
Report to: Inner North West Environment Sub Group

Date: 23rd September

Subject: Student Changeover Evaluation 2010

Executive Summary:

- 1 This report seeks to provide feedback on student changeover period in June and July 2010, and make recommendations for improvements to next year's changeover action plan.

Background:

- 2 Student Changeover refers to the period between late May and middle of July when student tenancies end. A huge amount of waste is generated as students empty their properties, concentrated around 30th June.
- 3 Each year, the changeover steering group develops an action plan to manage and co-ordinate services over the changeover period. This year's action plan was agreed in April 2010.

Resources:

- 4 Streetscene
One additional refuse collection vehicle Monday to Friday for three weeks funded by Area Committee at £9,800.
Two Sunday collections funded through core budget, est £3,700
Landfill costs for 670 tonnes collected
Recycling costs for 13 tonnes (including rejections)
Extra street cleansing and bulky waste collections using resources diverted from other areas.
- 5 Environmental Action Team
Two officers in the area Monday to Friday for *how many weeks?*
Overtime patrols 30th June to 2nd July 5am–8am & 7pm – 10.30pm, funded by Area Committee £1,900.
- 5 Police
Twelve PCSOs patrolling in the area spread between 8am and midnight each day.

Four PCSOs were deployed in partnership with the Environmental Action Team for evening bag slashing patrols.

6 Leeds University Union

Three complementary strands co-ordinated by Leeds University Union

- Communications strategy

- Neighbourhoods project - Ten changeover wardens patrolled the area with advice and information

- Green Streets project collected and distributed 20.8 tonnes of reusable items through free shops and charities

£15,922.29 funded by Area Committee

£2,198 generated income

£11,343 (estimated) in-kind resources from Leeds University Union

1261 volunteer hours (worth £8196 at job link temp rates)

7 Recycling

Bottle banks installed in three additional locations were in Headingley; Batcliffe Mount, Headingley Mount and Canterbury Drive. Two additional bottle banks installed on Hyde Park Road. These five new bottle banks are now permanent glass recycling sites. The cost of these additional sites was funded through the existing recycling bring site budget.

8 Environmental Services Communication Team

Wraparound for student newspaper, £2,000.

9 Residents

Seven residents provided photos

Nine questionnaires completed

10 Total contributions:

Area Committee: £27,622

Environmental Services: £50,580

Leeds University Union: £19,539 (in kind) £2,198 income

Planning:

11 Action Plan agreed in April with one further steering group meeting held in May.

Funding for Streetscene, Green Streets and EAT was agreed by the Area Committee in February. A separate meeting was held to plan the bag slashing patrols, although it was not reported through the steering group that the police were not able to support an early morning operation.

Communication:

12 Leave Leeds Tidy leafleted 10000 homes in the changeover area during May and

set up a Leave Leeds Tidy website with information for students, residents and landlords. Leeds University, Leeds Met University and Leeds Trinity issued high level messages on their main portal. Emails, social networking and articles in community newsletters were also used to give information, recruit volunteers and encourage donations to Green Streets.

- 13 A letter was sent to all accredited landlords in May reminding them of their responsibilities and the Household Waste Sorting Site amnesty for accreditation scheme members.

Service Delivery:

- 14 Streetscene used their own staff rather than agency workers for the additional vehicle, and their local knowledge and expertise improved the speed of collections. Main roads were kept relatively clear over the changeover period, with accumulations in back streets cleared by early in the following week. The teams did not have any issues relating to highways works or the street lighting replacement programme, but did report delays due to skips, especially the week after changeover.
- 15 There were very high levels of contamination of green bins, although all were sent for sorting. Following changeover, a lot of black and green bins were filled with garden waste from landlords tidying their properties.
- 16 The Leave Leeds Tidy changeover wardens distributed publicity in advance and dealt with 664 enquiries from residents and students. They were a visible presence on the streets giving information and advice to residents and students and making a practical contribution through litter picking and bagging. They told people about Green Streets scheme and provided information on other services.
- 17 The Green Streets project collected 20.8 tonnes of re-usable items from student halls and residential properties. These were re-distributed to students and local residents through 8 free shops held in 7 community venues and the Leeds University Union. Donations of bedding, kitchenware and clothing were also given to 18 local charities.
- 18 The Environmental Action Team worked before and during changeover, dealing with waste in gardens, bins on streets, littering and noise nuisance. Dedicated bag slashing patrols were carried out early morning and late evening over four days. 35 people were spoken to for interfering with waste left for collection, and of those, the majority were believed to be opportunists rather than criminals. PCSOs provided twenty additional statements in relation to bag slashing that have been passed to the Environmental Action Team. The early morning patrols were more successful in terms of stopping people going through rubbish, but the Neighbourhood Policing Team were unable to provide PCSO support due to the requirement for overtime to be paid.
- 19 There were 164 noise complaints in the inner North West area during June, an increase of 54 on the previous month. Noise complaints during changeover week itself were lower than the monthly average. The good weather in early June may have contributed to the higher number of complaints.

Evaluation:

- 20 Questionnaires were sent to all residents' associations, members of the Hyde Park and Woodhouse forum and the 'Headingley Activists' mailing list. Nine responses were received.

- 21 Overall, the responses were positive about how changeover had been managed this year. Seven of the nine felt that the appearance of their neighbourhood during changeover was better than last year. Five felt that rubbish left on the streets was collected more quickly, with three saying it was about the same.
- 22 Half of respondents had heard of the Green Streets project, with two thirds reporting seeing red bags used in their neighbourhood. Awareness of the Leave Leeds Tidy communications strand was better, with two thirds saying they knew what this was. It should be noted however, that all respondents were permanent residents rather than students.
- 23 Almost half of respondents highlighted landlord waste as an issue, although service providers felt that it was less of a problem this year. Communication with landlords and students throughout the year was requested by three respondents.
- 24 An independent evaluation of the Leave Leeds Tidy project was commissioned by Leeds University Union. A survey was carried out as part of the evaluation, using street interviews and an online questionnaire to get the views of students, residents, landlords and workers. This showed that two thirds of the respondents thought that the appearance of the streets had improved from last year and only 9% thought that it was worse. The survey also showed that student awareness of Leave Leeds Tidy activities is high. The leaflet had been seen by 77% of the students who participated in the survey and 96% said that they were aware of the campaign.
- 25 Noise from parties was highlighted as an issue by resident members of the changeover steering group. There were no additional noise patrols in the changeover plan, as they had little impact last year. The Environmental Action Team was asked to prioritise bag slashing patrols, which has less of an impact on normal service delivery than taking officers out of the rota onto night time and weekend working. As noise complaints during this time are unlikely to lead to formal enforcement, the police will be asked to respond to noise nuisance calls instead of referring them to the Council service.
- 26 Streetscene operatives reported that the Green Streets red bags attracted bag slashers, creating mess to clean up and sending the contents to landfill. Streetscene operatives did not have the contact details of Environmental Action Team officers and have asked that an EAT officer travel on the vehicle next year as they witnessed high levels of bag slashing and fly tipping.
- 27 Police officers would be required on any future early morning bag slashing patrols, and additional funding from the Area Committee would be required.

Recommendations:

- 28 The steering group recommends that the 2010 action plan be followed next year with the following amendments and additions:

Planning:

1. Apply for Area Committee funding in December
2. Ensure all key personnel attend planning meetings or send a substitute
3. Develop a coordinated communications strategy for changeover which clearly identifies the different messages, audiences, and methods, and sets a timetable for year round promotion. Ensure that all the universities are fully involved in delivering this strategy
4. Engage with landlords through existing forums to better understand how they communicate with tenants and seek their recommendations for service improvements
5. Streetscene to review the impact collection day had on the speed refuse was cleared

Delivery:

6. Concentrate on early morning bag slashing operations, and apply for funding for police overtime.
7. More frequent emptying of bottle banks and more involvement of officers in the planning process.
8. Agree protocols and identify opportunities for joint working and communication between front line staff
9. Organise Green Streets free shops in accessible community venues as well as university campuses. Hold the shops over several days and make sure that there is intensive publicity immediately before and during free shops event
10. Make it easier for people to donate goods to Green Streets by making red bags available to collect in community venues, local shops, the University Unions and faculties
11. Investigate ways of working in partnership with charities
12. Agree with police and out of hours noise service a way of informally dealing with noise complaints during changeover
13. Schedule skip enforcement for the week after changeover
14. Trial a day of yard sales in a particular location and provide publicity materials

Communication:

15. Create a dedicated message for Leeds Met students who leave early
16. Support residents who want to create their own street specific publicity
17. Write to skip companies before changeover
18. Publicise changeover through social networking sites like the LS6 Facebook page
19. Send out a dedicated noise nuisance message