

‘Tip Us Off’ Anti- Fly- tipping Campaign

London Borough of Waltham Forest

‘Tip Us Off’ was a six-week campaign to raise awareness of the types of fly-tipping in the London Borough of Waltham Forest and to encourage members of the public to report anyone dumping rubbish on the public highway. No extra money was available, so six partners (the council, the local newspaper, Bywaters, Lea Valley Estates, Waltham Forest Civic Society, Lee Valley Park) each contributed £500. The local newspaper promised a minimum one-page of coverage for each week of the campaign, plus the promise of advertising of all prosecution cases and court results. One day of in-depth television news coverage was also achieved.

A dedicated freephone hotline was installed, staffed by a highway enforcement officer from 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday. Outside these hours the hotline was placed on voicemail. Members of the public could also use the normal call centre reporting system. The local newspaper set up a web page, which allowed readers to email details of fly-tipping with the option of anonymity.

Posters were displayed in prominent places throughout the borough. They had a bright yellow background with black writing, a picture of a fly and the message ‘TIP US OFF – Fly-tipping is destroying our borough call 020 8496 2000’. Bookmarks in a similar style were distributed to every schoolchild. Bookmarks and leaflets were distributed to all council offices for placement at their reception area. The newspaper also ran a slogan and question competition for children.

A total of 237 genuine calls to the dedicated hotline were received. Fly-tipping-related calls increased by over 52% against the same period in the previous year. The enforcement officer who operated the hotline (taking details, trying to persuade callers to give evidence at court), allocated cases for investigation and passed details to the cleansing section for clearance. The deadline was 72 hours from time of call. The system worked due to the cooperation of all staff involved.

There has been a sharp increase in public awareness of fly-tipping and its illegal nature. The public is also more willing to advise the council of fly-tipping incidents. More people are willing to identify themselves, and to give evidence at court, but generally within the borough there is a fear of reprisal and an unwillingness to give evidence.

There are still a large number of anonymous callers and further work is needed to reduce the fear and perceptions of the public.

The posters proved to be effective and as the campaign progressed and the telephone number became better known, many residents tried to shortcut the normal call centre, and enforcement officers handled unrelated calls.

The campaign has also prompted the mobile tip scheme. Communities contribute to a weekend collection scheme, and dustcarts visit specific roads collecting anything that residents wish to get rid of.

The campaign was so successful that it has continued. The London Borough of Waltham Forest continues to publicise its call centre number, called Waltham Forest Direct. This number is frequently used and has proven to be very successful. The local authority also has three 'first stop shops' in the main shopping areas (shops operated by council staff where the local community can report anything) where residents are encouraged to provide the council staff with evidence of any fly-tipping spotted.

London Borough of Waltham Forest also has CCTV cameras dotted around the borough, which have caught around a dozen fly-tipping incidents. They have also served 486 fixed penalty notices this year (2005) and taken action against 26 fly-tippers, of which some went to court. In response to the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005, the council is reorganising its enforcement section. This involves increasing the number of officers within the section from six to nine. Six of these officers will be called street enforcers and their primary function will be to serve fixed penalty notices for all offences under the new Act. It is hoped that this and the above campaign will allow the borough to benefit from inward investment and regeneration and help to install a sense of civic pride and responsibility in its citizens.

For further information, please contact:

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