

# Spotlight on...

## Community partnership to reclaim Harehills

### What the need was and how we identified it

Harehills is one of the most deprived areas of Leeds. It has high rates of crime, anti-social behaviour and unemployment, and has, in the past, suffered from rioting and sporadic unrest. Local inner-city Primary Schools Hovingham, and Harehills, are linguistically and culturally diverse, with the majority of children having English as an additional language; pupils speak 35 different community languages.

For several years, an area of disused, overgrown, litter-strewn wasteland owned by and located behind Hovingham Primary School was the focus of anti-social behaviour and crime. This included flytipping, deliberate firesetting, prostitution and drug abuse. Over a two-year period (1st January 2009 to 31st December 2010), there were 99 deliberate fires in this area.

A lack of local facilities for children and young people exacerbated the situation. Many congregate on street corners and local parks without the opportunity to get involved in positive pursuits, such as sport or recreational activities, for example.

### What we did and the difference we made

WYFRS, along with West Yorkshire Police, joined a community/multi-agency partnership led by local people (residents, several young people from the community, staff and pupils from Hovingham and Harehills Primary Schools), to develop the land.

With support from Homebase (Roundhay, Leeds), teams of offenders on Community Payback from West Yorkshire Probation Trust, Beechfield Tree Services, Bellway Homes and their partners Hewletts, the land has been made safe, cleared and levelled, ready for development. This involved repairing broken fencing, removing waste and 3,000 used syringes, and cutting down overgrown bushes and trees. Crews from Red and White Watch, Gipton managed several controlled fires to dispose of vegetation.

The majority of work has been carried out in participants' spare time; equipment and support has been provided by the private sector free of charge.

A community group has been created to provide leadership and governance for managing the project: Community Action To Change Harehills (CATCH). CATCH is consulting the community (especially young people) about how the land should be used.



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This feedback will be used by Landscape and Design Students from Leeds Metropolitan University to produce designs. CATCH is actively looking for funding to complete the project, including land drainage and turfing.

### Outcomes

The Hovingham Project and formation of CATCH are fantastic examples of what we can all do to help make positive changes to support and develop the community.

A resource has been developed by the community, for the community. By working together, it's helped build trust and break down barriers between young people/community members and agencies. The project has helped foster good relations, and will help reduce antisocial behaviour.

### Keys to our success

- Cross-team working within WYFRS: the Arson Task Force and Gipton Crews.
- Ownership and leadership by the community.
- True partnership working between all stakeholders, particularly young people.
- Involvement of the private sector, alongside communities and public sector agencies to overcome a lack of funding.
- Enthusiasm, commitment and 'can do' attitude from everyone involved.

### Contact

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