

Report of the Chair Outer North East Community Committee

Report to Full Council

Date: 8th July 2015

Subject: Outer North East Community Committee

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): Alwoodley; Harewood; Wetherby	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

This report provides an overview of the progress, achievements and opportunities for the Outer North East Community Committee. Key achievements include partnership working, most notably around the Parish and Town Council Forum and Neighbourhood Planning, development of the role of elected Member Champions and the role of the Environmental Sub Group in helping shape the Environmental Services delegation.

The Community Committee has opportunities to build on existing good relationships with Parish and Town Councils to maximise the benefits of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Opportunities also exist for closer working with school clusters and further expanding some of the new approaches to community engagement. There are also opportunities to increase the range of community engagement opportunities, building on positive events held so far.

The Community Committee recognises that there are challenges ahead in working with Parish and Town Council's to support their use of the CIL.

Good progress has been made on delivering projects through the Well-being fund and Youth Activity Fund, work is on-going to target local groups to develop additional projects supported through these funds.

Recommendations

1. Members are asked to note the content of this report.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The report provides details of the work of the Outer North East Community Committee during 2014/15, including a focus on progress, achievements and opportunities.

2 Background information

- 2.2 Area Committees were established in 2004 to improve service delivery at local level and deliver projects and programmes of work on priority issues in the locality. In 2014 Community Committees were established to build on the successes of Area Committees but to better engage with communities, and in particular increase the attendance and active involvement of local people at Community Committee meetings.
- 2.3 This report looks at the achievements of the community committee over the past year, and highlights the opportunities and challenges for the future.

3 Main issues

Community Committee development

- 3.1 The Community Committee has considered a range of issues over the year, including environmental services, community safety, employment and skills and the Community Infrastructure Levy. The two most recent meetings have been themed specifically around the 'place agenda', with inter-linked issues being considered together at the same meeting. The March meeting for example considered environmental services, received an update from Housing Leeds and considered the opportunities available through CIL. The June 2015 committee had a clear focus on environmental issues, with reports on the Environmental Services Service Level Agreement, the new Parks and Countryside delegation and an update on the city-wide Derelict and Nuisance Sites programme including information on the process and criteria for nominating additional sites to be considered for inclusion in the programme.

The role of Community Committee Champions

- 3.2 Members through their Community Committee Champion roles have been instrumental in driving forward service improvements across Outer North East.
- 3.3 The Environment and Community Safety champion has led some positive work through the Environmental Sub Group to ensure that the Service Level Agreement is fit for purpose and that resources are targeted at the areas of greatest need and can deliver the greatest impact. The Employment, Skills and Welfare Champion has been a key member of the East North East Employment and Skills Board and has helped ensure that a meaningful Employment and Skills Plan for East North East has been established with priorities for Outer North East reflected. They have also worked closely with the Parish and Town Council Forum to deliver environmental improvements.

- 3.4 The Children's Champion has continued to work effectively with the clusters, ward colleagues and partners to improve the engagement of young people, especially in relation to allocation of Youth Activity Fund resources.
- 3.5 The champions have agreed to continue to build on their good work and retain and develop their roles for 2015/16.

Partnership working

- 3.6 The Outer North East Community Committee has continued to develop productive working relationships through the Outer North East Parish and Town Council Forum which provides a mechanism for regular engagement, and opportunities for discussion and collaborative working on issues of common interest to the parishes. The forum was highlighted as a model of good practice by the Safer and Stronger Scrutiny Board's review into the council's relationships with parish and town councils in 2013.
- 3.7 Partnership working between the Community Committee and parish and town councils presents a real opportunity, particularly in the context of the localism act. Relationships have been developed through neighbourhood planning and all key parties come together regularly through the Forum. All the parish and town councils in Harewood and Wetherby wards now have neighbourhood planning areas designated by Leeds City Council and are at various stages of developing their plans.
- 3.8 In particular, the forum also enables parish and town councils to work closely with the Locality Team to improve the flexibility and effectiveness of the local delivery of environmental services.
- 3.9 The next stage is for the Community Committee and parish and town councils to develop a working relationship around a framework for improving local services and the local infrastructure. This relates to areas of work such as maximising the potential of new funding opportunities and working closely to align the various funding streams at a local level. The delegation of more budgets and services to Community Committees is a real opportunity to be able to even further strengthen our working relationship with parish and town councils.
- 3.10 In April this year, the Council introduced the new Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The CIL neighbourhood fund will be available for Community Committees and Parish and Town Councils to spend on local infrastructure improvements. Following useful discussions around the opportunities offered through CIL at the March 2015 Community Committee, the Committee and Parish and Town Council Forum have started discussions with Planning to develop closer working around the CIL neighbourhood fund. The Community Committee will be holding a workshop through the Town and Parish Council Forum to:
- Help members and parish and Town Council representatives gain a better understanding of CIL and the impact on the local area
 - Seek local views that will help shape the format and content of the CIL neighbourhood fund guidance

- Strengthen the opportunity for local partnership working within the local area and exploring opportunities for creating joint solutions for cross-boundary issues
 - Develop stronger links with local neighbourhood planning proposals
 - Develop a collective understanding of local CIL accountability
- 3.11 The Forum has provided advice on a number of issues, for example it helped inform the roll out of selective reduced night time street lighting between midnight and 5:30am, to determine which lights will be switched off in each area, taking into account established 'avoidance criteria' such as high levels of road traffic accidents, crime or areas near to pedestrian crossings.
- 3.12 The Community Committee has supported a number of Parish Council led projects, utilising its Well-being funding, for example providing £1,780 to Boston Spa Parish Council to build and promote a heritage trail in Boston Spa using blue plaque type signage and an associated guide. The design of the trail includes 12 plaques which will be located on key listed buildings in the village, with an accompanying guide available in hard copy locally or downloadable from the Parish Council web site.
- 3.13 Strong partnership working has been fostered between the Community Committee and clusters. Alwoodley Cluster held its first Cluster Youth Panel in November. Hosted by Allerton High School, the panel meeting was attended by a total of 24 young people aged between 8 and 15. All 7 primary schools and 3 high schools in the cluster took part in the event which was chaired by a local ward Member with support from the East North East Area Support team.
- 3.14 The young people had the opportunity to state what activities they would like to do in their area, and discuss how these should be delivered. The most popular suggestions were drama and cookery and the young people expressed strong views that they would like to see activities that they could attend on a regular basis, rather than 'one off' events in the school holidays. All the young people that attended were a credit to their school.
- 3.15 Work with the EPOSS cluster enabled a varied programme of activities to be offered over the summer and other holidays, funded by £8,000 from the Youth Activity Fund. Activities included sports, dance, cooking, arts and crafts and free transport was offered to children in receipt of free school meals and other targeted young people.

Opportunities

- 3.16 The Parish and Town Council Forum provides an opportunity for services and organisations to consult on issues and build relationships with all the parish and town councils in Outer North East. In particular, the forum also enables parish and town councils to work closely with Environmental Services to improve the flexibility and effectiveness of local service delivery and the on-going work in relation to Neighbourhood Planning and CIL.
- 3.17 New ways of engaging with local residents have been explored and proved successful, for example three 'Conversation Dinner' events in Alwoodley for local

residents to share good food and conversation with people they have never met before to help break down barriers and promote community cohesion. The concept was created by Professor Theodore Zeldin at Oxford University when he chose to have a dinner with strangers instead of his friends on his birthday. The event was so successful that it has been replicated all over the world in professional and social contexts, but is still a very new concept to Leeds and our local communities.

- 3.18 The Community Committee funded these events through their Well-being funding. The numbers attending these Conversation Dinners have continued to increase to around 30 per event. The feedback has been positive, with people from different walks of life and backgrounds offering comments such as:

“It was enlightening to hear about his background”

“I gained a good understanding of the challenges of being isolated in a country where the local language is not spoken. The difficulties experienced and how personal drive changed their circumstances”.

Challenges

- 3.19 Whilst neighbourhood planning remains a strong opportunity there are also challenges in ensuring that different localities are able to work collaboratively to maximise the benefits of a local planning infrastructure across the Outer North East.
- 3.20 Community concerns in relation to the core strategy are ongoing and the committee will continue to work closely with strategic planning colleagues to maximise the involvement of local people.
- 3.21 Access to services for residents in rural areas where transport links are limited continues to be an issue. More localised and flexible services are required to meet the needs of local residents and the committee will continue to challenge services to find a better way of delivering locally such as the increased use of mobile and ‘pop up’ provision.
- 3.22 The Outer North East area has smaller pockets of deprivation which are often unrecognised by services at ward level and the Community Committee will continue to highlight these areas to ensure they have appropriate access to service, for example work through the Moor Allerton Partnership to identify local needs and work collaboratively to develop an appropriate service response. Greater delegation of services to the Community Committee would enable more responsive local services to be developed.

4 Corporate Considerations

Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1 The Outer North East Community Committee has good working relationships with the communities it serves. It will continue to supporting and enable local people and communities to engage and interact with us on issues that are important to them.

Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 4.2 The Outer North East Community Committee is committed to equality and cohesion. Specific equality impact assessments are undertaken on community engagement plans, specific initiatives and decisions as required.

Council policies and City Priorities

- 4.3 The Best Council Plan 2013-17 includes the key outcome to make it easier for people to do business with us, and the move to community committees makes a significant contribution to the delivery of this.

Resources and value for money

- 4.4 There are no new resource implications detailed within this report.

Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 4.5 There are no legal, access to information or call in implications arising from this report.

Risk Management

- 4.6 There are no risk management issues of any significance arising from this report.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 The Community Committee has built on the success of the Area Committee and developed a range of partnership work, supported by the Community Committee Member Champions. It has good relationships with its local communities and utilises its available funding streams to support local projects. The following are highlights of the Community Committee's work this year:
- Strong partnership working between the Community Committee and the Parish and Town Council Forum, particularly around the emerging CIL opportunities and neighbourhood planning work
 - The role of the sub groups and Member Champion roles in resolving local issues and driving improvements
 - Funding a range of local projects through Well-being and Youth Activity Fund resources
 - Increased engagement with the clusters and the further development of the youth panel model to seek the views of young people in service delivery and resources allocation
- 5.2 The Community Committee already has good relationships with its local communities and utilises its available funding streams to support local projects. It recognises that there are challenges ahead, but will continue to strengthen its positive working relationships with the Parish and Town Councils to improve local services and facilities. However it is recognised that there are still challenges particularly around the implementation of CIL, the engagement of

young people and increasing the range of organisations accessing Well-being and Youth Activity Funding.

6 Recommendations

6.1 Members are asked to note the content of this report.

6.2 Background documents¹

None.

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.