

NOTES FROM THE VISIT TO HULL COMMUNITY WARDEN SERVICE

INTRODUCTION

1. The scheme in Hull is very different to the one in Middlesbrough in that it is run by a Trust. The visit was designed, not to compare the Council's scheme with that in Hull, but as a fact finding exercise. The visit was to consider areas of good practice by looking at a scheme that had a lot of community involvement and also to find out some of the lessons that they had learnt in developing the scheme.

DETAILS OF THE VISIT

2. Councillors Rooney and Purvis attended the visit to the Hull Community Warden Service on 25 October 2007. Members spent the day with Barbara Onley, Centre Manager, Neighbourhood Training and Resource Centre, Paul Henderson, Operations Manager, Hull Community Warden Service, Terry Quinn, Area Warden Manager (Older People Lead) and Geoff Rollin Area Warden Manager (Environment Lead)
3. Hull is a city of about 300,000 people and the Labour controlled council has 7 areas and 27 wards. The Hull Community Warden Service started in 2001 and was the first service of its type in the country and as such there was no template for its operation. The service has developed through consultation with the residents who, when consulted, said they were concerned about environmental issues, social inclusion and the fear of crime.
4. Briefly, the scheme is operated by the Goodwin Development Trust, with funding from the Neighbourhood Development Fund, the Council, Hull City Council, the Government and the European Union. There are 150 wardens based in the community and who operate in small teams in various locations across the city. Each team has 6 wardens who are based from a local warden 'shop' in 10 out of the 13 areas.
5. Community Wardens in Hull have no enforcement powers and there was no desire to change this. Wardens work very closely with the Council's enforcement officers on issues regarding fly posting, noise, litter etc. and both the management and the wardens said that the close working relationship with the enforcement officers meant that enforcement powers for wardens was not necessary.
6. Members had the opportunity to visit 3 of the scheme's shops and speak with the wardens about a number of their key projects. The shops are run much like drop in centres; residents from the estates that they serve can come in and speak to the warden on duty about any issues for example debt advice and housing issues. In addition to this resource, wardens still patrol the areas, dealing with similar incidents to Middlesbrough's street wardens. They also report incidents of fly tipping, graffiti etc to the Council.

7. Panel members were interested in whether or not any work had been undertaken in Hull to evaluate the success of their scheme. It was outlined that it could be difficult to measure the value of intervention. One example of evaluation in Hull included work with Community Centres. Targets were set for getting young people involved. The young people developed their own behaviour strategy. Other ways are independent evaluation of the schemes, asking residents to evaluate the scheme or undertaking a cost benefit analysis.
8. There had also been an exercise to establish the added value of wardens collecting discarded needles. Which they thought had saved the council's environment department money.
9. There was a concern that the wardens were simply duplicating or even replacing the work of outreach workers. However in Hull there were no outreach workers so they were not replacing any existing Council services.
10. In Hull the scheme was described as one which provides a complimentary service to work alongside the Council is currently delivering. It was described by those running the scheme as 'the eyes and ears of the Council' and the first line of help for a lot of people. It was not the intention of the service to take over any exiting Council services, in fact it was suggested that the wardens were making the Council busier by signposting people to Council Services. Although Members did not speak to any Council officers on this issue.

Ideas and Examples of Good Practice

11. In their signposting role, wardens developed welcome packs available to new residents in a number of different languages.
12. The service recognised the need for a diverse work force and had a Kurdish, an African and a Gambian warden.
13. There is a junior warden scheme for 8 to 13 year olds which teaches them about being a good citizen and environmental issues.
14. The service would like to develop an apprenticeship scheme for NEETS (young people Not in Education, Employment or Training).
15. Informing Residents – residents meetings were held, in the area based team boundaries, with the wardens, the police, the ASBO teams and they are asked to discuss their three priorities for their area. A structured way forward is agreed with all the parties and the results are then fed back to the residents. There was a feeling that the residents appreciated that all the various organisations working together.
16. Wardens have been trained to locate and safely remove discarded needles as part of their patrols. This saves officers from the Council having to respond to ad hoc calls.
17. In Hull Councillors have small area budgets, if a warden manager has any funding issues they could go to their local Councillor and put together a case for additional funding.