

East End Quality of life Initiative

Survey of tenants and residents on behalf of the Darnall CTE Project

This brief summary gives an overview of the replies received from the survey carried out during July-October 2003. East End Quality of Life Initiative (EEQOL) was commissioned by South Yorkshire Housing Association (SYHA) to carry out a survey of tenants and residents in the Darnall area on behalf of 6 social landlords (Arches, Hallam, North British, South Yorkshire and Yorkshire Metropolitan Housing Associations, plus Sheffield City Council). They identified a total of 375 addresses, and we wrote to these residents in July, encouraging them to take part in the survey. A team of 12 community interviewers undertook the survey from late July to mid-October. They called at residents' homes up to 4 times to try and obtain an interview, unless the premises were obviously vacant, or if the resident decided not to take part. More than 500 visits in total resulted in 268 interviews, a response rate of 71%. The views expressed by residents should not be taken as representative, as the sample selected by landlords was not necessarily representative of their tenants in the area, either in terms of ethnicity or age, and interviewers conducted the survey with whoever was available within the household.

Darnall as a place to live

The survey started with a series of questions about how residents felt about the area in general. More than half the residents had lived in the area 5 years or more.

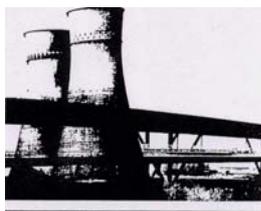
Residents were either very satisfied (23%) or fairly satisfied (42%) with the area as a place to live, although 21% were either fairly or very dissatisfied.

Opinions were split about how the area had changed over the last 2 years. 39% felt it had stayed about the same, 22% felt it had got better, but 39% felt it had got worse.

People were asked to choose 2 things that they liked about living in the area, or to add their own ideas. People mainly liked the friendly people (117 responses), good public transport links (87), their neighbours (84), being close to shops and amenities (67), and being close to family (66).

Asked if they would prefer to stay in the area or move out, 134 people said they would prefer to stay, 62 said they would like to move, and 59 said it would depend. Asked if they would be likely to move in the next 3 years, 127 people said they did not expect to move, 48 said they did, 58 people said it would depend, and 6 said they couldn't afford to move.

Residents were asked about a range of possible noise problems in the area. There were relatively low proportions of people who suffered from serious noise problems, but 35 people said road traffic



noise was a serious problem, 21 said dog noise was a serious problem, and neighbour noise was a serious problem for 17 people.

Residents were asked how satisfied they were with various aspects of their property and the local area. Residents were generally satisfied with their property, the service from their landlord, the quality of local education and health services, public transport and local shops. They were dissatisfied with the availability of recycling facilities, the quality of street cleaning, and the availability of jobs and training for local people. There were mixed feelings about local policing, the quality of street lighting and roads, and leisure and community facilities.

Residents were asked to rate out of 10 how much they would like certain things to happen in the area, and the top 10 issues were:

- 1 safe places for kids to play near their own homes
- 2 free skips and more litter bins
- 3 improvements to local parks
- 4 better crime prevention and safety on the streets
- 5 action to prevent groups of young people causing problems
- 6 less crime and vandalism
- 7 create long term jobs with decent wages
- 8 drop-in centres
- 9 more traffic slowing and pedestrian safety measures
- 10 modernising of housing

Asked about the availability and cost of fresh fruit and vegetables locally, more than half (140 people) said they were fairly satisfied, but 32 people said they were too expensive, and 42 people said they were not very fresh. Most of the surveys were undertaken before the closure of a local supermarket, which may affect the situation.

Social issues

Residents were asked whether alcohol, drug use, hooliganism or vandalism were problems in the area. Almost half of those expressing an opinion were concerned about these issues.

Residents were asked how many people they knew in their immediate area. 87 said they knew most of the people, 78 said they knew many of them, 82 said they knew a few, and 16 said they did not know any local people. People generally seemed to get on with their neighbours. 107 people said that people in their neighbourhood generally tried to do things together and help each other, 67 said they went their own way, and 77 said some helped and some didn't. 137 people said they could ask someone to help in an emergency, 86 said they were not sure, and 37 said they had no-one they could ask.

People were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with a list of statements about their area. They generally agreed with the statements *There is a drugs problem in the area*, *The area has a bad reputation*, *You can rely on your neighbours when you need to*, *There is not enough for young people to do*, *People keep themselves to themselves*, *There is a good community spirit*, and *Younger and older people respect each other*, but they disagreed with the statement that *This is a safe place for kids to play*.

Asked if they knew who to contact if they wanted to change things in the area, 87 people said they did, 76 people said they didn't, 41 were not sure, and 46 said they did not know.

Residents were asked how much they trusted groups of people (councillors, the council, employers, police, landlord, neighbours, friends and family). As would be expected, the highest levels of trust were in family, friends and neighbours, but residents also expressed quite high levels of trust in their landlord, the police, the council and local councillors.

Safety and security

Residents were asked how safe they felt in their local area:

How safe do you feel:	very safe	fairly safe	a bit unsafe	very unsafe
alone in your home at night?	59	119	56	23
walking alone in your local area after dark?	36	91	82	50

The average score for how much peoples' quality of life was affected by fear of crime, was 4.67 out of 10, and 37 people said they had been the victim of crime in the past 12 months.

Based on previous surveys in Sheffield, we provided residents with 6 suggestions which might improve safety in the local area. Respondents were asked to rate each one on how much they would like to see it implemented, and these are listed below with the most important first:

- 1 more police on the beat
- 2 burglar alarms in houses
- 3 Neighbourhood Watch projects
- 4 smoke alarms
- 5 slow traffic down
- 6 more street lighting

Involvement and participation

One of the main aims of undertaking the survey was to encourage tenants and residents to get more involved in the running of their estates, and residents were asked to choose up to 2 suggestions from a list of 6 as to what would encourage people to get involved:

- 1 better information
- 2 more get togethers
- 3 a place to drop in and chat
- 4 if they can influence things
- 5 adult education classes
- 6 expenses for volunteers

Demographic and health details

Respondents were aged 16 to 98, with an average age of 43. 113 were male, 153 were female. 102 people were looking after the home or family, 50 were retired, 41 permanently sick or disabled, 18 were employed full-time and 16 part-time, 10 were self-employed, 11 were in full-time education and 1 was on a government supported training scheme. 11 were unemployed. Of those, 3 said how long they had been unemployed, and this ranged from 16 months to 2 years. 71 people gave their ethnic group as White-British, 156 were Asian (1 Indian, 89 Pakistani, 51 Bangladeshi, and 15 Yemeni), 26 were Somali, 11 were Black (Caribbean or African), and 3 were mixed race.

People were asked to rate their current health status on a scale from 0-100 using the Euroqol "thermometer". The average score was 59.83. 100 respondents said they, or someone in their household, had a limiting long-term illness and 141 residents said that someone in the household was receiving benefits.

Recommendations

- Encourage local residents to get involved with environmental regeneration in the area, e.g. Kettlebridge Action Group and the Doorstep Green project on Myton Road; action to improve Darnall Community Park near Kashmir Gardens; the Friends of High Hazels Park; improvements to the canal, etc.
- Closer working between landlords and Streetforce to improve street cleaning in the area, and to combine "bring out your rubbish" days with educational activities about rubbish dumping and litter.
- Increase recycling facilities in the area.
- Focus groups with residents drawn from the white population to explore what social activities and facilities they want, and why they feel excluded from current activities.
- Focus groups from different ethnic groups to explore ways of bringing the different groups together.
- Local policing should build on existing confidence and trust in the area, and do more to re-assure older residents about action on anti-social behaviour.
- Focus groups with young people from different ethnic groups to find out what activities and leisure facilities they would use, and a commitment to ensure these are provided.
- Closer working between landlords, youth workers and the police to ensure adequate provision is made for young people in the area.
- Improved access to good quality training and employment in the area.
- Closer working between residents and landlords to ensure everyone has access to information and feels able to contribute to improving the quality of life in the area.
- Monitor the availability of fresh fruit and vegetables, and residents' opinions about the quality of local shops, following the closure of Morrisons supermarket in Darnall.

Further information

If you would like to see the full report, which contains detailed data tables and analysis, and the questionnaire used, it will be available on the internet (www.sheffieldeastend.org.uk/eeqol-reports), or you can consult a printed copy at your landlord's office. If you are unable to obtain a copy in this way, please contact: Barbara Rimmington, Research Worker, East End Quality of Life Initiative, 10 Montgomery Terrace Road, Sheffield S6 3BU, tel: 0114 285 9931, email: barbara@sheffieldct.co.uk.