

## Clean Start Programme

### Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council

Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council initiated a £500,000 environmental quality improvement programme (increased to £1m the following year). Part of the initiative was 'Clean Start', which is targeted action to improve the local environmental quality within a neighbourhood. The ultimate aim is to achieve a self-sustaining clean and healthy environment, and where appropriate, compliance with waste management legislation.

The Clean Start programme began in 2003 with one full-time member of staff, and continued throughout 2004, when the number of dedicated staff increased to two. The initiatives have continued to the present day, due to their success. Each project runs for approximately 9 to 12 months.

The measures taken to implement the initiative are:

- Identify the area that requires action by means of knowledge and experience, and consultation with council officers, elected members, stakeholders e.g. businesses, housing associations and the public;
- Define the area, following consultation with ward members and community groups;
- Assess the problems in the area by means of public consultation;
- Carry out an environmental audit of the area to provide baseline evidence;
- Provide a 'Clean Start' to the area, initially by providing community skips for refuse disposal, and removing of longstanding graffiti and flyposting;
- Address the issues raised in the public consultations, e.g. fly-tipping on derelict land; premises detrimental to amenity; weeds in back streets; unadopted streets not cleansed; blocked street gullies; provision of additional litter bins; rats, etc.;
- Publicise the project;
- Educate through visiting schools, distributing leaflets advertising the council's waste collection service, talking to community groups and business groups;
- Ensure that every person has the means to properly dispose of their household refuse;
- Require by Notice (Environmental Protection Act 1990 section 46) that every occupier of every household disposes of waste properly;
- Require by Notice (Environmental Protection Act 1990 section 34) that every business can show that they are disposing of their waste appropriately;
- Carry out enforcement action to ensure proper disposal of waste;
- Carry out environmental audit of the area to provide evidence of any improvement;

- Ongoing throughout the initiative: recruit volunteer neighbourhood guardians who will monitor the area and ensure that improvements are sustained.

As a result of the programme, there has been a visible difference in the Clean Start areas, which is believed to have improved the community feel. Following promotion of the free bulky household waste collection service there has been a significant decline in the number of household items, such as tables, chairs, carpets, washing machines, etc., being fly-tipped. However, the most notable decline is in the number of black refuse sacks that have been fly-tipped.

The impact of the Clean Start programme was measured through environmental audits, which are carried out at the beginning, and throughout the programme to collate information about the problems in the area. Photographic evidence is widely used and gives a good indication to the improvements that take place over the course of the initiative.

Some examples are illustrated below:





The Clean Start programme has proved to be an enormous success. Since it began there has been a 20% reduction in service requests for rat treatment and a decrease in the fly-tipping service requests. In addition to this, there has been interest from the local press, and the programme has been publicised through community newsletters and local papers such as the Asian Image.

Due to its success, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council is continuing to run the programme. The total cost is £60,000 per annum, which covers six Clean Start areas. This breaks down to a cost of £10,000 per area.

**For further information, please contact:**

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