CASE STUDIES – Working with others

Communicating with neighbouring residents and businesses – Network Rail, Bloxwich

Parts of the area are hotspots for over the fence dumping. Network Rail works in partnership with the local authority, the police, and British Transport Police to resolve this issue. Joint letters from Network Rail and the local authority were sent out to all residents within 250 metres of the site. These letters highlighted the legal implications of fly-tipping and the problems it causes, and informed residents of legitimate waste disposal options and civic amenity sites in the locality.

The press have been involved and articles have featured in the local newspaper. Network Rail undertook recovery operations on the site. This included clearing the tipping, erecting new fencing and ‘caging’ the bridges. British Transport Police has been involved by carrying out surveillance for anti-social behaviour. CCTV has been installed but is very limited due to the close proximity of private residences and human rights legislation.

It is too early to draw conclusions as to the degree of success that has been achieved and there have been no prosecutions as yet (although there have been in other areas). One aspect of the initiative that has been very effective, however, is the success of the partnership itself – it is clear that partnership working is the way forward in tackling fly-tipping. What is unclear is whether this level of partnership working is possible in the long term as resources and interest can change within organisations, and some of the work has relied on specially diverted resources, such as British Transport Police patrols, that cannot be sustained in the long term.

Joined up working to combat fly-tipping – Network Rail, Walsall

Network Rail and British Transport Police, supported by Walsall Council, are working together to crack down on the local fly-tipping that has been leaving hundreds of tonnes of rubbish dumped next to the track. Fly-tipped rubbish is highly dangerous in the trackside environment – not only does it look unsightly to travellers and commuters, it causes a potential danger and disruption to transport services and carries health and safety implications for the Network Rail staff who have to clear it up.

“It can interfere with track circuits and larger items could even derail a train and we have to spend thousands of pounds clearing up the mess.”

To help keep tracksides clear in Walsall, regular patrols are made by British Transport Police to deter fly-tipping. A confidential phone line is available through which fly-tipping can be reported, which will also help police in seeking prosecutions.

Working in partnership to combat fly-tipping – National Trust, Bedfordshire

Working with the local authority and the police, a National Trust estate in Bedfordshire removed dumped tyres from an area physically accessible only by Land Rover.
They saved approximately £500 as the district council, at the request of the police, took all the tyres away.

The National Trust Property Manager identified that builders’ rubble and other construction waste has been the most common type of fly-tipped material.

“Our worst experience was when 15 lorry loads of material was dumped in two of our car parks.”

Abandoned vehicles, sometimes the target of arsonists, have also been a problem. However, the Community Safety Partnership was very effective in dealing with abandoned vehicles. As part of their ‘Environment Action Days’, the combination of police, district council and Fire Service personnel removed and destroyed hundreds, if not thousands, of vehicles which would otherwise have ended up on National Trust sites around Bedfordshire.

In 2002 the National Trust took the decision to erect height barriers and since then has had very little fly-tipping other than small quantities of garden clippings and the occasional dumping of car parts. The three barriers cost £3,000 each to buy and install. The Trust’s county council partners have paid for two more barriers to be installed at two other sites.

There is one drawback for the region in that, since the district councils have taken to using CCTV in hotspots, field gates and lay-bys in the immediate area still suffer from fly-tipping with farmers’ fields in particular taking the brunt. However, despite there being quite regular fly-tipping in the area up to 2002/2003, the rate of incidence has gone down and this could be attributable to everyone’s efforts to deal with fly-tipping quickly and to making the public aware that the dumping of rubbish is unacceptable.

**Tackling large-scale commercial fly-tipping – Network Rail/Salford City Council/Police/ Greater Manchester Waste, Salford**

Salford City Council identified large-scale commercial fly-tipping immediately adjacent to operational railway land. There was over 225 tonnes present, much of which was the result of a network of professional fly-tippers who were carefully covering their tracks by using fake number plates and removing any evidence of company names. Network Rail and the council were jointly responsible for removing the fly-tipping and operations were commenced to do so. The location is closely monitored by the police and Greater Manchester Waste. The situation has also improved following the installation of bollards and gates.

**Birmingham Fly-tipping Partnership – Network Rail / Birmingham City Council / ENCAMS / British Transport Police / Environment Agency**

Fly-tipping was having a negative impact on residents’ perceptions and the environment, while also representing a considerable health and safety issue on trackside and railway land. The commitment from all of the parties involved meant that the problem could be addressed from a number of different angles:

- Enforcement – Gathering of evidence and deterrence through the use of CCTV and surveillance, taking photographs etc and active enforcement;
- Education – A publicity campaign to raise awareness of Duty of Care for businesses and local waste services for householders as well as to encourage reporting of the problem; the production and distribution of an information leaflet and by actively talking to businesses and local residents;
- Clearance – Establishment of a call-off contract with contractors to quickly clear fly-tipping from Network Rail land.