

Case study: Ravensthorpe Neighbourhood Action Group (R.A.G.)

What was the issue to address?

To give community development support to individuals to enable them to come together as a group so that they can build relationships with a range of services and ultimately, have a say in how services are delivered in the places where they live.

With the exception of two local schools, local nursery and a small number of projects led by voluntary community groups, there was no existing community forum that was truly representative of the area.

Ravensthorpe is one of the most deprived neighbourhoods in Kirklees and in the bottom 10% nationally. It has a population of 5870 residents of which 58% are white British and 45% Pakistani. It was imperative that any forum reflected the diverse make up of the different communities living in the area whether in terms of ethnicity, gender, being a home owner, or tenant.

What difference did we make?

Ravensthorpe Action Group (RAG) meets every 4 weeks with a good cross section of the community attending. Meetings are regularly attended by elected members and Community Rangers. Services that have both consulted and liaised with members on a range of issues include:

- **Highways:** Sixteen individual issues have been raised by residents resulting in members being consulted on a proposed Road Safety Scheme for the area
- **Local Environmental Quality:** Persistent reports around household litter matched by reports from other services such as the Community Rangers resulted in a pilot scheme called, **“Street Action Ravensthorpe”** which is funded by the local area committee and Dewsbury West Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder
- **Housing Market Renewal:** Two consultation meetings were well attended with residents identifying problems and key issues in the area but more importantly, sharing their thoughts on creative problem solving which have helped to shape the Ravensthorpe Master Plan. At a follow up meeting, proposals were shared with residents for comments and feedback before the final draft was submitted for funding
- Members devised and distributed a **“Litter Information Sheet”** with relevant contact numbers in relevant languages to every household in the area
- Two members represent the group on an **“Eat ‘n’ Bin Scheme”** which is coordinated by Community Rangers
- **Crime Stoppers** presented information on how to report incidents and what the process is once information has been received



What were the keys to our success?

- The resolution of a single construction issue overcame perceptions that the group was ‘just about meetings’.
- Intensive and on-going outreach work at local facilities, schools, libraries, shops, community groups and regular leaflet drops in relevant languages.
- Signposting residents who had individual concerns
- Having named officers to collate and relay information and issues to services through forums such as Neighbourhood Management groups
- The group has a designated representative as a member of the Dewsbury West Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder Board.

What are we doing next?

- Support members in taking on management committee roles and responsibilities to service the group
- Members will meet with the other three action groups in Dewsbury West to share commonalities and good practice
- An action plan is being developed towards achieving key priorities towards a Neighbourhood Charter
- Follow up meetings are planned to make sure people continue to be involved in the Housing and Market Renewal project.

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