

2013 to 2014



# Area Committees' Annual Report





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## Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>03</b>
<b>Councillor Peter Gruen,</b> Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Neighbourhoods, Planning and Personnel	
<b>Major developments</b> .....	<b>04</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Community Committees</b></li><li>• <b>Area Lead Members (Community Champions)</b></li><li>• <b>Youth Activities Fund</b></li></ul>	
<b>How we made a difference in 2013 to 2014</b> .....	<b>08</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Wellbeing fund</b></li><li>• <b>Success stories from the localities</b></li></ul>	
<b>Conclusions</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>Next steps</b> .....	<b>13</b>

# Introduction

**This report gives an overview of the key changes that have taken place over the last 12 months; it reflects on some of the activities, successes and challenges during the year 2013 to 2014 and looks ahead to future developments, which will improve the way decisions are taken in local areas and to highlight the important role the new community committees play in local democracy.**

The new community committees are an essential part of our local democracy; they work with local residents, the third sector and businesses to ensure the services delivered by the council are delivered in a targeted way and to a high standard.

Our city, our communities and our residents are facing massive social and financial challenges, including health inequalities, an ageing and more diverse population, poverty and financial exclusion. At the same time, the level of public funding over the last few years has seen unprecedented swingeing cuts of around £94m over the past three years. The council anticipates that there will be a further reduction in funding from Government of around £81m over the next two years. In these challenging conditions our area committees and their members have worked determinedly to improve the lives of local people.

They have continued to use their funding and powers to support a vast and wide-ranging number of activities and organisations, ranging, for example, from ensuring young people can find jobs and training, or preventing older people from being isolated, or supporting local environmental improvements.

The pressures now facing local government mean that the council must work more intelligently and flexibly than ever before. We have therefore continued to look at the way we deliver services locally and the Area Working review looked critically at the role the area committees play in this. We have made a lot of progress, but there is still a great deal of work to do to ensure that we serve the residents of Leeds as effectively as we can.

2013 to 2014 saw the introduction of some important developments. The appointment of area lead members has already started to strengthen links between the corporate centre and the local delivery of services. The delegation of the youth activities fund has enabled the area committees to champion the young people in our city. The new community committees will enable us to focus more clearly on community engagement and local decision-making, which will play a crucial role in driving the changes we must now action. This is part of a broader approach by the council to address issues of poverty, getting people into work, and providing more accessible services.

My sincere thanks go to all Community Committee chairs, who have picked up the baton and run with the new agenda enthusiastically and with real determination. Thanks to members and officers for their support, ambitions and desires to make things happen!



**Councillor Peter Gruen,**

Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Neighbourhoods,  
Planning and Personnel



# Major developments 2013 to 2014

2013 to 2014 saw the introduction of new initiatives that will build on the work of area committees, all of which are helping to improve local democratic leadership and enable our area committees to work more effectively.

## Community Committees

There were three main drivers for changing our approach to locality working and developing the community committees.

Firstly, like other local authorities, Leeds City Council has suffered unprecedented cuts to its budget over the past three years. This reduction in funding is in addition to the need to meet the cost of inflation and continuing spending demands across a range of services. This has meant that, in addition to reviewing many of the services we provide, we have a responsibility to ensure that we spend money and work more intelligently and more flexibly than ever before.

Secondly, one of the objectives of our Best Council Plan is to make it easier for people to do business with us, as well as ensuring that we involve people in shaping their city.

And finally, a key outcome of the 2012 Area Working Review included the need to improve community involvement and engagement in the local decision making process.

Our locality arrangements are key to achieving all of these aspirations. In short, we want to bring place, people and resources together.

The move towards a more collaborative and inclusive approach to working locally began following a review of the council's area working arrangements. A number of recommendations were agreed by Executive Board in December 2012 and officers, working closely with area committee chairs, undertook further work to develop a set of principles to underpin a new approach to area working arrangements.

Work with area chairs helped identify the key issues to be addressed with regard to area committees. The key areas of concern were:

- the work of area committees is not widely understood or recognised in the council or in communities;
- the style of meetings does not naturally lend itself to effective engagement with local residents, and;
- reports are not sufficiently tailored to the locality.

At a meeting of Full Council in September 2013 members received a report proposing an approach to replace the area committee arrangements as a way of demonstrating a new expression of democratic leadership. This step aimed to ensure a move towards a greater focus on local issues by local people and away from the bureaucratic nature of many area committee meetings where there is little or no attendance by the public.

In December 2013, Executive Board endorsed the proposition to be more responsive to local communities and recommended further work to build on efforts already undertaken to improve locality working arrangements.

As a result of this, consultation took place with elected members, services, partners, the third sector and town and parish councils between February and April 2014. This included:

- member workshops
- presentations to all five political groups
- three area leadership team discussions involving partners
- school clusters
- discussions with all directorate management teams
- discussion with the third sector leadership forum (attended by 15 third sector representatives)
- presentation to and discussion with town & parish councils at their Annual General Meeting.

Outcomes from the consultation were as follows:

- a change in name from area committees to community committees to reflect the new approach to locality working;



- an agreed set of design principles for community committees to create a framework that is consistent across the city, but still responsive to local needs;
- an agreed brand and identity for community committees to assist in communication and marketing activity, raising the profile of community committees and their work;
- the need for more services and decision making responsibilities to be delegated to community committees;
- more locally focussed meetings supported by local intelligence and issues local members want to consider, rather than prescribed city wide or corporate based reporting;
- more freedom and flexibility in terms of the way community committees operate;
- the development of community engagement plans, which recognise the differing needs of each area; and

- meaningful community engagement - an improved model of locality working that will give residents the opportunity to 'have their say', as well as a greater influence on decisions about the design and delivery of public services.

On 9 June 2014 the Annual Council meeting approved the constitutional amendments relating to community committees and the first meetings took place in July.

Delivering the new community committees will need a significant cultural shift in a number of areas. We will need to ensure we have appropriate support arrangements in place within the locality teams to effectively support the new way of working. Services will need to be more locally focussed and responsive to local issues and priorities and partners will need to engage with the new arrangements in new and different ways. Therefore, any change agreed will need to be supported by an appropriate organisational development and change process to ensure culture and behaviours also change to reflect the new way of working.

## Area Lead Members (Community Champions)

The Area Review report in 2011 introduced the concept of developing the area 'champions' roles into the area lead member roles. The role provides an important part in providing a local lead perspective on executive board portfolios. It is a practical expression of the strong local leadership role set out within the locality working design principles and best city and best council ambitions.

The area lead member roles were introduced in July 2013 and covered the following work areas:

- Adult Social Care and Health and Wellbeing (as one or two roles)
- Children's Services
- Employment, Skills and Welfare
- Environment and Community Safety (as one or two roles)

A supporting brief was developed for each area, which includes core, common factors but are tailored appropriately. These briefs reflect the different facets of the role and the opportunities it presents in terms of:

- working closely with area committee chairs to identify and lead relevant debates at area committees;
- representing the area committee at local project or partnership meetings, and in the commissioning process to ensure the needs and interest of the area are represented;
- developing informal opportunities and networks with council services and partners to build understanding, improve partnership working, provide challenge and bring a local democratic perspective to a wider range of services; and
- supporting the relevant executive portfolio holder and officer lead to ensure local issues are included in policy development, highlight any service issues or failures, drive service improvement, share best practice and learn from innovative approaches developed through area committees.

Executive portfolio holders regularly meet with their area lead members to focus on understanding the local and city-wide agendas and provide challenge

and debate around local issues. The role provides a useful vehicle to broaden understanding at all levels and to strengthen relationships between officers and members. This has enabled action to be taken more quickly when issues have been raised within a locality. A formal evaluation of the role will be taking place in autumn/winter 2014. The results of this evaluation will form the basis for developing an action plan for area lead members.

The area lead member role has already started to make an impact in local areas as demonstrated by the following examples.

The area lead member for community safety in Inner North East has been heavily involved in gang prevention work across Chapeltown. She has developed very good relationships with community safety officers and regularly monitors progress and looks for ways to influence change. The area lead member for Outer North East has facilitated activities with partners, including Connexions, EPOSS (Elmet Partnership of Schools and Services) LCC Area Support Team and the Youth Service, to reduce numbers of young people who are NEET.

In South East lead members worked with adult social care and older persons networks to deliver 1800 winter warmth packs, holding launch events where green doctors attended and provided advice on saving fuel. Lead members also played a significant role in helping set up new arrangements around tasking and the formation of the Locality Safety Partnership.

At the request of the Outer West Environment Sub-Group, targeted work has been undertaken around flytipping. A list of hotspot areas prone to flytipping and littering is being collated for enforcement officers to patrol. This piece of work is also complemented by the use of small covert cameras to catch offenders in action.

The West North West health and wellbeing area leads worked with public health to co-fund a range of projects to tackle health inequalities across the area. Projects ranged from tackling social isolation in Outer North West to highlighting the health dangers of sedentary occupations such as taxi drivers.



## Youth Activities Fund

The Youth Activities Fund was devolved to area committees in 2013, enabling members to allocate a total of £250,000 to this important area of work. This figure will be doubled in 2014 to 2015. It is being used in conjunction with school clusters, for example, ensuring young people are involved in the decision-making process and benefit from a more targeted approach to funding.

## East North East

Ward members attended school councils in Burmantofts and Richmond Hill to consult with young people on the type of activities they would like to see provided through the Youth Activity Fund. The fund acted as a catalyst for better partnership working, helping to identify gaps and how we can better utilise and promote Breeze.

The Youth Activities Fund helped set up a Table Tennis Club in Roundhay, which is now self-sustaining and runs every Monday evening from September following successful taster and promotion sessions. The group received a grant of £2,240 and used this to purchase table tennis tables, bats and balls as well as train four sports volunteers to run the sessions. The club is the only one of its kind in the local area and gives young people aged 8 to 17 a new and engaging activity to take part in.

## South East

An exciting project funded by the Youth Activities Fund in Outer East is 'Junior Parkrun' at Temple Newsam established by Parkrun Limited. The set up costs were £6,000, with half of the cost funded by Parkrun Limited, and the other half funded from the Youth Activities Fund. Building on the success of the Saturday Parkrun for adults, the highly enthusiastic team are anticipating attracting over 60, 8 to 15 year olds every Sunday. In the first year, this will equate to over 3000 young people attending at a cost of under £1 each. This project meets the local health and wellbeing priority to organise positive activities for young people and tackle childhood obesity.

## West North West

'Project Beats' is run by Equilateral Media in the Inner North West. Equilateral received £2000 from the Youth Activities Fund to provide weekly sessions for young people to explore, learn and develop skills in various musical disciplines. Young people enjoyed singing, basic music production, DJing, audio recording and rhythm games. The project ran for 10 weeks from the Cardigan Centre, attracting up to 13 young people per session with 105 over the course of the project. The project has given young people an opportunity to explore music in a structured learning environment to develop new skills, which they can continue to evolve.



# How we made a difference – highlights from 2013 to 2014

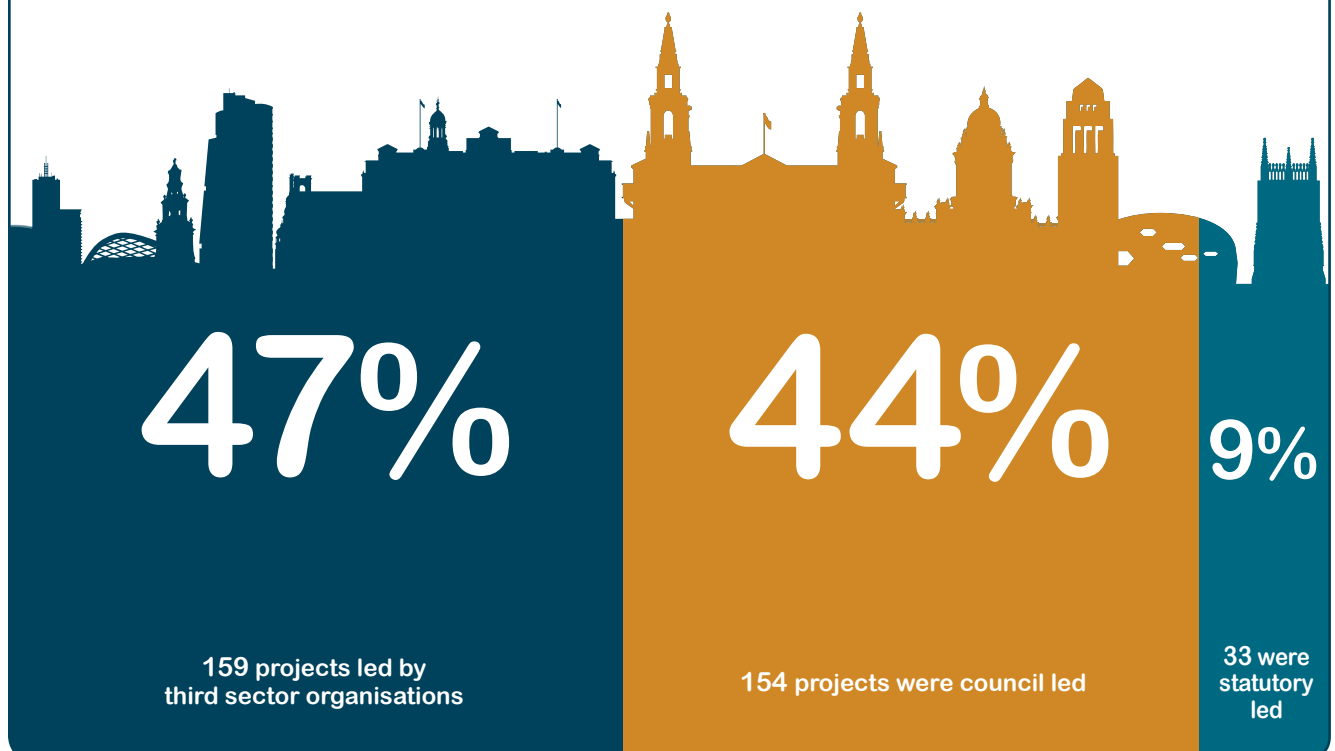
## Wellbeing fund

Area committees, and now community committees, continue to play a fundamental role in understanding and addressing issues of concern to local people. They do it in many ways, one of which is by providing funding to take forward projects that fall within their identified priorities. It is generally recognised that the money provided is increased significantly due to the opportunity to lever in matched funding and volunteering.

Five major benefits have been defined from locally delegated funding as follows.

- **Developing community capacity and pride** – generating a sense of belonging and often involving volunteering by local residents to make things happen.
- **Sealing the deal** – gap funded projects where the work would not otherwise be taken forward.
- **Leverage** - acting as a catalyst to lever in funding from other sources.
- **Implementing planned local actions** – focussing on specific local priorities.
- **Supporting council departments and partners** – supporting our own council departments and supplementing the funding of partner agencies to improve their services to the local community.

The total value of projects approved and funded through the Wellbeing Fund across Leeds in 2013 to 2014 was over £2 million, with match funding bringing the figure to almost £4 million. This covered a range of projects, both in terms of value and in terms of focus. Across the city, the wellbeing expenditure supported 337 projects.





## Success stories from the localities

The success stories presented here provide a flavour of the type of projects supported and promoted by the area committees across Leeds. They are a representative sample of the types of local projects that are making a real difference within local communities. Every area committee has many, many success stories to tell reflecting great work across every community and neighbourhood in Leeds – for this annual report we have picked one for each committee as an illustrative example.

### East North East

#### Inner East

##### Lincoln Green Computer Suite

**Local priority: to increase usage of community centres.**

In response to local residents call for access to computers and IT based education courses to be run in the community, the area committee funded the installation of a computer suite at Lincoln Green Community Centre. The suite is being used to run courses for young people in Lincoln Green who are NEET - this led to nineteen young people gaining the Step Up NOCN qualification.

Sarah Suess, project manager at Learning Partnerships, said:

***“The course was run in this location to forge a partnership with the Co-operative Academy. If the computer suite had not been installed it would not have been possible to run the sessions. Even if a different location had been used it is highly likely the young people would not have engaged.”***



Students who attended the courses added:

***“I like coming to the course because it helped me keep my anger down and it helped me work in a team better.”***

***“I think passing the course will help me in the future as it has boosted my confidence.”***

#### Inner North East

##### Roundhay Junior Park Run

**Local priority: increase volunteering, promote healthy lifestyles.**

Roundhay Junior Park Run was established in November 2013 to give young people a chance to attend a free weekly organised run. The sessions give young people the chance to participate in free physical activity and meet new friends. Nine sessions have been run to date with an average of 66 young people attending each session. The young people have run a total of 1,194km. The sessions are run purely by volunteers; the lead volunteer has stated it would have been very difficult to set up the project without funding.

Miss D, volunteer, said:

***“I am a medical student with a degree in human nutrition. Unfortunately a large proportion of the health issues I encounter are overweight and obesity related. I believe initiatives like this help a small, yet meaningful, number of our community to lead healthier lifestyles and improve wellbeing.”***

Mrs T, parent, added:

***“My son is plump and does not like football as the ‘good’ players won’t let him play. At his first park run it took him over 16 minutes, his best is now 13:13. He is so proud.”***

## Outer North East

**Maecare Partnership Co-ordinator - £10,667, staffing costs. Local priority: supporting older people to be independent**

Maecare is an elderly care community organisation. The funding received enabled Maecare to employ a co-ordinator post to ensure closer partnership working with schools and local organisations. A number of projects were developed as a result of the post, including partnerships and projects with four new schools, Meanwood Clinic, a singing group for carers and service users with dementia, dementia training for local residents and third sector organisations.

Of particular note this year was the establishment of an intergenerational reading project with Moor Allerton Primary School.

Carol Burns, manager of Maecare, said:

*“Being involved in schools has meant the organisation can ensure older people feel more involved in their community. They like to feel needed and give something back to their local community. Being able to contribute to the community improves older people’s wellbeing.”*

Mrs W, a volunteer reader from Maecare, added:

*“I feel like I am doing some good, I am glad that I can help. It’s really lovely for me to be around children, I do not have any grandchildren of my own. I see them all as my grandchildren.”*



## South East

### Outer South

**Older people celebration events.**

**Local priority: vulnerable members of the community living independently for longer.**

This year saw the development of new events celebrating older people across Outer South Leeds, funded by the



Outer South Area Committee. The Rothwell event was delivered and supported by Rothwell & District Live at Home scheme and was a real success with over 100 visitors. The event was supported by Tea Cosy Memory Café, who were also delivery partners in the area committee’s Winter Warmth Scheme. Tea Cosy have been trailblazers in their commitment to supporting people with dementia through pioneering Rothwell as Leeds’ first dementia friendly community.

## Inner South

**ASDA pre-recruitment sessions.**

**Local priority: provide opportunities for people to get jobs or learn new skills.**



The new ASDA store in Middleton is the largest development in that ward for a number of years and was a real opportunity to get local people into work. In order to support that challenge LCC’s Employment & Skills section worked with partner agencies including Job Centre Plus, Leeds City Colleges, Housing Leeds, South East Area Support Team and many others to deliver three days of pre-recruitment sessions at the St George’s Centre and BITMO Gate. The whole approach was supported and endorsed by members of the Inner South East Area Committee. Approximately 1,500 people attended these sessions and 68% of the jobs were eventually taken up by people living in the LS10 area. Those attending the sessions that



were unsuccessful with ASDA have been picked up by the council's employment and skills team and are receiving support at The Point in The White Rose Centre, where there is likely to be job opportunities in the future. The newly recruited staff were trained by ASDA at St George's Centre and are now in post with the new store, which opened in early May 2014. The success of this project is seen as a template for future developments across the city.

## Outer East

**Winter warmth packs for elderly residents.**

**Local priority: vulnerable members of the community living independently for longer.**

In January 2014 winter warmth packs for elderly residents were provided across the whole of the Outer East Area. Funded by Outer East Area Committee and Housing Leeds and supported by the four elderly support networks, around 1,700 packs were provided. In Garforth & Swillington ward and across the adjacent villages the packs were distributed by Garforth NET (Neighbourhood Elders Team).

Launch events were held by NET in Garforth and Kippax with both events attracting large numbers of elderly people. Officers from the council's fuel poverty section attended and a 'Green Doctor' was on hand to provide advice on keeping homes warm, keeping themselves warm and saving fuel. The packs included a number of items to help keep residents warm including a flask, hot water bottle, various items of clothing to keep warm, along with soups and foodstuffs. The issue of fuel poverty, particularly amongst elderly residents, has been a key priority of Outer East Area Committee for several years. The packs and the launch events have been welcomed locally and have increased the number of elderly people engaging with the older persons support networks, thus hitting another priority of reducing social isolation amongst the elderly.

## West North West

### Inner North West

**EnviroMET – Leeds Met Students' Union.**

**Local priority: support volunteering within our local communities / improve the local environment and our parks and open spaces.**

Due to limited capacity over the last few years, Leeds Met Students' Union has been unable to respond quickly and innovatively to environmental issues raised by the local community. The area committee funded the EnviroMET project and a part-time (20 hours a week) project worker to coordinate environmental projects, increase the number of students volunteering on environmental projects within the local community,

improve student-community relations and to provide a joined-up approach between Leeds Met Students' Union and other environmental initiatives within the city.

The project has been hugely successful and there has been a significant increase in the number of students volunteering to be part of environmental projects. The Students' Union is better represented at key meetings and able to respond to issues that are raised by the community which is exactly what the committee hoped to achieve through this post.

The success of the project has led to Leeds Met now funding a permanent project worker post and additional resources to expand the project.

Local Resident JK said:

***"It is refreshing to see students engaging with local residents groups and to see people from different groups coming together."***

Joseph Cole, parks and countryside officer, added:

***"I am pleased to have a contact within the students' union, who is able to liaise with volunteers and residents and coordinate successful events."***

## Inner West

**The Broadleas and Fairfield multi-agency partnership.**

**Local priority: increase the levels of young people in employment, education or training.**

The Broadleas and Fairfield multi-agency partnership, supported by the area committee, identified the issue of some young tenants aged 25 and under getting into difficulties, causing anti-social behaviour and getting into rent arrears. Together with the Barca Youth and Community Team and Housing Leeds, joint first tenancy visits were agreed for all new tenants under the age of 25. The first two visits resulted in tenants being allocated a Connexions worker, who helped them into full-time training with Full Circle Learning, a specialist training provider working with the construction industry, together with ongoing mentoring and emotional support. The project is proving a success and Housing Leeds are looking to extend the pilot area to other priority neighbourhoods.

Amanda Ogg, Team Leader Children's Services, Barca Leeds, said:

***"It's great when a plan comes together!"***



## Outer North West

### Horsforth PCSOs

Local priority: safer communities.



The area committee funded two additional PCSOs to carry out approximately 40 hours patrolling per week and hold weekly surgeries in Horsforth. The officers also participate in other community safety activities in the area. Benefits have included an increased police presence on the streets of Horsforth, with local residents provided with more opportunities to contact and get advice and support from the police. It has increased community safety and reduced the community's fear of crime.

PCSO activities include attending local schools, clubs and other events in the Horsforth area. The PCSOs attend the Brownlea Stone Centre and local Morrisons in Horsforth to provide visible contact points every week. Reducing anti-social behaviour is one of the police priorities with police targeting areas reported by the public or town council. Other local priorities include monitoring speeding on local roads. The PCSOs have also received a small grant from Horsforth Town Council to work with Trading Standards to introduce a 'No Cold Calling Zone' in Horsforth.

## Outer West

### The Farsley Festival.

Local priority: Supporting local events that bring people together.

Local community groups, voluntary organisations and churches came together to celebrate the Tour de France inspired Farsley Festival on the 26th May. Celebrations funded by the area committee saw Town Street closed to traffic to allow the whole community to enjoy the event. 'Tour de Farsley' saw thousands of residents enjoying music, family fun and food with local businesses doing a roaring trade. The festival involved inter-generational activities for all ages and provided an exciting opportunity for all those living in Farsley to have a positive experience and take pride in their community. Farsley Community Initiative is set



up to look at opportunities to make Farsley the best community it can be and to support and inspire those who live there. The area committee recognises the value of investing in community events and supports projects which bring communities together to celebrate local diversity.

# Conclusions

Area committees have undertaken a huge amount of work over 2013 to 2014, and importantly, have taken the first decisive steps towards the cultural change that we must now all embrace in these challenging times.

2013 to 2014 saw significant challenges as government budget cuts intensified and impacted on services. In response area committees worked hard with their area support teams to deliver strong leadership and real change for local people.

Considerable work has taken place in each locality to prepare the committees and teams for the anticipated challenges and opportunities of the new approach to locality working with community committees and further engagement with local residents. They are now in a good position to implement these changes, which reflect the focus on locality working and local democracy.

The new approach of shorter, business-focussed committee meetings will provide more time for effective engagement with local communities and will help ensure that all parts of communities are involved. The

new branding and identity will support communications activity to better raise awareness of area committee funding for specific local projects within communities.

The Youth Services Delegation and activities fund have brought about greater accountability and improved local services. Further delegation of budgets and services in 2014/15 will give Community Committees an unprecedented opportunity to act as local 'improvement committees'.

The area lead member role is already making an impact in local areas, providing a useful means to broaden understanding at all levels and to strengthen relationships between officers and members. This has enabled action to be taken more quickly when issues have been raised within a locality.

All of the above initiatives have resulted in better and closer working in the locality for both members and for officers. However, for community committees to be successful they need to be accompanied by a significant cultural shift for all involved, and this will not happen overnight.

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## Next steps

The journey towards our new commitment to listen to local people and seek their involvement in local civic life of the community has begun. But there is still a long road ahead and significant work to be undertaken by the community committees, area support teams and our services to ensure the new approach to meetings and engagement can be fully implemented in keeping with the design principles. The measures of success will be:

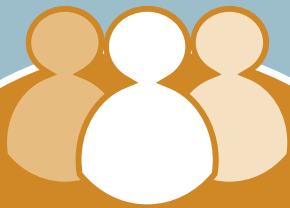
- a clear focus on engaging local communities over local topics of interest;
- business-focussed meetings with reports that have local significance;
- recommendations from community committees to the council's executive board
- a new approach to localised budget setting; and
- accessible ways of organising meetings and other engagement activities that promote debate and discussion from all parts of our communities.

For 2014 to 2015 there will be a significant focus on improving marketing and communications. The appointment of a temporary communications officer for 2014 to 2015 will support the development of communications plans, help embed the new brand and identity for community committees, develop new approaches to communications, including social media, and, most importantly, support community committees by raising the profile of their work. An evaluation and review of this work will be presented to the community chairs' forum in late 2014.

The role of area lead members will be monitored and supported to ensure a local perspective is included in policy development and delivery of services. A formal evaluation of the role will take place in autumn/winter 2014. The results of this evaluation will form the basis for developing an action plan for area lead members.

Finally, work will be undertaken to address issues of capacity, organisational development and cultural change to drive forward the community committee agenda and ensure its success. This will include ensuring the links shown on the diagram on page 14 between the community committees, community chairs forum, area support teams and the newly formed Communities Board are robust and effective.

# Locality Working



## Communities Board

The board leads the long-term strategy for the city for communities and co-ordinates the partnership actions to work towards ensuring that all communities in Leeds are successful. This is a cross sector partnership board with a balance of expertise and knowledge in working with communities.



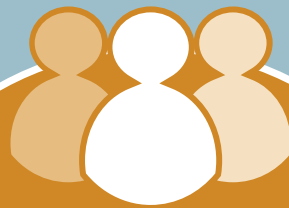
## Community Committees Chairs Forum

The Community Chairs Forum brings their influence to bear in reflecting and responding to local needs, within the context of the city priorities. Joint work and sharing is vital to the success of Community Committees, particularly with more delegations and the additional responsibilities that are therefore on members.



## Community Committees

Local elected members meeting to promote and improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the committee's area. They engage with residents on the local improvement agenda and make local decisions over devolved budgets and services.



## Area Support Teams

The council officers that support the Community Committees, community engagement work and locality working. Responsible for implementing the community plans of the Community Committees and the decisions of the committees with regard to devolved budgets.



**For further information on community committees  
please contact the area leaders**

**Rory Barke (corporate) 0113 224 3103**

**Martin Dean (south east) 0113 395 1652**

**Shaid Mahmood (west north west) 0113 336 7858**

**Jane Maxwell (east north east) 0113 336 7627**

