

EAST (OUTER) AREA COMMITTEE

TUESDAY, 10TH SEPTEMBER, 2013

PRESENT: Councillor A McKenna in the Chair

Councillors D Coupar, J Cummins,
M Dobson, P Grahame, P Gruen,
M Harland, J Lewis, M Lyons, K Mitchell
and K Wakefield

25 Chair's opening remarks

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting

26 Late Items

Although there were no formal late items, Members were in receipt of additional information on the impact of benefit changes as of July 31st 2013 in the Outer East Area, to accompany the report on Welfare Reform (minute 33 refers). The additional information had been made available prior to the meeting

27 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests

28 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Murray. The Chair advised that Councillor Mitchell would be arriving slightly late due to another appointment

29 Minutes

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the East Outer Area Committee meetings held on 17th June 2013 and 2nd July 2013 be approved

30 Open Forum

No matters were raised under the Open Forum

31 Summary of key work

Members considered a report of the South East Area Leader which set out priority work carried out in the area over recent weeks. Appended to the report were minutes of forum, partnership and sub-group meetings and those of the Area Committee Chairs meeting

Three presentations were made to the Committee highlighting priority work in the area, these being:

- a report from West Yorkshire Trading Standards representatives on financial fitness workshops which had been run in other parts of the city and were planned to be delivered in the Outer East Area
- an update on the proposed Thorpe Park development
- the Junior Cricket Week, which was subsidised by the Area Committee

Financial Fitness Workshops

Members welcomed Dawn Mason from West Yorkshire Trading Standards (WYTS) who provided an overview of the workshops being delivered which were to provide information and raise awareness of the of the range of scams and frauds which were in operation and targeted job seekers and vulnerable people. Other topics to be covered in the workshops would be banking and budgeting; welfare reform and consumer rights

Both Kippax and Garforth Children's Centres would host the workshops, with Members being welcome to attend the sessions and provide details of other venues or groups which could benefit from these courses

In summary, reference was made to the following matters:

- the selection of areas to deliver the workshops
- the benefits of receiving updates via Social Media from WYTS of the scams operating in the area
- the need for closer working by WYTS with Area Committees to tackle these issues
- the increase of cyber crime and the current position in detecting and preventing this
- the need for further updates to be presented to Members

The Chair asked that any suggestions for venues to hold future workshops or groups which could benefit from receiving these session be conveyed to WYTS through the Area Improvement Officer

Thorpe Park Update

Members welcomed representatives of Scarborough Developments and the Chief Planning Officer to provide an update on the proposals for a major retail-led scheme at Thorpe Park

Members were informed that the application would be presented for determination at a special meeting of the City Plans Panel to be held on 19th September. The developers were of the view that whilst not all matters were fully resolved, the principles of the proposals were clear and that a key matter,

this being a review of the layout for the Manston Lane Link Road (MLLR,) to optimise the ELOR had been carried out, with details of this included in the planning application

At this point, Councillor Mitchell joined the meeting

Regarding highways matters, much testing had been done on the proposals including consideration of future proposals, with appropriate conditions being proposed to require highways monitoring to take place and mitigation measures to be introduced where necessary

In terms of the impact of the proposals on other local centres, a positive response was reported to have been received from the Council's independent retail consultant, subject to conditions

The importance of local employment to Members had been recognised and an employment strategy would form part of the S106 Legal Agreement. Members' request for further consultation on revisions to the scheme had also been carried out

Councillor P Gruen informed the meeting that in view of the application being considered on 19th September and through being a member of City Plans Panel, he would not participate in the discussions at this meeting. Councillor J Lewis and J Cummins echoed this, through also being members of the City Plans Panel

The Chief Planning Officer informed Members that the report being taken to City Plans Panel would be for the changes to Thorpe Park; the options for the roads and proposals for Green Park, which was planned to be delivered on a phased basis. The proposals for the East Leeds Extension would not be submitted to Panel at this stage as there were matters outstanding, particularly in relation to the East Leeds Orbital Route (ELOR), with further information on the ELOR being presented to Executive Board in October. In terms of the MLLR this would be provided in full and be paid for and developed by Scarborough Developments

On the employment and training strategy, the Chief Planning Officer commended the scheme put together by Scarborough Developments as a model and stated that he would be recommending this approach to other developers in the city

Further information was provided on the proposed conditions relating to highways matters

In summary, reference was made to the following matters:

- the MLLR and ELOR and the need for clarity on what would be built and when; also that the number of roundabouts through Thorpe Park would need to be given careful consideration
- apprenticeships and local employment; the need for this to be delivered at an early stage and to target young people with few or no qualifications in the Cross Gates, Kippax and Halton Moor parts of the Outer East area. On this matter Members were informed that Scarborough Developments were working on and testing a range of innovative ideas around training and employment to further enhance

the offer the development would bring to the local community in terms of jobs and skills

- that the employment and training strategy should also encourage an increase in the levels of qualifications of young people
- the need for the jobs and skills to be focussed on the East Leeds area, rather than being rolled out across the city. Members were informed that the report to City Plans Panel specified the Wards which should be focussed on for employment and training

The Chair thanked Officers and representatives from the developers for their attendance and asked them to provide a further update at the October meeting

Junior Cricket Week

Mr Tony Bowry from the Yorkshire County Cricket Board was welcomed to the meeting to give a brief presentation on the recent Junior Cricket Week which was held in two venues, Kippax and Whitkirk during the school holidays

Details were provided about the number of participants; the splitting of the sessions into am and pm at one venue; that this had not worked and the reasons for this; the involvement of professional players in the scheme and future projects, including establishing links with a new cricket academy with the aim of developing local people playing for Yorkshire CCC. The development of young officials, ie 14-16 year olds for umpiring and scoring was also being considered as was encouraging younger people to become Board Members

Members commented on the following matters:

- the level of interest shown by young people in watching and participating in this sport
- the good behaviour of the participants
- the possibility of broadening the scheme across the East Outer area and that Councillor Coupar, the Area Lead on Children's Services and Corporate Carers would meet with Tony to discuss this and bring further information back to the Committee

Mr Bowry thanked East Outer Area Committee for their continued support of this project and on behalf of the Members, the Chair thanked Tony for all the work done on this

Older Persons Event Week 2013

The Area Improvement Officer informed Members of the proposals for this annual event and that the organisation HOPE were to arrange an additional event this year, with an additional event being arranged by HOPE in Cross Gates in 2014

It was confirmed that the venue for Kippax would be at Kippax Central Working Men's Club off Gibson Lane

RESOLVED - To note the report, the presentations and the comments now made

During consideration of this matter, Councillor Gruen left the meeting due to having another meeting to attend

32 Children's Services Area Committee update report

Sarah Sinclair and Martyn Stenton of Children's Services presented a report of the Director of Children's Services which provided a six-monthly update on local outcomes for young people in the East Outer Area and responded to questions and comments from the Area Committee. Issues relating to Ofsted inspections, school places; achievement levels of Looked After Children, cluster governance arrangements and NEET figures were outlined

Members commented on the following matters:

- the involvement of Ward Members on Children's Services clusters; that in some cases Members were appointed to these but not then contacted to attend meetings
- the uneven approach to cluster governance which led to in some cases a lack of involvement, whereas in other areas, Councillors were attending meetings and taking decisions about funding. Sarah Sinclair agreed to undertake some urgent work to answer the concerns raised
- that requests by a Ward Member over a long period of time to see the minutes of their local cluster meetings had not been met
- that Elected Members did not have voting rights on the clusters and that this did not promote close working
- the lack of school places in the Outer East area; that children were having to travel further afield, often passing their local school en route, and that the journey to school having to be undertaken by primary school children and their parents was impacting on the ability of parents to work. Members were informed that additional money had been secured to create additional provision in the area but that in terms of building new schools due to changes by Central Government, Local Authorities had lost the ability to open these and that any new school had to be either an academy or a free school. There were also issues around land availability, particularly in the areas where provision was most needed
- the unwillingness of some schools to extend provision either by the use of portacabins or creating bulge classes
- the amount of funding held by clusters
- the number of schools in the area which had been closed in the past; that the effects of this were now being seen and that action was needed to ensure that children could be educated locally
- the need to ensure that any funding for new schools arising out of development was provided for in the area where the development was, rather than further afield
- the need for Members' concerns about the clusters to be taken up and addressed

The Chair requested a further report be presented on this issue to the October meeting, with Councillor Coupar, as Area Lead asking to meet with Officers before the October East Outer Area Committee meeting

RESOLVED - To note the report, the comments now made and that a further report be brought back to Area Committee

33 Update on Welfare Benefit changes

Shaun Kelly Financial Manager Welfare Benefits presented a report of the Chief Officer (Welfare Benefits) providing an update on the impact of the welfare reforms at both a city-wide and ward level basis, including information on arrangements which had been established to support tenants. Details about the campaign against high cost lenders was also included in the report. In responding to queries and comments from Members Mr Kelly was assisted by Jason Kirk from Aire Valley Homes Leeds

Members also considered a supplementary report providing details in respect of East North East Homes

Members discussed the report in detail

In summary, the following issues were raised:

- the Local Welfare Support Scheme how people were signposted to this scheme; the underspend on the scheme and the reasons for this. Members were informed that the Job Centre would direct people to the Local Welfare Support Scheme. Regarding the underspend on this, one reason was that two different systems were being compared as the previous system was cash-based, whereas the Council's scheme was not. Work was also ongoing to see if the reduced demand for this service was due to people not being aware of its existence
- Discretionary Housing Payments and the need to ensure that advice centres for residents were spread out in the villages, in view of the level of interest seen at Garforth Library. Members were informed that 'pop-up' centres were being considered for villages
- that more information was required on the work being carried out in the East Outer Wards and the need for some of the funding streams to be clarified
- the Social Fund and the need for information about this to be provided to Ward Members to enable them to inform constituents. It was stated that an advice guide had been published and that a meeting would be arranged with Councillors about signposting constituents to the appropriate organisation
- under-occupancy; that this would plateau and what measures would then be taken when arrears could not be cleared. Jason Kirk advised that new protocols had been agreed for collecting rent and that it would be for the Council to decide on the issue of triggers for possession
- the cashless scheme used by the Council; how this worked and that it was reminiscent of the token system of 1930s – 1940s which stigmatised people using it. Members were informed that the system used was based on pre-paid vouchers for the four main supermarkets
- the need to understand that the majority of people in receipt of benefits were working

Councillor Wakefield assured Members that further information would be provided especially on Discretionary Housing Payments and that the funding made available for this by Government would be used

RESOLVED – a) to note the information about the impact of the welfare reforms

b) to note the information about the campaign against high cost lenders and to contribute to options for locality-based events and initiatives to support the campaign

c) to note the work ongoing in the locality in response to the welfare changes

34 2011 Census Results

Members considered a report of the Chief Officer, Strategy and Improvement on the 2011 census figures. Appended to the report was detailed, statistical information providing comparative data for the Outer East area to provide a demographic profile which included information on population; diversity; housing, economic activity and qualifications and health and wellbeing

Jackie Pruckner attended the meeting and informed Members of the range of data which was available, as well as the ability to drill down further beyond the main headings and cross tabulate data to better inform Members and provide an evidence base which could be used for leverage, particularly relating to jobs and skills

Members thanked Jackie for her work in compiling and presenting this data and for the support she had given to Members to help drive provision where it was most needed

RESOLVED - To note the report and the emerging issues and to consider how the data could inform neighbourhood improvement strategies in East Outer area

35 Well Being Budget (Revenue) 2013/14

Members considered a report of the South East Area Leader detailing the Well Being budget available to East Outer Area Committee in 2013/2014, together with an overview of spending to date and presented funding requests from new projects seeking support

The Area Improvement Manager presented the report and outlined the funding requests

The request for funding for the maintenance of grass/fields at the St Gregory's site was queried and in view of a concern which had been raised on behalf of Councillor P Gruen, it was suggested that consideration of this application be deferred to the next meeting. It was also stated that there were many similar sites in the area where maintenance funding could be requested from the Wellbeing budget and that further consideration to agreeing this funding should be given

The Area Improvement Manager stated that following consultation with Ward Members on the funding request, he had formed the view that this was supported and in as a result, the work had been carried out

RESOLVED - a) To note the report, the position regarding small grants and to award the following payments:

£7,000 towards the cost of extending and refurbishing Swillington Children's playground
£3,920 to Leeds Groundwork Trust to deliver the Staithe Riverside Sensory Garden project in Allerton Bywater
£5,000 to Swillington Miners and Social Welfare Scheme
£8,682 for additional CCTV in Halton Moor
£840 to provide Christmas tree in Garforth
£1,500 to fund maintenance of grass/field at St Gregory's site

b) That the Lead Members be asked to present a report on their work to the next meeting

36 Outer East Area Committee Business Plan 2013-14

Members considered a report of the South East Area Leader setting out the draft 2013/14 Area Committee Annual Business Plan for the East Outer Area, which included priorities and actions for the year; Area Leads and a framework for community engagement. A copy of the draft plan was appended to the report

RESOLVED - To approve the business plan for 2013/14

37 Dates and Times of Future Meetings

Tuesday 15th October 2013 at 4.00pm at Firthfields Community Centre
Garforth

Tuesday 10th December 2013 at 4.00pm in the Civic Hall, Leeds