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WEST (OUTER) AREA COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 18TH SEPTEMBER, 2013

PRESENT: Councillor J Jarosz in the Chair

Councillors A Blackburn, D Blackburn,
A Carter, M Coulson, J Hardy, J Marjoram
and R Wood

18 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

There were no appeals against the refusal of inspection of documents.

19 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There were no resolutions to exclude the public.

20 Late Items

There were no late items. However, supplementary information had been sent to the committee members, Prior to the meeting relating to item 13 Community Centres Pricing Policy Update Report (minute 31 refers).

21 Declaration of Interests

No declarations were made.

22 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor R Lewis.

23 Open Forum

Claire Turnbull from the Pudsey Wellbeing Centre attended the meeting to inform the committee of the activities that the centre provided these included:

- One to one counselling
- Art workshops
- Knitting and crochet workshops
- Help with CV writing

In reply to questions from the members Ms Turnbull explained that the centre also offered assistance and information on a number of health issues including:

- Weight management
- Smoking cessation
- Mental health

The centre provided a number of courses from drop in sessions, special events and courses running over a number of weeks.

A timetable of forthcoming events was handed out to members.

Cllr. A Blackburn entered the meeting at 13:08

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting
to be held on Wednesday, 30th October, 2013

Cllr. J Majoram entered the meeting at 13:10

24 West Outer Area Committee Minutes -10th July 2013

That the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 10th July 2013 be approved as a correct record.

25 Matters arising

Minute no. 8 Deputation to West (Outer) Area Committee: Concerns in respect of proposals which relate to the future of Musgrave Court.

The Committee expressed their concern at the report which had been presented to Executive Board on 4th September 2013 by the Deputy Director of Adult Social Care Commission Services. The report had made no mention of the deputation that had been received by the West (Outer) Area Committee meeting on 10th July 2013 at which the Deputy Director had been in attendance, or to the subsequent communication received from the deputation which had been passed to the relevant service by the committee members.

The Chair offered to take this issue forward to ensure that information provided by future deputations to West (Outer) Area Committee is acknowledged and referenced in future reports.

26 Minutes ALMO Area Panel

Members of the Area Committee considered the minutes of the West Outer Area Panel meeting held on 5th June 2013.

The Area Performance Manager was in attendance, and it was requested that thanks be conveyed to the relevant Neighbourhood Management Officer for their hard work on Heights Drive.

RESOLVED – That the minutes be noted.

27 Minutes- Environmental Sub Group

The minutes of the Environmental Services Sub Group were considered by the committee.

A Member informed the committee that they had requested an update report on the black bin roll out for West Outer Area, and requested that an officer for Environmental Enforcement attended each meeting.

During the consideration of this item discussion took place relating to the Area Lead roles for both the Environment and also the Community Safety field, and it was suggested that to have one councillor be Area Lead for both jobs.

RESOLVED –

- That the minutes be noted
- That Councillor Coulson appointed Area Lead for both the Environment and Community Safety fields

- That Councillor A Blackburn liaise with the Chair and Area Support on suitable areas of work that she may contribute to on behalf of the Area Committees.

Councillor Coulson left the meeting at the end of this item, 13:25

28 Minutes - Area Chairs Forum, 3rd May 2013

The Committee considered the Area Chairs Forum minutes of the meeting held on 3rd May 2013.

Members' attention was drawn to Minute No. 4.0 (Neighbourhood Planning) relating to the role of Area Committees and the neighbourhood planning process.

RESOLVED – That the minutes be noted.

29 Children's Services Performance Report

The report of the Director of Children's Services was presented by the Deputy Director, Children's Services. The report provided a six monthly update. The report informed the Area Committee about local outcomes for children and young people and aimed to support the involvement of the Area Committee in improving outcomes by providing an update on the work of the directorate and the Leeds Children's Trust, including local children's cluster arrangements. The progress made against local and national agendas was also highlighted.

The report summarised performance at Area Committee level with a broader acknowledgement of City wide performance. Key issues for Children's Services were highlighted and included Ofsted inspections, basic need and child friendly city.

Committee Members and Officers discussed issues in relation to:

- Children's Homes in the West Outer Area Committee area and the need for good communication and sharing of information in light of recent media broadcasts
- Ofsted inspections and the process where schools are graded as inadequate
- Criteria used for Ofsted inspections
- Increases in NEETs

Members asked for clarification on attendance figures for Farnley Academy highlighted in the report.

Members also asked for future updates to include performance information in relation to Swallow Hill.

RESOLVED – That Members' noted the content of the report.

30 Community Centres Pricing Policy Update Report

The Area Committee considered a report of the West North West Area Leader, presented by the Area Support Officer. The report outlined a revised pricing and lettings policy which the Area Support Team had been requested to amend for Outer West Leeds on behalf of the Area Committee. The proposals were based on feedback received from members and community groups using the centres.

Members' attention was drawn to the current and on-going review being undertaken by Leeds City Council in relation to community centre policies and that any decisions taken by the Area Committee on pricing and letting of community centres would need to be reviewed subject to any future changes, where appropriate.

RESOLVED – Members considered and approved the proposed pricing policy changes.

The Rev. Paul Ayers entered the meeting at 14:00 and stayed for the duration of the meeting.

31 Welfare Reform Report

The Chief Officer, Welfare and Benefits presented his report on Welfare Benefit changes. The report provided an update on the impact of welfare reforms at both a city-wide and ward-level basis and also provided information on arrangements that have been put into place to support the tenants. This included the Discretionary Housing Payments scheme which provided support to tenants affected by the welfare changes, the scheme was on track to spend the full £1.9m budget with the bulk of this spend being allocated to those deemed to be priority cases within the Council's policy.

The Benefit Cap came into effect in Leeds on 12th August 2013 around 350 families would lose some or all of their Housing Benefit which was lower than first thought and reported in the report. All the families affected have been visited to make them aware of the changes.

Preparations were underway for Universal Credit with a focus being on preparing tenants for a digital claims process, developing a Local Support Services Network, tackling high cost lenders and putting in place arrangements for dealing with direct payments of the housing element of Universal Credit to tenants. The report provided information about this programme and sought input from the Area Committee on how the programme of activity could work at a local level. Payday Loans adverts have recently been banned from Council websites.

The Area Committee discussed over occupancy and under occupancy which affected the City as a whole. Concern was raised by Members regarding a campaign which was operating in the area advising people to stay in their property and not pay rent. Clarification was to be sought from Environment

and Housing on the impact this may have, and assurance was given that those who need support would be offered it and that those affected would be informed around October.

The Advice Services Manager was in attendance at the meeting and informed the members of the advice and information that his Team could provide in relation to welfare support. Leaflets were passed to the members, and Area Support offered to get the leaflets sent to locations identified by members.

RESOLVED – That Members considered and noted;

- a) The information about welfare reforms and requested that it be a standard heading for the meeting;
- b) The information about the campaign against high cost lenders;
- c) The work going on in West North West to mitigate the impact of the changes in the local area and of the work being undertaken and offered to engage with Welfare Benefits about those families in West Outer area who might need assistance.

Cllr. Hardy left the room at 14:25 returning at 14:28.

32 Wellbeing Update Report (Capital)

The report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) was presented by the Area Support Officer provided the Committee with an update on the budget position for the Wellbeing Fund for 2013/14. The report provided the current position of the Small Grants and skips budgets and those Small Grants and skips applications that had been approved since the last meeting.

The report also provided an update on the Youth Activity Fund and those projects seeking support through this fund.

The report sought approval from the Area Committee on the grant application and commissioning process for the 2014/15 Wellbeing budget and the decommissioning of capital schemes from previous years that had not spent their full allocation.

The Area Committee was asked to consider a proposal from Ahead Partnership in relation to the Business Engagement Project.

Members discussed issues raised in the report including;

- Community First, guidelines were to be circulated to members to clarify Leeds City Council's position with regard to Community First.
- Ahead Partnership proposal
- Closure of previous capital schemes
- Provision of grit bins in all three Wards

Members were asked if they would like Area Support to look at the revenue accounts.

RESOLVED – The Area Committee;

- Noted the current budget position for the Wellbeing Fund for 2013/14
- Noted the current position of the Small Grants and skips and the Small Grants and skips received and approved since the last meeting;
- Noted the current position of the Youth Activity Fund;
- Agreed to decommission the capital projects and noted the new balance of £68,515 in the Capital Wellbeing budget (which includes an allocation from Capital Receipts Incentive Scheme) ;
- Approved the grant application and commissioning process for the 2014/15 Wellbeing budget;
- Further developments with Members and Ahead Partnership on the Business Engagement project. Further information requested and a meeting to be organised; and
- Agreed that Area Support look at the revenue accounts and report back to the next meeting.

Cllr. Marjoram left the meeting at the end of this item, 14:55.

33 Area Update Report

The report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) was present by the Area Support Officer. The report informed the Area Committee of the progress made against the Area Support Team work programme for West Outer area and local contributions to Council priorities.

The Members were updated on the following;

- Farsley Town and District Centre Scheme which was now completed
- CCTV for Farfield Avenue and Pudsey Town Centre was now fully operational
- The Community Development role jointly funded by West Outer and North West Inner Area Committees had been advertised. Recruitment to begin at the end of September and the expectation that the successful applicant would be appointed in October 2013.

RESOLVED – Members noted the content of the report.

34 Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 30th October 2013, 1pm at Pudsey Town Hall.