



**East Durham Trust**  
*Moving our community forward*

# **The South Hetton Agenda for Action**

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## Background

The concept of *Agendas for Action* for areas of the District of Easington emerged with the identification of a need to change the existing Neighbourhood Forums, in order to create a more effective way of engaging the local community. Although the Neighbourhood Forums had some success, only four were established and they did not adequately represent areas which were perceived as 'neighbourhoods'.

Elected members attending forums along with Council Officers agreed that, in order to harness the sense of place which people feel in individual neighbourhoods, it would be beneficial to divide the district into ten neighbourhoods-an approach previously adopted by the police- and to pilot three of these areas first with *Agenda for Action* meetings.

East Durham Trust was engaged in February 2008 to organise and facilitate the pilot meetings. The Trust, as a new organisation with an extremely strong community engagement record, was able to ensure a good level of attendance at the three meetings, and also to ensure that 'new faces' who had not been part of the Neighbourhood Forums came along.

A decision was made to use one small, one medium and one large neighbourhood for the three pilot meetings - South Hetton, Murton and Seaham. Taking inspiration from the recent DCLG publication *How to develop a local charter – A guide for Local Authorities*, the intention of each meeting was to draw up a charter to be referred to as a local *Agenda for Action*.

Meetings were arranged for 6pm – 8pm as follows:

Monday 17<sup>th</sup> March: Seaham; Parkside Community Centre

Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> March: Murton; The Glebe Centre

Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> March: South Hetton; The Robin Todd Centre

## Venues

The venues in Murton and South Hetton were the only feasible locations for the meetings, being the main or only community venues in those locations. The venue at Seaham was chosen as central locations including the Leisure centre were unavailable. However the spread of attendees and the take up of the offer of free transport at the

event proved that holding the meeting in a less than central location did not present too much of a barrier.

## Marketing and publicity

The meetings were advertised using a variety of methods, as outlined below:

- **Press releases** – to Peterlee Mail, Sunderland Echo, Northern Echo etc
- **Mailshots** – a letter was sent to all previous Neighbourhood Forum attendees as well as all Parish/ Town councillors in the areas concerned.
- **Canvassing support from Trust members** – Members and East Durham Trusts engagement team spoke to Trust members in each of the locations to secure their support and to ask them to pass on the word to others.
- **Advertising** – an ad was placed for two consecutive weeks in the Seaham and Houghton Star
- **Leafleting** – local community contacts in each location helped to spread the word by distributing leaflets to local contacts and by displaying a publicity poster in community venues/ pubs/ doctor's surgeries.

## Format for the meetings

People were asked to arrive at the Robin Todd Centre for tea and coffee at 6.00pm, and were able to sit at any one of a number of tables around the room. An external facilitator gave an outline of how the event would work. Trust and DoE staff were on hand to facilitate and feed back when the group broke up into small groups to list their priorities. The external facilitator then summed up the feedback/ key priorities. The itinerary was:

- 6.00 Arrival
- 6.10 Malcolm Fallow: Introduction, welcome and purpose of the meeting
- 6.15 Facilitator: What we think we know about things to improve in Seaham / Murton / South Hetton now
- 6.35 Small groups: Ideas and areas where a real difference can be made in the next year

- 6.45 Collecting the ideas together and suggesting the top priorities
- 7.30 Sharing our views with the whole group
- 7.45 Facilitator: summing up, explaining how things will work, what will happen next and who to contact
- 8.00 Malcolm Fallow/ Facilitator: thanks to those who attended, close of meeting

### **Attendance**

At the South Hetton event approximately 30 people attended and of these 13 left their contact details in order to be kept up to date with progress with the *Agenda for Action*. The age range of attendees was mixed, some attendees took advantage of the childcare facility available by way of a youth club in the building . In terms of gender the audience was fairly evenly split. There was a presence from local councilors and community activists, but also some new faces.

### **Outcomes – The Broader Statement**

As this was a smaller meeting and dealt with a smaller neighbourhood, the South Hetton outcomes were much more specific and targeted than those in larger neighbourhoods like Seaham. General regeneration issues such as dealing with crime did come up, but an *Agenda for Action* with specific measurable actions was quickly formulated, as most attendees had the same issues in mind. Please see below. The accompanying appendix lists the full set of results for South Hetton .

## South Hetton Agenda for Action

- Address traffic congestion and unlawful parking etc around South Hetton Primary School in Frederick Terrace
- Control Traffic and improve pedestrian safety on A182 through South Hetton by introducing a pedestrian crossing
- Improved facilities for young people, specifically to include a youth club and access to youth workers and to continue to support and develop the 'Youth Shelter';
- Improved frequency of public transport (particularly early mornings, evenings and weekends) to enable people to get to job opportunities outside the village – including Durham, Doxford Park etc.
- Improve the environment of the area by revitalising the fishing lakes and dealing with the garage site. A general clean up to tackle dog mess and litter is needed.
- Increase availability of female doctors and clinical staff at the Health Centre

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