

**Report of: Jane Maxwell, East North East Area Leader**

**Report to: Inner East Community Committee - Burmantofts & Richmond Hill, Gipton & Harehills and Killingbeck & Seacroft**

**Report author: Andrew Birkbeck, Area Officer, Tel: 0113 3367642**

**Date: 18<sup>th</sup> June 2015**

**For decision**

## **Area Update Report**

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### **Purpose of report**

1. This report provides an update on the work programme of Inner East Community Committee.

### **Main issues**

2. Following on from the March meeting of the Inner East Community Committee where Elected Members agreed their priorities for 2015/16, Members are asked to consider how to best ensure progress against their six identified priorities:
  - Projects that seek to promote diversity, encourage community cohesion and address language barriers
  - Projects that seek to tackle issues associated with child poverty
  - Projects that seek to get residents into employment, training, volunteering opportunities or learn new skills
  - Projects that seek to address both physical and mental health issues that affect residents in Inner East Leeds
  - Projects that seek to improve the environment for local residents
  - Projects that seek to reduce levels of domestic violence in Inner East Leeds
3. Whilst tangible progress has been made in the first year of the Community Committees, most notably increasing resident and partner involvement in the decision making process and giving specific focus to key themes such as re-engaging young people and social isolation, it is clear that there is still more work to do.

4. One of the key issues for Community Committees in the coming year is having an identified mechanism to drive forward its priorities and achieve defined outputs that can be measured and RAG rated by Elected Members and in turn by partners and stakeholders.
5. Clear accountability around any actions generated by the Community Committee could be aided by the introduction of a tracker that readily identifies who is the owner of any specific actions.
6. This step change from the Community Committee being a vehicle for articulating local concerns to being a driver for change is a challenge common to all ten Community Committees.
7. It is proposed that is that a cross Ward working group is established to explore options and best practice for how the Community Committee can achieve this aim.
8. A possible option to explore is the establishment of a Neighbourhood Improvement Board (NIB) for Inner East Leeds that along with the locally developed Neighbourhood Improvement Plans (NIPs) would be the driver for progress against the Community Committee's identified priorities.
9. The Neighbourhood Improvement Board option is one that is already being employed by both the West North West and South East Area Support Teams. The key elements underpinning this approach are the buy-in and involvement of council services and partners at a senior level, creating an accountable body for measuring and delivering progress against agreed outcomes.
10. Allied to this is the work of the Neighbourhood Manager for Gipton & Seacroft and the Area Officers for Harehills and Burmantofts & Richmond Hill. It is proposed that the work of these officers, informed by local intelligence and data sets, is aligned to the priorities of the Community Committee and that their annually produced Neighbourhood Improvement Plans are refined and drafted to reflect this.
11. At the time of writing, the new Area Officer for Harehills has been recruited and started work on 1<sup>st</sup> June. The Area Officer for Burmantofts & Richmond Hill is currently in the process of being recruited with the aspiration to be in post by mid-July. A Neighbourhood Manager for both Gipton & Seacroft is already in place.
12. Members should also note that the new three point pricing policy for community centres within the citizens and communities portfolio was implemented for new bookings on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2015. This was agreed by Executive Board in July 2014. The new policy sets prices at commercial and community rates and allows Community Committees to agree free lettings in their community centres.
13. In order to improve accountability for these decisions, free lettings now need to be agreed for each individual letting. Each Community Committee is able to agree the delegated approval process that best suits their needs.

14. A second stage review will look at developing the community centre delegation arrangements to increase accountability at a local level. Initial discussions will take place with Community Committee Chairs to scope this work including the possibility of greater budget delegation.
15. The implementation of the pricing review has uncovered a number of deficiencies in the availability of management information relating to the usage and financial performance of community centres, which is needed to underpin an improved Community Committee delegation. This will be addressed during review of lettings processes, including the move towards online transactions.
16. A major review is commencing of the service level agreement between Citizens and Communities and Civic Enterprise Leeds covering caretaking, cleaning, repairs, programmed maintenance and building management. Community Committees will be involved in this process as it takes shape.
17. Subject to Member approval it is proposed that on a case-by-case basis Ward Members are emailed the details of each request for a free let for a community centre in their area. It is then for the Ward Members to approve or decline this request on a majority basis i.e. two out of the three Ward Members are in agreement. Once these decisions are made, the Area Officer will communicate this to the Communities Team.
18. The rationale behind this approach is that in order to get through the anticipated volume of requests generated by the new letting procedures, Ward Members will have the flexibility to respond electronically rather than via their monthly Ward Member meetings which could cause delays and, in turn, uncertainty for applicants.

## **Options**

19. The Inner East Community Committee discuss a way forward for both delivering their agreed priorities and the approval process for Community Centre lettings.

## **Conclusion**

20. There are a number of actions on-going to achieve the Community Committees' priorities and fulfil its work programme but despite this, the Community Committee recognises that there is still a significant amount of work to be done.

## **Recommendations**

21. That Members note the contents of the report and make comment where appropriate.
22. That Members agree to the formation of a cross Ward working group to explore options of how best to achieve progress against Community Committee priorities.
23. That Members agree a process for deciding upon Community Centre lets in light of the new arrangements as approved by the council's Executive Board.

## Background information

- Link to the Facebook Page for the Inner East Community Committee:  
<https://www.facebook.com/LCCInnerEast>
- Link to the Priority Setting report that was approved by the Inner East Community Committee in March 2015:  
<http://democracy.leeds.gov.uk/documents/s128842/2%20-%20Priority%20setting%20report.pdf>