

NORTH EAST (OUTER) AREA COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 7TH FEBRUARY, 2011

PRESENT: Councillor G Wilkinson in the Chair

Councillors A Lamb, J Procter,
R D Feldman, Mrs R Feldman, P Harrand,
A Castle and M Robinson

Apologies Councillor R Procter

53 Late Items

In accordance with his powers under Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chair agreed to admit to the agenda a late report in respect of Agenda Item 11 (Minute No. 66 refers) – Wellbeing Fund 2010/11 – Update Report.

The report had not been available at the time of agenda despatch, but it was regarded as necessary to consider it as a late item of urgent business, as it contained details of applications for funding from various local organisations.

54 Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor R Procter.

55 Declaration of Interests

The following declarations of personal interest were made:-

- Agenda Item 19 (Minute No. 63 refers) – West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service – Collaborative Working within Area Committees – Councillors A Castle and P Harrand in their capacity as members of the West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority.

See also Minute No. 61.

56 Open Forum

Reference was made to the provision contained in the Area Committee Procedure Rules for an Open Forum session to take place at each ordinary meeting of an Area Committee, to allow members of the public to ask questions or to make representations on matters which fell within the remit of the Area Committee. On this occasion, no such matters were raised.

57 Minutes - 6th December 2010

Minutes approved as a correct record
at the meeting held on Monday, 21st March, 2011

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 6th December 2010 be confirmed as a correct record.

58 Towards Integrated Locality Working

The Assistant Chief Executive (Planning, Policy and Improvement) submitted a report outlining the concept of locality working across the City, and how this was proposed to be introduced.

In attendance at the meeting and responding to Members' queries and comments, were Shaid Mahmood, Area Leader, South East Leeds, and Rory Barke, Area Leader, East and North East Leeds. In brief summary the main points of discussion were:-

- Whilst welcoming the appointment of Rory Barke to his new position under the revised arrangements, Members expressed some scepticism at the impact the new Area Leader posts would have in practice. It was regarded that much of the power over local service delivery still lay either with other Council officers – Streetscene Services being a good example – or with partner agencies which had their own priorities and budget issues. In these circumstances, Members were likely to adhere to the tried and tested method of contacting the Chief Officer or the Chief Executive direct if they had any problems. The officers accepted that it was unrealistic to expect an overnight improvement, it would be a gradual process. However, experience with the pathfinder project, piloted in SE Leeds, had shown that greater co-ordination of services and effort towards the common goal of improved services at local level had led to real achievements in community engagement, partnership working and locality improvements.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

59 Proposed Delegation of Environmental Services to Area Committees

Further to Minute No. 35, 25th October 2010, and Minute No. 45, 6th December 2010, the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods submitted a report updating the Committee regarding the proposed delegation of elements of Streetscene Services to Area Committees with effect from the beginning of the new Municipal Year.

In attendance at the meeting, and responding to Members' queries and comments, was Dayle Lynch, Environment and Neighbourhoods Department. In brief summary, the main points of discussion were:-

- It was explained that overall control of the delegated services would remain with the Chief Officer Environmental Services within the Environment and Neighbourhoods Department. In terms of day to day operation of the services, this responsibility would lay with three posts

of Locality Manager, one within each of the three wedges across the City.

- Reference was made to Member involvement to date, which included an Outer NE workshop held on 12th January, and proposals for further Member involvement in Phase 2 of the implementation plan in February and March, which included discussions on proposed Service Level Agreements for each Area Committee area.
- Members were not convinced that the proposals were a material improvement on existing arrangements. No extra resources were being made available, and it appeared that central control would be maintained over staff and machinery.

It was explained that, via the Area Leaders and the Locality Managers, Area Committees would have a real say in establishing priorities in their areas and allocating resources to meet those priorities.

- Members regarded that the whole concept was ill-conceived and requested that the architect of the proposals appear before them to enable them to further explore their concerns. Members also requested to know the costs involved in the proposed exercise, including all the consultation arrangements. They were also sceptical regarding any alleged cost savings.
- Members also requested to be supplied with concrete details regarding current service and expenditure levels in the NE Outer area, together with details of proposed expenditure levels and equipment levels under the new proposals.
- Members also queried whether, as it appeared, this proposed delegation was a fait accompli, or whether Area Committees could opt for the status quo ?

In response, officers replied that if the majority of Area Committees did not regard the proposed new arrangements as satisfactory, then the proposed delegation may have to be reviewed. However, the proposals had generally found favour with Members. If the discontent was with only one or two areas, then perhaps in those particular areas the situation would have to be looked at again, but this would mean that those particular Area Committees would not be able to shape service levels or priorities to the same degree.

- In conclusion, Members stated that they were not content with the current proposals, which, in their view, passed responsibility down to Area Committees, but without any real power or control over resources.

RESOLVED – That, subject to the above comments and concerns, the update report be received and noted.

(NB: Councillor P Harrand left the meeting at 6.20 pm, at the conclusion of this item.)

60 Children's Services - Performance Report

Further to Minute No. 26, 20th September 2010, and Minute No. 33(a), 25th October 2010, the Director of Children's Services submitted a report updating the Committee on performance levels in a variety of areas, including recent statutory inspections of the adoption service, the youth offending service and five children's centres, various education performance indicators, the latest NEET (young people Not in Education, Employment or Training), and the top priorities contained in the Children and Young People Plan (CYPP) 2011-2015.

In attendance at the meeting and responding to Members' queries and comments, were Amanda Jackson, Locality Enabler, Children's Services, and Shaid Mahmood, Area Leader, South East Leeds. In brief summary the main areas of discussion were:-

- The development of the multi-disciplinary children's wellbeing concept across the City, as outlined to the Committee at its meeting on 20th September 2010 (Minute No. 26 refers). This concept was evolving.

Members reiterated their view expressed on 20th September, that it was important that resources followed the child – in other words, in an area like the NE Outer area, where a lot of pupils from across the City travelled to school, then the resources needed to be allocated to provide appropriate services in the NE Outer area, and not all linked to a young person's home address.

This point was acknowledged, as was the need to work collaboratively across wedge boundaries.

- Members expressed concern at the number of 'Not Knowns' amongst the NEET statistics, and the possible or potential problems which this statistic might be masking.

The officers accepted that this was a major challenge and more work needed to be done. However, a lot of work had already been done and the latest available figures represented a significant improvement on the previous position.

RESOLVED – That, subject to the above comments, the report be received and noted.

61 Future Options for Long Term Residential Care and Day Care for Older People

The Committee received and considered a report submitted by the Deputy Director of Adult Social Care (Strategic Commissioning) relating to future options for the provision of long term residential care and day care for older people in Leeds, and the current extensive consultation exercise taking place on the issue.

In attendance at the meeting and responding to Members' queries and comments, were Michele Tynan and Kim Maslyn, Adult Social Care.

In brief summary, the main points of discussion were:-

- The costs associated with possibly modernising the Council-owned accommodation, compared with the already cheaper services on offer in the private sector.
- The lack of consultation to date with Local Members. Members regarded that, in effect, they were being presented with a fait accompli - the Executive Board had effectively decided that savings needed to be made and, in the Area Committee's view, this consultation exercise was merely an academic exercise, pending the decision later in the year to close facilities.

The officers stressed that no decisions had been taken, and the present consultation process was a very real process, in which all stakeholders' views were being sought and would be taken into account in the final report back to the Executive Board in the summer.

- Primrose Hill Residential Home, Boston Spa – Members expressed surprise that residents and relatives had not, to date, been consulted on the review. The officers responded that, clearly, they would be consulted, but in their experience, and from comments which had been received in the past, residents, relatives and staff found it unsettling and upsetting to be consulted in a general way on non-specific proposals – it often raised unnecessary fears.

Members were also sceptical whether, if Primrose Hill did close, places could be found locally for the 36 current residents. In their view, any suggested closure of Primrose Hill should be co-ordinated with the proposed opening of the new private home in Wetherby, and Primrose Hill residents should be given priority in terms of the new home.

The officers drew Members' attention to the information and options set out in the report to the Executive Board at its meeting on 15th December 2010, which was appended to the report on tonight's agenda.

- The Chair requested that officers add Wetherby In Support of the Elderly (WISE) to their list of organisations to be consulted – Area Management Officer to supply the details. Also, Boston Spa Parish Council.

RESOLVED – That, subject to the above comments, the report be received and noted.

(NB: Councillor M Robinson declared a personal interest in this item, as he had a relative who was resident in a care home.)

62 Transformation of Learning Disability Day Services

The Director of Adult Social Services submitted a report informing Members of a current review of learning disability day services across the City, the aim of which was to move away from segregated services based in large, former adult training centres, which were now viewed as outdated and a potential barrier to independence and social inclusion.

In terms of the NE Outer area, consultation was progressing on the potential closure of the Wetherby Fulfilling Lives Centre on Sandbeck Way, and the provision of possible smaller alternative facilities. A number of potential sites had, or were, being considered, including the Wetherby One Stop Centre (subsequently regarded as unsuitable), Wetherby Leisure Centre or part of the Leeds City College site (formerly Wetherby High School).

Michele Tynan and Andy Rawnsley, Adult Social Care, attended the meeting and responded to Members' queries and comments. In brief summary, the main points of discussion were:-

- Members again raised their concerns at a lack of consultation to date with Local Members. It appeared to them that, yet again, they were being faced with a fait accompli, with only lip service being paid to consultation.
- Issues were raised regarding the suggested use of part of the Leeds City College site – this school now had Trust status and Councillor Lamb indicated that he was unaware of the suggestion, even though he was a school governor. Expectations may have been raised amongst service users and their carers which the Department might not be able to fulfil. Concern was expressed that the proposals for this site only proposed to cater for approximately half the current users of the Wetherby Fulfilling Lives Centre, which meant that friendship groups might have to be broken up.
- On a more general point, Members regarded that it was hypocritical of the Council to talk of an expanded and enhanced role for Area Committees, and the development of a 'One Council / Locality Working' concept, whilst examples of lack of involvement and consultation, such as this item and the last, were rife.

RESOLVED – That a meeting be sought with the Executive Member (Adult Health and Social Care) to further explore and explain the Committee's concerns.

63 West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service - Collaborative Working within the Area Committees

Graham Ambler, Deputy Station Commander, Moortown and Wetherby, presented a report regarding the community risk management strategy initiative included in the WYFRS Service Plan 2011-15. The service already worked collaboratively with its public sector partners across the City. However, in these times when all public sector organisations faced budget pressures, it was regarded that even closer working ties would be mutually beneficial. For instance, the Fire and Rescue Service could no longer afford to maintain its home safety check programme and its resources had to be targeted at the most vulnerable – hence the need for closer co-operation and data sharing between agencies. As an example, PCSOs in the area had been taught home safety basics and would also alert the Fire and Rescue Service, say when someone would benefit from having a smoke alarm fitted. The Fire and Rescue Service also ran educational programmes in schools and in respect of arsonists.

Members welcomed the suggestion regarding more joined-up services. It was suggested that WYFRS representatives might be invited to occasionally attend Ward Member meetings and, in the meantime, if Members wished to pass on any information regarding vulnerable constituents, or contacts who might be helpful to WYFRS, then this could be done via the Area Management Officer.

RESOLVED – That the report be received and noted.

64 Appointments to Outside Bodies - Ancient Parish of Barwick in Elmet Trust

RESOLVED – That Mr Jack Anderson be re-appointed as the Council's representative on the Ancient Parish of Barwick in Elmet Trust for a further four year period of office.

65 Appointments to Outside Bodies - Lady Elizabeth Hastings' Educational Foundation

RESOLVED – That Councillor John Procter be appointed as the Council's Nominative Foundation Trustee on this charity for a period of three years, commencing from the date of the resignation of the existing Trustee, Mr Michael Fox, or from the end of his term of office in June 2012, whichever is the sooner.

66 Wellbeing Fund 2010/11 - Update Report

The East North East Area Leader submitted a report updating the Committee on its current revenue and capital wellbeing budgets, and setting out details of some applications before the Committee for a decision.

Further to Minute No. 34, 25th October 2010, and Minute No. 47, 6th December 2010, the report also addressed proposals to rectify the accounting error previously identified and discussed.

Members felt that there was still confusion surrounding the Committee's previous and current financial position and, in view of that, they could not satisfy themselves that what was being proposed fully rectified the matter.

RESOLVED – That a decision be deferred, and a further meeting be sought with the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods to discuss the Committee's wellbeing budget situation.

67 Area Delivery Plan and Community Charter 2011/12 - Update Report

The East North East Area Leader submitted a report regarding the preparation of the draft Area Delivery Plan (ADP) and Community Charter 2011/12, the final draft version of which was proposed to be submitted to the next meeting on 21st March 2011.

Some concerns were raised regarding the content of both documents, which contained commitments over which the Area Committee had no direct control, i.e. services provided by partner agencies. The value of producing a separate Community Charter document was also questioned.

The Area Leader indicated that similar comments had been made at other Area Committees, and the proposed content of the documents could be reviewed. However, the ADP was not just about the Area Committee's commitments – a key role and responsibility of Area Committees was to engage its public sector partners in dialogue and to hold them to account for their promises, so this needed to be reflected somehow in the ADP. With regard to the production of a Community Charter document, unlike the ADP, this was entirely discretionary, but it did help to simplify the ADP commitments and aims for the wider public.

RESOLVED – That a decision be deferred pending further discussions at Ward Member meetings.

68 Town and Parish Council Forum - Feedback Report

It was noted that Councillor Wilkinson would Chair the next Forum meeting on 21st April, in lieu of Councillor J Procter.

RESOLVED – That the notes of the Harewood and Wetherby Town and Parish Council Forum meeting held on 20th January 2011 be received and noted.

69 Date, Time and Venue of Next Meeting

Monday, 21st March 2011, 6.00 pm, Treetops Community Centre, Alwoodley.

The meeting concluded at 8.32 pm.