 That Area Committee is asked to:
- a) note the initiatives undertaken and feedback received;
 - b) continue the work of the changeover group; and
 - c) request a report with suggestions for tackling student changeover issues to be taken to Executive Board.