

New Deal for Communities

The National Evaluation

Research Reports

Cleaning-up the Neighbourhood: Dealing with Abandoned Cars and Fly-tipping

Research Report 1

The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit is currently sponsoring the 2002-2005 national evaluation of New Deal for Communities. This evaluation is being undertaken by a consortium of organisations co-ordinated by the Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research at Sheffield Hallam University. The views expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect those of the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit.

Those wishing to know more about the evaluation should consult the evaluation's web site in the first instance
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Sheffield Hallam University

**Cleaning-up the Neighbourhood:
Dealing with Abandoned Cars and
Fly-tipping**

Research Report 1

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Key Findings

Abandoned cars and fly-tipping appear to be significant problems in NDC areas and many residents perceived this to be the case. Nearly half - 45% - felt that abandoned cars were a problem in their area while 70% felt the same about 'litter and rubbish in the streets'.

A number of Partnerships have developed innovative and comprehensive initiatives to tackle the problems of fly-tipping and abandoned cars. These include the eight areas which were studied in-depth as part of this project (Leicester, Birmingham Kings Norton, Manchester, Luton, Hartlepool, Newham, Newcastle, and Knowsley) and three (Bristol, Haringey and Brighton) featured on the NRU's new regeneration good practice website: renewal.net.

Four main reasons were offered by Partnerships to explain why dumping had emerged as being a particular problem in their area. All eight studied in detail felt that the paucity of the neighbourhood clean-up service provided by statutory agencies had been the principal contributory factor behind this. It was suggested that 'contextual' factors such as the prevalence of derelict land and empty properties, the urban form of the neighbourhood, and estate reputation also contributed to the problem.

Although to date, none of the eight Partnerships examined had completed a robust assessment of the impact of their neighbourhood clean-up initiatives, most felt that they were working. A number of positive outcomes were identified by Partnerships: an improved physical environment; an enhanced neighbourhood image; more effective partnership working; and greater community involvement.

In addition, there is evidence that some 'mainstreaming' may be occurring as a number of local authorities appear to be contemplating replicating across the whole of the borough the neighbourhood clean-up initiatives introduced by NDCs within their areas.

A number of potential barriers to the successful implementation of neighbourhood clean-up initiatives were identified by Partnerships. These included: the reluctance of local authorities to commit resources, both financial and human, to NDC areas; the difficulties of partnership working; insufficient resident support for the project; the difficulties of tackling the problem of dumping when properties are privately owned; and the prioritisation of other issues by NDCs.

Figure 1: Abandoned Car at Birmingham Kings Norton NDC



1. Introduction

This report represents the first of the Housing and Physical Environment (HPE) Team's outputs since the National Evaluation of the NDC programme proper began in May 2002¹. Drawing principally on data gleaned from an in-depth study of eight good practice initiatives, it focuses on the key issues of abandoned cars and fly-tipping and how Partnerships are responding to these problems. In doing so it identifies a number of good practice examples and identifies a number of key pointers for those Partnerships considering developing neighbourhood clean-up strategies in their areas.

As is consistent with the relatively limited research objectives of this sub-theme project, the analysis presented in this report is not as comprehensive as that which will appear in other outputs from the HPE team. However, it does provide a useful review of Partnerships' neighbourhood clean-up activity and in-depth analysis of a number of initiatives.

A number of studies have clearly demonstrated that the quality of public spaces has a significant impact on residential quality of life (Galster and Hesser; Pacione; Furbey and Goodchild). However, many deprived areas in this country are blighted by poor physical environments where problems such as graffiti, rubbish dumping, and neglect are endemic. In many areas, the paucity of public spaces has become a very visible sign of broader malaise and neighbourhood failure - this is especially the case for a number of New Deal for Community areas.

The importance of improving the physical environment of this country's poorer neighbourhoods was recognised recently by the Deputy Prime Minister when he wrote foreword of the report, *'Living Places - Cleaner, Safer, Greener'*, launched at the Urban Summit in October 2002:

"Successful, thriving and prosperous communities are characterised by streets, parks and open spaces that are clean, safe and attractive - areas that local people are proud of and want to spend their time. Tackling failure, such as litter, graffiti, fly-tipping, abandoned cars, dog-fouling, the loss of play areas or footpaths, is for many people the top public service priority."

This paper looks at how NDC areas have sought to tackle two of the issues highlighted by Mr. Prescott: abandoned cars and fly-tipping. Our initial analysis had shown that these two problems were prevalent in a number of areas - this was confirmed by the recently launched analysis of the MORI household survey.

As part of a survey of more than 19,500 residents in all 39 of the NDC areas, MORI asked respondents to describe how problematic 17 key residential attributes were in their neighbourhood. As Table 1 reveals, both 'litter and rubbish in the streets' and 'abandoned or burnt-out cars' emerged as being significant problems - 70% of residents felt that the former was a problem in their area while 45% felt the same about abandoned cars.

Further analysis revealed that the severity of the problems differed little when the sample was broken-down by demographic group. However, perhaps not unexpectedly, they did vary by Partnership. Initial analysis also suggests the existence of a link between quality of life and neighbourhood clean-up issues: residents who thought that abandoned cars and fly-tipping

¹ The HPE team have devised an indicative work programme which covers some eight themes over a three year period. In addition to the neighbourhood clean-up theme, in the first year of the project the team will examine the key issues of low demand, anti-social behaviour and tenure diversification.

were problems in their areas were more likely to be dissatisfied with their neighbourhood as a whole.

Table 1: The Ten¹ Most Problematic Aspects of the Neighbourhood Identified by NDC Residents (All Areas)

Problem	%			
	A serious problem in this area	A problem in this area, but not serious	Not a problem in this area	Don't know
Litter and rubbish in the streets	38	32	29	1
Teenagers hanging around on the streets	41	28	29	1
Car crime	38	25	30	8
Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property	33	30	36	2
The speed and volume of road traffic	31	28	40	1
Household burglary	25	28	42	5
Drug dealing and use	36	17	32	15
Disturbance from crowds and gangs or hooliganism	20	26	52	2
Poor quality or lack of parks or open spaces	24	23	51	2
Abandoned or burnt out cars	20	25	53	2

Source: MORI Household Survey 2002 (n = 19,574)²

This report, which focuses in particular on eight 'good practice' initiatives, is divided into eight sections, including this one. The second briefly considers our approach to the research, the third explores why the problem of dumping has come to the fore in many NDC areas in recent years, while the fourth reviews the objectives of Partnerships' neighbourhood initiatives. Section five explores a number of process issues including resident involvement, partnership working, and mainstreaming. The penultimate section identifies several potential barriers to the implementation of neighbourhood clean-up initiatives while the last section offers a number of concluding thoughts. In doing so, it identifies the key lessons for Partnerships to emerge from the research.

¹ The seven problems which were seen as being less severe than the issue of 'abandoned and burnt-out cars' were: 'dogs causing nuisance or mess'; 'problems with neighbours'; 'run down or boarded-up properties'; 'poor public transport'; 'racial harassment'; 'people being attacked or harassed'; and 'property being set on fire'.

² The data presented in this table have not been weighted to reflect demographic and contextual factors. It is possible that some figures may change slightly once this has been done by MORI.

The Braunstone Estate, Leicester consists mainly of local authority owned family houses, divided into two distinct areas. Braunstone South has a relatively higher standard of housing and physical environment, and there are some tensions between this part and Braunstone North. Many local residents believe that Braunstone has been neglected by statutory agencies, but there is still a strong sense of community in some parts of the neighbourhood, as indicated by the high level of community involvement during the preparation of the NDC Delivery Plan. The estate had severe problems with abandoned vehicles and fly-tipping, from rubbish bags thrown into void properties, builders' waste, domestic appliances and garden waste. The relatively high number of void properties in some areas made the neighbourhood vulnerable to dumping. The appearance of the estate suffered, and residents were also concerned about health and safety issues, due to the presence of rats and glass and debris making children's play areas unsafe. These problems were more extensive than elsewhere in the city, imposing higher costs on already stretched mainstream environmental services. In addition, tighter regulations have made legal waste disposal more costly, which has led inevitably to a higher incidence of dumping builders' rubbish, household goods and end-of-life vehicles.

The Braunstone Community Association's (BCA) Brush-up Fly-tipping Project began in 2000 after Leicester City Council approached the BCA with a proposal for a joint initiative with City Cleansing to tackle the poor state of the physical environment. While the NDC Board considered that the local authority should be providing adequate environmental services from mainstream funding sources, a project appraisal highlighted the resource problems involved in tackling the fly-tipping problem in Braunstone and supported the introduction of a special scheme. The project began in July 2000 and has funding until 2004, and works closely with Estate Wardens, the Housing Department, and the police, pursuing prosecution of fly-tippers. Members of the local community are encouraged to report incidents of dumping to the BCA, and the project has attempted to recruit locally-based workers.

When the project was first implemented in July 2000, ten temporary workers were recruited to carry out a three week blitz, which removed over 125 tonnes of rubbish. The project currently employs two full-time workers, recruited from the local community and seconded from the local authority. Between August 2000 and January 2001, some 401 tonnes of rubbish were removed. The team has reported incidents of dumping, responded to requests to remove heavy and bulky household items and actively targeted dumping hot spots. In addition, rubbish is removed from void properties, and from residents' gardens, where appropriate permission can be obtained.

2. Research Approach

The research comprised four main elements:

- A review of existing documents such as Partnership Reports and Delivery Plans held by the CRESR team
- A telephone survey of all Partnerships
- In-depth telephone interviews, and
- Case studies

The first two phases of the project were concerned principally with assessing the scope of the abandoned cars and fly-tipping problem within areas and with identifying which Partnerships had put in place measures to tackle the problem. Representatives from eight which had developed an innovative or comprehensive approach to tackling the problem (Leicester, Birmingham Kings Norton, Hartlepool, Newham, Knowsley, Newcastle, Manchester and Luton¹) were interviewed over the telephone. Interviews, which invariably were conducted with an NDC officer, lasted between thirty minutes and an hour. Data gleaned from these eight organisations provides the basis for this report and brief profiles of each initiative have been interspersed throughout the report. A list of officers spoken to at this stage of the research can be found in Appendix 1.

On completion of the analysis of the in-depth telephone survey data and the documents sent to us by Partnerships², we undertook two brief case study visits to Birmingham Kings Norton and Leicester. At these organisations additional interviews were conducted with local officers, supplementary documentary data secured, and site visits undertaken - photographs from both areas have been interspersed throughout the report.

Luton Marsh Farm NDC had suffered from neglect over a number of years, typified by problems of abandoned and burnt out vehicles, fly-tipping and health hazards, affecting the reputation of the neighbourhood. Residents' surveys identified the poor state of the physical environment as a major concern and the problems required immediate action from the NDC. An Environmental Hit Squad was therefore set up from NDC funds to improve the physical appearance of the area and add value to existing local authority services, and as a short term initiative to remove dumped rubbish. A dedicated team of council workers provided a rapid response to reported problems, and tackled known trouble spots. It ran for about one month as a pilot project. There are now plans by the NDC to fund a longer-term project, including measures to deal with graffiti and abandoned cars, to provide job opportunities and training for local people, and to develop closer links with the community.

¹ Three other Partnerships were identified as being good practice in respect of neighbourhood clean-up initiatives: Brighton, Bristol and Haringey. However, as much has already been written about their work - see www.renewal.net - it was decided to focus on other less well publicised initiatives. Brief profiles of these initiatives can be found in Appendix 2.

² We are extremely grateful to all Partnerships who took part in this study for giving up their time and supplying us with such useful information.

3. Background to Neighbourhood Clean-up Initiatives

Respondents from the eight organisations that comprised the in-depth telephone survey were asked why their NDC had introduced neighbourhood clean-up initiatives. Three principal reasons were offered. First, all respondents felt that the problems of fly-tipping or abandoned cars had become so acute in their neighbourhoods that current measures for dealing with them had become inadequate and ineffective. Second, it was felt by a number of respondents that these problems were triggering other forms of anti-social behaviour such as arson (Knowsley and Newcastle) and broken windows (Newcastle). And third, it was reported by a number of Partnerships, that fly-tipping and abandoned cars were important issues to residents and were seen as being one of the first problems that NDCs should tackle - this had emerged from residents' surveys that many had commissioned or from residents' meetings (Hartlepool, Luton, Manchester).

Figure 2: Abandoned Cars at Leicester NDC



Four main reasons were given by Partnerships to explain the growth of dumping, whether of rubbish or cars, in their areas:

i. The paucity of the neighbourhood clean-up service provided by statutory agencies in recent times

All eight of the Partnerships analysed in-depth reported that the failure of statutory agencies to provide an effective neighbourhood clean-up service, in particular local authorities, had contributed significantly to the severe dumping problem that existed within their neighbourhoods. The service provided by statutory agencies was perceived by Partnerships as being too slow and ineffective:

'We've got a real problem here with people dumping wardrobes and suites... xxxxx Council have a (household collection service) but it's not widely publicised. It's also a very limited service as they (xxx) will only remove the first six (dumped) items free of charge - after that residents have to pay'

However, a number of respondents felt that the paucity of their performance was more a result of inadequate funding than an intrinsic lack of commitment to their areas:

“They (xxxx council) simply haven’t got enough money to deal with the (fly-tipping) problem across the whole of the borough... so things have got really bad here.”

“The problems we have here are much worse than in the rest of the city so the cost of sorting-out the problem is much higher ... environmental services can be around 50% more expensive to deliver here ... I’m not sure they (xxx council) had sufficient resources.”

Kings Norton, Birmingham has suffered from a neglected local environment, manifest through severe problems with fly-tipping, litter, graffiti and abandoned vehicles and a general decline in the quality of the physical infrastructure. An extensive programme of environmental improvements is now being carried out. The majority of environmental services have been contracted to Groundwork Birmingham, which operates the Kings Norton Environmental Task Force (KNETF). KNETF performs a range of tasks from cleaning-up dumped waste and removing graffiti to more focused projects, such as the regeneration of a school's wildlife area.

KNETF has also been made responsible for operating the Abandoned Car Project, introduced in September 2000. A local group which had originally participated in the clean-up of the area disposed of some vehicles, but it was costly and did not provide a long-term, sustainable solution. The NDC's Community Development Team therefore investigated the problems of removing vehicles and attempted to find new ways of tackling the problem. An NDC project officer traced the process of removal from the first reports to final removal and found that the complexity of the procedures and the number of agencies involved caused delays and failure to remove vehicles. The NDC appointed a neighbourhood officer to streamline the procedures and co-ordinate and liaise with a range of agencies, including other neighbourhood officers, the Housing Department, Environmental Services, DVLA, residents, Police, British Waterways and Groundwork. KNETF is responsible for checking the neighbourhood for abandoned vehicles, and then placing a sticker on them, informing people that the vehicle has been reported (see below). This has helped to reduce the burden on neighbourhood officers who may have previously received several reports about the same vehicle, with little effect.

Figure 3: Birmingham Kings Norton NDC's abandoned car removal notification sticker



ii. Demolition, derelict land, and empty properties

Two Partnerships (Knowsley and Leicester) reported that demolition programmes in their areas had further exacerbated the dumping problem as newly created 'wasteland' was a 'soft targets' for residents looking to dump a car or rubbish.

"For us, it has been the big decline in properties caused by demolition in the area that has made the (fly-tipping) problem worse ... there's obviously a lot of rubbish from this and people have obviously thought: 'what's a little bit more?'" (NDC Officer, Knowsley NDC)

In both Partnerships, void properties had also been targeted by 'dumpers', and this it was felt, had aggravated the area's problems.

iii. Neighbourhood stigma

A belief prevailed amongst Partnerships that the poor reputation of their areas had helped contribute to the dumping problem by attracting 'dumpers' from outside the neighbourhood. One respondent felt that this had helped create a self-perpetuating downward spiral of decline where further dumping resulted in further stigmatisation of the estate which in turn encouraged further dumping:

"The (fly-tipping) problem has got worse in recent years as the area has become more neglected. People now come from outside the estate to dump stuff here - this all helps to fuel and aggravate the stigma that goes with the area." (NDC Officer, Luton NDC)

iv. Urban form of the neighbourhood

Three Partnerships (Hartlepool, Manchester, and Birmingham Kings Norton) reported that the physical urban form of their area (i.e. street pattern, housing layout, housing type etc.) had adversely affected the incidence rate of dumping. In Hartlepool and Manchester, both of which are comprised of terraced housing, dumping of rubbish in alleyways proved to be a particular problem:

"To be honest, the (fly-tipping) problem here has been caused by the lay-out of the place. The area is made up of traditional back-to-back properties which have alleys at the back. These are a magnet for dumping as they're out of sight. People didn't feel too guilty about dumping stuff there because that they knew eventually the Council would clear them (the alleys) up because they're part of the Highway." (NDC Officer, Manchester NDC)

"The thing that has made fly-tipping worse is the lay-out of the area. The area is largely made up of terraced houses built in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries... there is little open space to dump stuff so people drop it in back alley ways." (NDC Officer, Hartlepool NDC).

The **Hartlepool** NDC neighbourhood consists mainly of terraced housing built a hundred years ago and with few areas of open space. While the area is not particularly affected by abandoned vehicles, fly-tipping is more problematic, especially since a shift in housing tenure has taken place, from owner-occupation to renting. Property values have collapsed, and there has been an increase in anti-social behaviour, affecting community cohesion, and exemplified by the casual tipping of refuse in back lanes and void properties. The NDC neighbourhood is also close to the town centre, which has suffered from an overall lack of investment in the physical environment. Data collected by the NDC Partnership indicated a high level of resident dissatisfaction with the physical environment: litter and rubbish was identified as the biggest problem (44%), along with local drug use.

Tackling fly-tipping was seen as an early priority by the NDC, as an initiative that would have immediate visual results and benefits for local residents. A review of environmental operations by the local authority has indicated that significant environmental problems were not being tackled adequately by mainstream services. An Environmental Task Force was therefore established - initially as a two year pilot - to provide the local neighbourhood with much-needed environmental improvements, based on a partnership between the NDC and Hartlepool Borough Council. Community consultation was carried out, largely involving liaison with the local Residents' Forum.

The Task Force involves three people, employed by the Borough Council and funded by the NDC, and managed by the local authority's area supervisor. The council also provides a van, equipment and covers the costs of waste disposal. The Task Force is both reactive and proactive: problems are identified through area surveillance (informed by local knowledge of 'hotspots'), by reports from the public, and by establishing strong links with the community, through task force workers attending public meetings and being visible in the community. The Task Force also responds to requests to move larger items of household waste, such as unwanted furniture.

4. Objectives of Neighbourhood Clean-up Initiatives

Partnerships had devised a range of outcomes with regard to tackling the abandoned cars or fly-tipping problems in their areas. These included:

- Improving the living environment for local residents in terms of appearance, health and safety. (Leicester, Birmingham Kings Norton, Hartlepool, Knowsley, Luton, Manchester)
- Reducing the amount of dumped rubbish and cars:
 - in the short-term, by implementing quick fixes (Leicester, Newham, Luton)
 - in the long-term by on-going maintenance (Leicester, Birmingham Kings Norton, Leicester)
- Reducing the amount of dumping that occurs:
 - by preventing dumping from occurring by target hardening (Manchester, Knowsley)
 - by changing people's behaviour and instilling pride and ownership in the quality of the physical environment (Knowsley)
- Tackling the root causes of environmental problems (Birmingham Kings Norton)
- Involving and engaging with residents in creating a cleaner and better quality environment (Birmingham Kings Norton, Manchester)
- Making the area more attractive to both existing and potential residents (Hartlepool)
- Lifting the morale of local residents (Knowsley)
- Demonstrating to local people that the NDC is committed to improving the neighbourhood
 - changes to the physical environment are a very visible signal of change (Knowsley), and
- Reducing the level of associated crime and ASB (Newcastle, Manchester, Knowsley)

Figure 4: Burnt-out cars at Leicester NDC



5. Process Issues

This Section examines how partnerships have developed neighbourhood clean-up initiatives with reference to five key aspects:

- Resident involvement
- Partnership working
- Funding and bending the mainstream
- Assimilation and dissemination of good practice and mainstreaming, and
- Monitoring and evaluation

i. Resident involvement

Resident involvement was a feature of all but one of the initiatives introduced by the eight Partnerships examined as part of the project. The experiences of Hartlepool and Manchester were typical:

"We've had a long lead in with this scheme and we've worked with residents right from the start and taken on-board their views." (NDC Officer, Hartlepool)

"Engaging residents in improving their environment was one of our key objectives ... we consulted with residents from day one and we've had lots of demands (about the scheme) from residents. We heavily consulted them through tenants' groups and meetings." (NDC Officer, Manchester)

Birmingham Kings Norton noted that the employment of local residents on their neighbourhood clean-up initiative had helped to promote community involvement in their area:

"Our approach was to employ local people. This was a real bonus in engaging with the community."

However, one Partnership, reportedly driven by a desire to reduce costs, had not involved residents in the design or implementation of its clean up initiative:

"Residents weren't consulted because we wanted to keep costs down ... there were fears that widespread community consultation would have produced a high level of rubbish to be cleared. Rather, the initiative focused on the apparent visible problem as the NDC/Council saw it and not on responding directly to residents' requirements ... Public consultation was deliberately kept to a minimum to avoid high costs and expectations that could not have been reasonably met."

ii. Partnership working

Partnership working was a feature of all the initiatives studied. As many of the schemes are still very much in their infancy, it is difficult at this stage to talk with any certainty about the robustness of partnerships established. However, a number of Partnerships spoke very positively about the relationships they had established, particularly with local authorities, and a couple saw these as the first step towards neighbourhood management in their areas:

"Our clean-up plans for the area are the first step of a three year plan to introduce neighbourhood management in the area ... the local authority are now employing a neighbourhood manager." (NDC Officer, Knowsley)

“The NDC has linked strongly with what the Borough Council (Hartlepool) is doing ... this (neighbourhood clean-up initiative) may be the first step towards neighbourhood management.” (NDC Officer, Hartlepool)

The neighbourhood of **North Huyton NDC** has suffered from a deteriorating physical environment. The decline in housing stock, following demolitions, has resulted in a number of derelict sites where fly-tipping has become a problem. This has taken the form of household waste and builders' rubbish, and has included hazardous materials. Abandoned vehicles have also been a growing problem. Vehicles were often not moved for long periods and attracted criminal behaviour, particularly arson. North Huyton NDC responded to these problems by establishing the Neighbourhood Action Team, with the aim of tackling a range of environmental, neighbourhood and housing problems associated with neglect and crime. More specifically, their objectives were: to improve the quality of the physical environment; to lift the morale of local residents; to demonstrate to local people the commitment of the NDC to delivering improvements to the neighbourhood; to raise the standards of people who have been involved with anti-social behaviour; and to cut across issues of the physical environment and crime.

The Neighbourhood Action Team (NAT) followed on from a 'quick wins' project by the NDC in partnership with Action for Jobs - the Community Environmental Task Team. This team employed a team of local people to tackle 'grot spots' in the North Huyton area, for an initial period of six months, and provided opportunities for training and skills development. NAT was established to provide a wider range of environmental services, and received funding for a three year period. Their work involves both initiatives designed to reduce crime - such as graffiti removal, tackling arson and dealing with incidences of anti-social behaviour that impact upon the public realm - and responses to environmental neglect - such as garden maintenance, clearance and maintenance on open spaces, fly-tipping removal, and repairs to the physical fabric of the area (including flagging and fencing). In addition to these activities, NAT deals with minor housing repairs, issues resulting from demolitions, and other problems caused by the existence of void properties. While the majority of the funding is from the NDC, NAT is a partnership with other agencies including Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council and the local housing association, KHT. Community involvement has been a key factor in implementing the initiative, and local people have been employed by NAT.

iii. Funding and bending the mainstream

As one might have expected, the nature and level of project of funding varied significantly between initiatives. The neighbourhood clean-up schemes in Knowsley and Newcastle are the most resource intensive and a break-down of the planned expenditure for both schemes is outlined below:

Table 2: Planned Expenditure for Knowsley's and Newcastle's Neighbourhood Clean-up Initiatives over the Next Three Years

<i>Knowsley (Neighbourhood Action Team)</i>		
Revenue costs	NDC	£745,356
	KMBC (local authority)	£9,828
	KHT (local housing association)	£36,000
	TOTAL	£791,184
Capital costs	NDC	£133,891
Total Project Costs		£925,075
<i>Newcastle (Arson Task Force)</i>		
Newcastle West Gate NDC		£206,780
Tyne and Wear Fire Brigade		£301,794
Northumbria Police		£211,243
Total Project Costs		£719,817

Partnership investment in neighbourhood clean-up initiatives also differed markedly. The largest investment has been made by Knowsley (£879,247), the smallest by Newham (£2,500). All but one of the Partnerships - Leicester - have jointly funded their initiatives in association with partners - Leicester is solely responsible for meeting the costs of its Brush-up Fly-tipping Project, which will amount to £91,000 to run in 2002/03 and £95,000 in 2003/04.

Partnerships were asked to what extent they had been successful in 'bending the mainstream' to secure additional funding for their areas. Perhaps not unexpectedly, most were unable (or unwilling) to answer this question. However, two Partnerships had clear views on the subject:

"Getting match-funding and bending the Council's resources has proved really difficult ... the creation of the NDC has allowed mainstream providers to step back a bit ... it's very difficult to stop this happening. What should be fair is for NDCs to make some contribution and for local authorities to make it clear what their responsibilities are."

"Mainstreaming of the clean-up operation we're doing will be a problem. It needs funding above and beyond what the council can do to properly deal with the problems of this area.... one of the biggest barriers we will face is continued funding. It is a labour intensive operation, and so is expensive - but worthwhile."

Figure 5: Removal of an abandoned car at Leicester NDC



iv. Assimilation and dissemination of good practice and mainstreaming

Respondents were asked whether their Partnership had sought to learn from the experiences of other initiatives. The views of one officer were representative of those from six of the eight initiatives examined in detail:

"We haven't really learnt from anywhere because what we're doing here is really innovative and original."

However, one officer attributed his Partnership's failure to identify good practice to the lack of readily available guidance and lack of time:

"We didn't look for guidance from elsewhere because it's really difficult to access and we were really short of time ... we had to get started on the project straight away."

Only Luton appeared to have actively sought to identify good practice examples:

"We did some research and we looked to find out what other areas had done to tackle the (dumping) problem." (NDC Officer, Luton)

Partnerships were also asked whether other organisations had sought to replicate their initiative. A number reported that their local council was considering adopting their approach across the whole of the borough:

"Mainstreaming is on-going throughout the city, and other places have expressed an interest." (NDC Officer, Newcastle)

"The Council (Manchester) may take on our approach elsewhere." (NDC Officer, Manchester)

However, one Partnership noted that the local council was reluctant to adopt their approach to neighbourhood clean-up across the whole of the borough:

"The Council are still wary of doing what we've done across the rest of the borough."

A number of Partnerships also reported that neighbouring estates were looking to replicate their approach:

"Other estates in the area have been enquiring. They want to know how we went about negotiating with the Council, how to do it (i.e. neighbourhood clean-up), and what the opportunities are." (NDC officer, Luton)

"Kensington NDC are interested in doing what we're doing and thinking about doing something similar." (NDC Officer, Knowsley)

Newcastle reported that its scheme had received acclaim at the national level -

"We've been nationally recognised and residents are happy with what we've done...we have received an award and we've been featured in The Guardian recently." (NDC Officer, Newcastle)

- while Manchester reported that it "received lots of requests from all over (the country)".

West Ham and Plaistow NDC area has experienced severe problem with fly-tipping - particularly associated with old mattresses, suites and wardrobes. Newham Council operated a free collection service, but it was not widely known. The NDC and the local authority formed a partnership to run a Big Clean-up Day, to deal quickly with these problems. This was a blitz of the area to remove incidences of fly-tipping, and to arrange collection of residents' unwanted items such as furniture, white goods and other bulky items from their homes and gardens. Three community involvement teams were also involved, and housing associations in the area were approached to help tackle problems on their land. However, the degree of community consultation was limited, as there were fears that widespread publicity would have generated a higher level of rubbish than could be dealt with.

The NDC funded Newham Council to provide three rubbish trucks and nine workers. In two weeks leading up to the Clean-up Day, a team of community outreach workers identified dumping 'hotspots' and incidents throughout the neighbourhood. On the day of the clean-up, the team made over 140 pick-ups. Due to the extremely high demand for the service, another day was added. This initiative was very popular locally, and succeeded in tackling the immediate problems. There are now plans to organise a more frequent collection service. While this is essentially a short-term response by the NDC, it has been complementary to other services offered by the local authority. As stated above, the council's Refuse Hotline operates a free collection service for unwanted refuse. It makes approximately 550 collections every week, and responds to 97% of calls within five days of the initial report. Also, the Council's 'Street Watcher' scheme encourages residents to report eyesores and hazards such as rubbish and fly-tipping, poor street lighting and pavements, and abandoned cars.

The NDC also works in partnership with a local organisation called Newham Community Recycling (also known as 'Wombles Recycling') which removes abandoned vehicles, fly-tipping and general eyesores. Wombles Recycling also takes residents' unwanted furniture and passes it on to other residents via referrals by social services organisations and through

a local shop.

v. Monitoring and evaluation

Partnerships were asked to describe the measures they had put in place to monitor and evaluate neighbourhood clean-up initiatives. Their response suggested that relatively few had got to grips with this important issue. A number of Partnerships appeared to have given the issue comparatively little thought:

“There’s been no evaluation yet - this is something that we’ll think about later on.”

Another Partnership seemed somewhat hazy about its evaluation strategy:

“We’re going to do some evaluation and we’ve paid for a masters student. We’ll also do our own monitoring and something at the end to see if it’s worth continuing the project.”

For those that had begun thinking about the issue, the problems of working with other agencies appeared to be stymieing their efforts to undertake robust analysis:

“The monitoring that’s been done has been really limited and it’s really hard to get the Council to do anything.”

“The Council has done some monitoring and it showed that it has met the targets it set itself ... you know for things like speed of response. But the targets it set were very low so I’m not sure how worthwhile the whole process was.”

Perhaps not unexpectedly, the monitoring systems put in place for long-term projects appear to be more effective than those introduced for short term one-off initiatives. A number of Partnerships planned to use independent consultants to evaluate their initiatives.

Figure 6: Litter and Rubbish at Hartlepool NDC



6. The Benefits of Neighbourhood Clean-up Initiatives

Partnerships identified a number of benefits that introduction of neighbourhood clean-up initiatives had brought. These included:

- The faster removal of rubbish and abandoned cars (this was cited by all NDCs)
"Fly-Tipping has been reduced drastically. It's hard to spot an incident nowadays." (NDC Officer, Leicester)
- An improvement in the physical environment of the neighbourhood (again this was cited by all NDCs)
"the residents have really gained from what's been done... in the past they were too scared to use the alleyways." (NDC Officer, Manchester)
"We believe that as a result of our clean-up efforts, people were coming out onto the streets more to shop and socialise, and felt better about their neighbourhood surroundings." (NDC Officer, Birmingham Kings Norton)
- Long term environmental benefits (Leicester, Birmingham Kings Norton, Hartlepool, Knowsley, Newcastle, Manchester)
- An enhanced neighbourhood reputation (Leicester, Luton)
"Yes, the (neighbourhood clean-up) scheme has made a real difference. You can see that people have noticed a difference and it's given the place a real lift." (NDC Officer, Luton)
"Our clean-up project has a high profile on the estate. It's making a visible difference - residents can see that it's working." (NDC Officer, Leicester)
- Positive publicity for the NDC and its partners (Luton, Hartlepool)
"Also, the local authority as a partner has benefited (from the initiative) and the NDC has had a lot of really good publicity." (NDC Officer, Luton)
- Closer partnerships with other agencies (Leicester, Birmingham Kings Norton, Knowsley, Newcastle)
"the project has created good links between the NDC and fire-brigade ... the fire-brigade were very pro-active." (NDC Officer, Newcastle)
"Partnerships with council services and the housing department are working very well. It's all about keeping a dialogue going and coming up with solutions to problems." (NDC Officer, Leicester)
- Greater levels of community involvement and engagement (Manchester, Newcastle, Luton, Hartlepool, Birmingham Kings Norton). Officers from five NDCs reported that the introduction of neighbourhood clean-up initiatives had triggered greater community involvement in their areas. The views of three officers were representative of others:
"The scheme really encouraged local people to get involved which they did ... they had misconceptions about how we worked but I think they trust us more now." (NDC Officer, Luton)

"One of the benefits of the (neighbourhood clean-up) scheme has been enhanced community links." (NDC Officer, Newcastle)

"There was a barrier between the community, Council and us, which has now gone. We wanted instead to be part of the community and respond to their wishes." (NDC Officer, Birmingham Kings Norton)

- A reduction in crime and anti-social-behaviour that may be associated with fly-tipping and abandoned cars (Manchester, Newcastle)

In **Newcastle West Gate**, arson was a major problem, with incidents occurring at a much greater rate than the national average. Many of these incidents were associated with the problems of fly-tipping and abandoned vehicles. Arson was therefore high on the agenda when the NDC was initiated, and was highlighted by the original Delivery Plan. The NDC's Arson Task Force (ATF) was established to respond to arson incidents, and provide a preventative service by removal of abandoned vehicles, fly-tipping and hazardous materials, making void properties secure and running educational campaigns. The Task Force originated from an SRB funded partnership in 1997, and the NDC then became involved and provided extra funding to expand the service, enabling it to deal with all arson incidents, rather than the 17% it had previously been able to cover. The ATF is a partnership involving the Tyne and Wear Fire Brigade; Northumbria Police; Newcastle City Council's Housing, Public Health and Environmental Protection, and Refuse Departments; and the Private Rented Properties Project. In addition to representatives from these organisations, the ATF Advisory Group also includes representatives from NDC management and elected Board members, including residents. This Advisory Group acts to guide and support the project's staff in their duties. The main target of the ATF is a reduction in arson incidents of 5% per year.

The core team comprises an administrator/coordinator, a research assistant, a fire officer (seconded), a police constable (seconded) and a dog handler, under the management of the Fire Service and the Northumbria Police. The AFT investigates every case of intentional fire setting in the neighbourhood. It is also active in education programmes that discourage fire play, aimed mainly at children and young people. By working in partnership with other services, the ATF works to restrict the opportunities available to potential arsonists. The Arson Task Force has NDC funding for a three year period.

7. Barriers to the Implementation of Neighbourhood Clean-up Initiatives

Partnerships were asked to identify any barriers to success they had encountered when developing their neighbourhood clean-up initiative. A number were offered including:

i. Insufficient resident support for the project

While most Partnerships agreed that a broad level neighbourhood had promoted resident involvement, as was noted in the last section, two reported that lack of resident involvement in the day-to-day running of schemes had adversely affected their initiatives.

For example, while one noted that residents had ample opportunity to get involved in the initiative and perhaps extend their involvement -

“Once they (alleyways) are gated, residents are encouraged to find and apply for funding to improve the fabric of the alleys ... there are other small pots of money to do this available from NDC or council schemes.”

- in reality some residents were failing to take-up ‘ownership’ of the initiative:

“In a few cases, residents aren’t taking up ownership (of the scheme) so we’ll have to do more in the future to get them involved.”

In a similar vein, another Partnership reported that relatively few local residents had sought to take-up its offer of employment in the neighbourhood clean-up team:

“NDC Board members were keen that local people were employed on the scheme and - training costs were wrote into the cost of the project ... but there has been a poor take up in the local community.”

Two respondents offered reasons why sometimes residents were reluctant to fully engage with the NDC:

“Residents don’t care about processes - they’re only interested about results.”

“Residents cannot understand how unrelated organisations can object to what is going on ... they get frustrated by this.”

ii. Partnership working

While most Partnerships were fairly positive about the benefits of partnership working, as was noted earlier, a couple identified problems with this way of working. For example, one reported partnership working had left residents unclear about who was responsible for cleaning-up the neighbourhood in their area:

“One problem we have faced here is making it clear to residents who is responsible for doing what - there’s been a lot of confusion about our role and what the Council should be doing. The local authority is based in the town centre and the NDC is based on the estate but people don’t distinguish between us - they think we’re all part of the same thing.”

Another Partnership reported that the joint funding of schemes brought with it a number of difficulties:

"We've had organisational difficulties financially managing the project ... the bureaucracy can't cope with having a joint financier."

iii. The prioritisation of other issues by the NDC

One officer felt that the prioritisation of other regeneration issues by the NDC he worked for may have hampered plans to clean-up the neighbourhood:

"Environmental issues aren't seen as a priority here. The NDC has been keener about employment and other matters. But there has been an increasing and subtle drive to raise awareness about environmental concerns which is making our job easier ... in the past the Council had been very slow to respond to abandoned cars and fly-tipping."

iv. The intransigence of local authorities

One respondent was clearly frustrated by local council's failure to give its local NDC area a 'second chance' and change the way it thought and responded to the neighbourhood:

"Working with the local authority has proved difficult. They've obviously got restraints on their resources but they're very difficult to change. They've got stereotyped ideas and prejudices about the estate. They're used to saying 'no' and have got no confidence that people can improve ... attitudes in the local authority need to change."

v. The difficulty of tackling the problem of dumping when properties are not owned by social housing landlords

A number of Partnerships noted how difficult it could be to establish the ownership of privately owned properties (Leicester, Manchester, Birmingham Kings Norton). Manchester noted that tracking down private landlords could be a particularly time-consuming process:

"It's really difficult to trace all landlords." (Manchester)

In **East Manchester NDC**, the alleyways of traditional back-to-back housing stock have suffered from crime (particularly drug-related incidents), littering, fly-tipping and other kinds of anti-social behaviour. Dumping has been caused by local residents, but also by residents from other areas. As the alleyways constitute the public highway, the perpetrators of dumping have presumed that the council will clear it, and as a result the alleyways were not used. Prior to NDC funding becoming available, small-scale initiatives had been introduced to deal with alleyway closures, such as a pilot alley-gating project, implemented in Higher Openshaw. The positive response of the local community prompted NDC to expand and enhance this project.

The Community Alleyways Programme currently has NDC funding until 2004. Anecdotal evidence suggested there had been a decrease in real rates of crime, and improvements to the physical environment of alleyways. The amount of fly-tipping and other forms of anti-social behaviour have been reduced significantly, and, where problems still arise, agencies and local residents have a better idea of who is responsible. The Community Alleyways Programme involves a partnership between the NDC, Groundwork Manchester, Manchester City Council's Housing Department and Operational Services, local housing associations, and residents' groups. The participation and the commitment of local residents, the active engagement of neighbours, and the contribution to community capacity building have all been key to the success of the programme.

The Programme, which is funded from NDC, SRB, European Regional Development Funds and capital receipts, secures legal closures of alleyways, if residents are in favour. The programme is managed by the NDC and the programme of community consultation and physical works is delivered by Groundwork Manchester. Usually, residents' groups approach the NDC with a request for their alleyway to be gated, the level of demand among residents is explored and a decision is taken whether to go ahead. The council must grant its approval, and planning permission must be sought. This can be a lengthy process, especially if objections are made to a closure. When a scheme has been approved, residents are actively involved with the design of the scheme. The gates are installed and other remediation work carried out, such as the rebuilding of walls, or making good road surfaces. Once legally gated, the alleyways are no longer the local authority's official responsibility, but some operational services may be continued following negotiation, such as refuse collection.

8. Conclusions

Summary

To sum up, our analysis has revealed that residents in NDC areas perceive the issue of abandoned cars and fly-tipping to be significant problems in their area. A number of Partnerships have developed innovative and comprehensive initiatives to tackle the problems of fly-tipping and abandoned cars. These include the eight areas which were studied in-depth as part of this project (Leicester, Birmingham Kings Norton, Manchester, Luton, Hartlepool, Newham, Newcastle, and Knowsley) and three (Bristol, Haringey and Brighton) featured on the NRU's new regeneration good practice website: renewal.net.

Four main reasons were offered by Partnerships why dumping had emerged as being a particular problem in their area. All eight studied in detail felt that the paucity of the neighbourhood clean-up service provided by statutory agencies had been the principal contributory factor behind this. It was suggested that 'contextual' factors such as the prevalence of derelict land and empty properties, the urban form of the neighbourhood, and estate reputation also contributed to the problem.

Although to date, none of the eight Partnerships examined had completed a robust assessment of the impact of their neighbourhood clean-up initiatives, most felt that they were working. A number of positive outcomes were identified by Partnerships: an improved physical environment; an enhanced neighbourhood image; more effective partnership working; and greater community involvement. In addition, there is evidence that some 'mainstreaming' maybe occurring as a number of local authorities appear to be contemplating replicating across the whole of the borough the neighbourhood clean-up initiatives introduced by NDCs within their areas.

A number of potential barriers to the successful implementation of neighbourhood clean-up initiatives were identified by Partnerships. These included: the reluctance of local authorities to commit resources, both financial and human, to NDC areas; the difficulties of partnership working; insufficient resident support for the project; the difficulties of tackling the problem of dumping when properties are privately owned; and the prioritisation of other issues by NDCs.

Key messages for Partnerships

Partnerships looking to develop neighbourhood clean-up initiatives, particularly in response to abandoned cars, should first visit the informative and comprehensive renewal.net website which provides clear and evidence based guidance on how to develop neighbourhood clean-up strategies. They should also consider contacting the Partnerships studied in detail as part of this project, contact information for which can be found in Appendix 1.

To conclude, we would like to highlight for Partnerships a number of key messages that have emerged from our analysis:

- They should give considerable thought to how they intend to package their initiatives. One respondent we spoke to felt that the name of the initiative was especially important:
"I think what you call it (neighbourhood clean-up initiative) is really important. I think names like 'hit squads' and 'rapid response teams' give the right impression and make a real difference (to the public)." (NDC Officer, Luton).
- In a similar vein, they should also be clear about how they present and explain the initiative to their public, particularly when working with another agency. In doing so they should communicate to their residents in a clear and accessible manner the respective roles and responsibilities of partnership members

- Partnerships should publicise the gains of their neighbourhood initiatives and keep a visual record of changes occurring - this may help increase the popularity of an area and erode negative perceptions of it
- They should pursue an active policy of identifying and following-up perpetrators of dumping in order to gain the confidence of local residents
- Residents should be involved at all stages of the neighbourhood clean-up process, whether this be project design and development, implementation or monitoring and evaluation. Our analysis suggests that the impact of neighbourhood clean-up initiatives is maximised if residents are fully engaged with, and supportive of, the exercise
- Partnerships should be aware of the potential benefits that partnership working may bring. In an increasingly fragmented and fractured housing market, it is essential that Partnerships take a strategic view of the neighbourhood clean-up process and engage with *all* stakeholder agencies and both housing sectors i.e. public and private
- In doing so, they may be able to secure additional mainstream funding for the project, thereby enhancing the chances of it continuing beyond the life of NDC - it is essential that Partnerships look to maximise match funding for their initiatives
- They should consider whether a partnership approach to neighbourhood clean-up could be a spring board to more comprehensive neighbourhood management and budgeting. The visible demonstration of the benefits of a partnership approach to tackling the problem of dumping could make this transition more achievable
- When developing neighbourhood clean-up initiatives within their areas, Partnerships might want to consider implementing one-off 'quick-win' initiatives in order to demonstrate their commitment to tackling the area's problems
- It is imperative that Partnerships put in place effective systems for evaluating their initiatives. They should do so at the earliest possible stage so that monitoring and evaluation is central to the initiative and not a belated afterthought on its completion
- Partnerships should appraise whether the costs of their programmes are likely to diminish once 'quick wins' have been secured, and on that basis, develop realistic long-term budgets for on-going intervention

References

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Appendix 1: Partnerships Contacted as Part of the In-depth Telephone Survey

Agency	Name of Project
Braunstone Community Association (Leicester NDC)	Brush-up Fly tipping Project/Abandoned Vehicle Initiative
Birmingham Kings Norton NDC	Kings Norton Environmental Task Force/ Abandoned Car Project.
West Central Hartlepool NDC	Environmental Task Force
West Ham and Plaistow NDC	West Ham and Plaistow Big Clean-up Day
North Huyton NDC	Neighbourhood Action Team
Newcastle West Gate NDC	New Deal Arson Task Force
Beacons for a Brighter Future Partnership (East Manchester NDC)	Community Alleyways Programme
Marsh Farm Community Development Trust (Luton NDC)	Environmental Hit Squad

Appendix 2: A Summary of the Neighbourhood Clean-up Initiatives Undertaken by Barton Hill, Haringey, and Brighton NDCs

As was noted earlier, three NDC Partnerships not studied as part of this project have also undertaken impressive work in the field of neighbourhood clean-up. A summary of the projects undertaken by Barton Hill, Haringey, and Brighton NDCs can be found below and, in more depth on the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit's newly created website, [renewal.net](http://www.renewal.net). This site, which offers guidance on all aspects of regeneration, can be accessed at <http://www.renewal.net/>.

Lead Agency	Name of Project	Brief Description
Barton Hill NDC (Bristol)	Project Pathfinder	'Project Pathfinder' aims to create a clean and well-maintained neighbourhood. It has brought together all of the neighbourhood's environmental maintenance services under an agreement between a private sector company, the relevant trade unions, Bristol City Council and local residents to provide a co-ordinated multi-skilled local team.
The Bridge NDC (Haringey Seven Sisters)	Abandoned Vehicles Project	The Abandoned Vehicles Project employs an Abandoned Vehicles Officer who regularly patrols the neighbourhood and has a remit to remove abandoned cars within 24 hours. Residents may report suspected abandoned vehicles via a dedicated telephone line.
East Brighton NDC	Abandoned Cars Workshop	A workshop was carried out that aimed to engage residents in neighbourhood management using an issue of local concern – abandoned cars. Residents discussed the problems associated with abandoned cars; the agencies that could be involved and helped to formulate solutions. These have had an impact in reducing the problem and agencies are working together more effectively. Residents now have more confidence in neighbourhood management and, are more likely to get involved with other issue-based workshops.