

Report of the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods

To: Inner West Area Committee

Date: 21st October 2009

Subject: Area Managers Report

Electoral Wards Affected:
 Armley
 Bramley & Stanningley

Ward Members consulted
 (referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Council Function

Delegated Executive Function available for Call In

Delegated Executive Function not available for Call In Details set out in the report

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to inform members of progress against Leeds Strategic Plan and the Inner West Area Delivery Plan.

1.0 Purpose of This Report

1.1 This report informs Members of the progress against Leeds Strategic Plan and the Inner West Area Delivery Plan.

2.0 Background Information

2.1 The Area Delivery Plan is the delivery of the Leeds Strategic Plan in the Inner West area. This report identifies progress against the themes of the Leeds Strategic Plan.

3.0 Main Issues

Thriving Communities

Jobcentre Plus Latest Response to the Economic Downturn

Backing Young Britain

3.1 Backing Young Britain is a national cross-government campaign to encourage employers to do everything possible to give every young person the help they need to

find a job, training or work skills and experience. They are being asked to commit to at least one of the following initiatives:

- Become a volunteer mentor for school or university leavers to help them find their feet in the job market
- Provide work experience places, volunteering places or a work trial to help young people learn about work, make contacts and fill in their CV
- Offer an internship for a graduate
- Create a new internship for 18 year olds and non-graduates to give them a chance to prove themselves
- Provide an apprenticeship for 16-24 year olds
- Join a Local Employment Partnership to make sure job vacancies are advertised to local unemployed people
- Bid for one of the 100,000 jobs for young people in the Governments Future Jobs Fund

Latest register information

- 3.2 Last month 5,862 people left the JSA register. The number of people making new claims to benefit was 5,917. This is a positive trend and shows that the gap between the two figures is narrowing.

Young Persons Guarantee

- 3.3 The budget announced a guaranteed offer of a job, work-focused training, or meaningful activity to all 18 to 24 year olds before they have reached the 12 month stage of a claim to Jobseekers Allowance (JSA).
- 3.4 The guaranteed offer will consist of:
- New jobs created through the Future Jobs Fund
 - Support to move into an existing job in a key employment sector
 - Work-focused training
 - A place on a Community Task Force, delivering real help within their local community
- 3.5 The guarantee will be in place from early 2010 with some jobs on the Future Jobs Fund starting as early as October this year.

Future Jobs Fund

- 3.6 The Future Jobs Fund, worth £1.2 billion to the end of March 2011, aims to create 150,000 new jobs for young people and/or those living in an unemployment hotspot. The Future Jobs Fund will be administered by the Government, with Local Authorities and others bidding into it against key criteria:
- The jobs will be real jobs, lasting at least 6 months for 25 hours a week and paying at least national minimum wage
 - Additional jobs that would not have happened without the Future Jobs Fund
 - The work undertaken must be of benefit to the local community

- 3.7 It is very pleasing to note that Kirklees, Calderdale, Leeds and Wakefield Local Authorities have all been successful in their bids to the Future Jobs Fund.

New Help for Jobseekers from 6 April 2009

Newly Unemployed Offer

- 3.8 Personal Advisers will provide flexible, responsive and targeted support to meet the needs of individuals, helping their personal journey back into work. Personal Advisers will offer help from a range of options following first interview which includes:

- One hour group information session
- One to one coaching session
- One day Provider led seminar
- One day specialist Provider led seminar for Professional/Executive customers
- Access to the Adviser Discretion Fund providing one-off cash help to improve an individual's immediate job prospects
- Day one eligibility to Work Trials

Six month offer

- 3.9 Customer's age 25+ who remain unemployed for 6 months will be offered additional help, including an increase in the number of Personal Adviser interviews at this stage and making available some new options including:

- £1,000 recruitment subsidy to employers and access to in-work training support up to £1500 through Train to Gain
- Work focused training
- Work-focused volunteering options
- Help for customers starting their own business or starting a self-employed job

Rapid Response Service

- 3.10 The Rapid Response Service (RRS) provides a range of services to support employers and individuals affected by redundancy. Job centre Plus work with the employer and our partner organisations to tailor the support. Job Centre Plus have strengthened and expanded this service:

- To every individual losing their job through redundancy or the economic downturn
- To provide information about other jobs within the labour market, match redundant workers to known vacancies, help them draw up CVs, improve their job search skills and provide general information about benefits and making a claim
- Nationally, the funding for this service has doubled from April 2009 to £12m.

- 3.11 In addition the Response to Redundancy provision, administered by the Learning & Skills Council, offers a package of support including jobsearch, employability training and the opportunity to refresh or learn new skills. This provision also acts as the access point to the Rapid Response Fund for training which aims to offer funding for training where it cannot be funded through existing provision.

Local Employment Partnerships (LEP)

- 3.12 Job Centre Plus have had a magnificent response to LEP from employers in Leeds, with over 1040 employers now signed up to offering work opportunities for our most disadvantaged customers. From 6 April 2009 LEP's opened up their recruitment programmes to the newly unemployed.

Mortgage Relief

- 3.13 The benefit system has changed to help people with mortgages to stay in their homes; under the previous rules people losing their jobs only got help with mortgage costs up to £100,000 after 39 weeks of being unemployed. From January 2009 this was brought forward to 13 weeks, and the capital amount increased to £200,000.

Labour Market Information

- 3.14 The Leeds JSA register has increased to 24,461 in August 2009, up by 10,296 (72.7%) on August 2008. The average weekly intake of new JSA claims is running at 1,115, 25.3% higher than 12 months ago. Current analysis of the top occupations being sought by customers new to the JSA register are:

- Other goods handling and storage occupations
- Sales and retail assistants
- General office assistants/clerks
- Van Drivers
- Labourers in process and plant operations
- Cleaners, domestics
- Labourers in building and woodworking trades
- Packers, bottlers, canners, fillers
- Customer care occupations
- Bar staff

- 3.15 As of February 2009, there were 30,540 Employment Support Allowance and Incapacity Benefit Customers and 9,670 Lone Parents receiving Income Support in Leeds.
- 3.16 People claiming Jobseeker's Allowance are usually required to attend their nearest Jobcentre every two weeks to talk about what they have been doing to find work and discuss any further help they may need/require.
- 3.17 Most people who lose their jobs only spend a short time looking for work before they find a new one, and this has continued to be the case despite the economic downturn. Of the people who left the register in August 2009 53.4% had been unemployed for less than 3 months. For those who do not, further help is provided through our Personal Advisers and a range of employment and training opportunities available through our Employability provision (see Annex 1).
- 3.18 In August 2009 6,299 vacancies were notified in Leeds, an increase of 2,487 (65.2%) on July 2009. However this was a decrease of 1,065 (14.5%) on August 2008.

3.19 Current analysis of the top 10 notified vacancies within Leeds are:

- Customer care occupations
- Sales representatives
- Care assistants and home carers
- Heavy goods vehicle drivers
- Cleaners, domestics
- Sales related occupations
- Market research interviewers
- Kitchen and catering assistants
- General office assistants/clerks
- Security guards and related occupations

3.20 In August 2009 there were 5 employers who notified redundancies in Leeds. The figures below represent the YTD notified figures for the number of customers who have been or are expected to be made redundant by sector in Leeds. These are officially notified redundancies or redundancies notified through employer contacts in Leeds and may not represent the complete picture of redundancies in the area.

3.21

Leeds	
Sector	Total
Call Centre	197
Construction	140
Distribution	70
Education	152
Engineering	60
Finance	14
Legal Services	24
Leisure/travel	19
Manufacturing	238
Other	71
Retail	21
Telecomms/post	176
Grand Total	1182

4 Families West Area Update – Worklessness Pilot

3.22 There are two Family Mentors working in the Inner West area, covering the Farifields, Wythers and New Wortley neighbourhoods. Through referrals to date they have worked with sixty two people. Of these, two people have gained employment, one in New Wortley and one in Wythers neighbourhood. There has been approximately six offered intensive family support, this will increase shortly due to new referrals that have come in.

3.23 The Data Sharing pilot with the Department of Work and Pensions has identified eight lone parents in New Wortley area; they have been invited to monthly coffee mornings.

- 3.24 There are weekly surgeries starting from the 9th Oct 09 at Fairfield Community Centre on a Wednesday and the Wyther House on a Tuesday, with staff available to take new referrals. There is also a clothes swapping event to be held on Friday 9th October 2009 12.30-3.00pm at Wyther House.
- 3.25 There are staff available daily at New Wortley Community Centre with a specific surgery on Thursdays in conjunction with an organisation called Working Links who have funding to assist people back into work.
- 3.26 The Family Mentors have worked with a variety of agencies and these include:
- Castleton Children's Centre
 - Libraries
 - West North west Homes
 - Neighbourhood Street Wardens
 - Armley Annex
 - Local Churches
 - Voluntary Organisations
 - Local Schools
 - Job Centre Plus
 - Working Links

Integrated Money Advice Pilot

- 3.27 Work has been underway to roll out an integrated money advice pilot in two areas in Leeds involving a coordination of services from multiple partners. The areas chosen for the first pilots are South Seacroft (which commenced in February and is ongoing), followed by Armley.
- 3.28 Partners include: LCC Welfare Benefits and Rights, Debt Advice Agencies, Housing ALMO's, Social Care, NHS Leeds, LCC Corporate Debt Team, Leeds City Credit Union, Customer Services One Stop Centres and Contact Centre, Energy Advice.
- 3.29 Leeds Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) has been funded to provide 'Debt First Aid' training to front line staff across the different partner groups. Debt First Aid is a new training programme developed by Leeds CAB to provide very basic understanding and advice to staff on how to approach an individual who contacts them with money and debt problems. To date 87 front line intermediary staff from the following organisations have received this training; Leeds City Credit Union, Seacroft and Armley Leeds City Council One Stop Centres, Children Centre Staff, Wardens, Money Advice Volunteers, Housing Benefit Welfare and Benefit Home Visit Officers, Family Outreach Workers, Fuelsavers, Wildfire at Barnados, WY Police, National Loan Shark Team.
- 3.30 The mailing for Armley started on 30th June, and will include 28,000 households from Bramley to Lower Wortley. It is anticipated that the mailing will be conducted over a maximum period of 19 weeks. A report will be taken to the Narrowing the Gap group in autumn which will outline the findings of the pilots.

Environment

Field Of Dreams - Strawberry Lane Open Space

- 3.31 In April 2007 St Bartholomew's Primary School, Armley, applied to the People's Millions, Big Lottery, for a grant to create an informal community garden on designated public space adjacent to St. Bartholomew's Primary School. The application was successful and they were awarded £79,930.
- 3.32 Parks and Countryside have completed the main infra-structure items, inclusive of decorative fencing and entrance bollards, completion of an additional path, completion of a play area on which floor games will be painted, installation of benches and litter bins and two notice boards. An order of 10,000 daffodil bulbs and 6,000 croci have been place in addition to apple and pear trees and fruit bushes. There has been a little vandalism to the notice boards but this has been rectified. A launch is being planned.

Bin Strike Action

- 3.33 The current bin strike is causing concern regarding the build up of rubbish in certain areas. The Neighbourhood Wardens and LCC staff are endeavouring to report any areas of concern.

Harmonious Communities

Community Cohesion

- 3.34 The Area Management Team set out the approach that Leeds City Council is taking towards Community Cohesion at the June Area Committee meeting. The approach being to pilot and evaluate different interventions in different neighbourhoods in order to build effective community relations, and to gain an improved understanding of how to measure and improve cohesion at the local level.
- 3.35 Within West North West the area in which this approach is being implemented is Armley, and presently the focus is on the Wythers neighbourhood. The Area Management Team are leading on this piece of work and have set up a steering group to take this piece of work forward.
- 3.36 Work in the Wythers neighbourhood has recently been supplemented by COGS: Communities & Organisation: Growth & Support. COGS is a small training, development and action research consultancy organisation. They have been funded by Leeds City Council to support the work being undertaken in Armley and Middleton, specifically to undertake some qualitative research to help inform interventions. Work on this is currently underway.
- 3.37 The qualitative piece of work, being lead by COGS, is being undertaken through the Wyther Improvement Group to ensure that partners are engaged and involved in this piece of work. The Area Management Team will report progress on this project to the Wyther Improvement Group and future Area Committee meetings.

Intergeneration Work

- 3.38 Bramley For All Ages is an alliance of local organisations committed to improving intergenerational relations across the area. Bramley Elderly Action (BEA) have received a £2,500 Well Being Grant to support the co-ordination of two Bramley For All Ages taster / planning events.
- 3.39 The first event is scheduled for November at Bramley library. The event will involve people writing in groups / pairs with the finished pieces being used in future publicity for Bramley For All Ages. We are working with the library to ensure a broad representation at the event including secondary school children. At this event they will float the idea of a large scale Bramley For All Ages singing event in March, possibly leading towards the formation of a Bramley For all Ages Choir.
- 3.40 To help with these events, BEA is currently recruiting a part time Intergenerational Development Worker (16 hours per week until April 2010). The worker will also deliver a pilot Computer Buddies programme (with funding from Older Better, Leeds City Council Adult Social Care) and a Befriending Scheme (with funding from the Home Office's Safer Homes Fund).

New Wortley Local Area Management Project (LAMP) Group

- 3.41 The New Wortley residents have developed a community action plan. It has been produced following consultation with the local community with the objective of informing both residents and external agencies on residents' priorities for their local area.
- 3.42 The community plan was brought to the New Wortley LAMP meeting in September and partners were taken through the priorities and actions noted in the community plan for consideration at a future meeting. Of the key issues that emerged from the consultation day, there was concern about further demolition in the estate. Along with concern that the Neighbourhood Warden Service may be discontinued. It was felt that all residents are in favour of keeping them, as Anti Social Behaviour has reduced considerably since their introduction to the estate.
- 3.43 The New Wortley Community Plan was officially launched on the 11th September by MP Hilary Benn.
- 3.44 Fairfields Local Area Management Project (LAMP) Group
- 3.45 Fairfield Community Partnership have been successful in being granted funding to increase the capacity of the centre through the installation of a partition wall. This would create a new room that can be leased out and increase the amount of funds they can generate. Funding was secured from Awards For All and will pay for the creation and furnishing of the room.
- 3.46 At the recent AGM two new local residents were voted on to the board of directors, meaning that local people now have even more of an impact on how the partnership is run and what work is delivered to make a difference on the estate.

- 3.47 The LAMP group have continued to meet regularly and have been involved in the arrangement of two events that seek to engage with a range of community members. The first event was held in the summer holidays and was a 'European cultural day'. The event was organised with the Polish Speakers Group on the estate and also the Polish Centre in Chapeltown. The event was based around a meal that was cooked as a joint effort between the partnerships chef and a lady from the Polish Speakers Group. The day was a resounding success as over 90 people attended with a mix of local people and others from around the city interacting and having fun.
- 3.48 The second day is planned for the 28th October and is a 'Winter Well-being' event. This brings together partner agencies to help older people to cope in the winter months. Activities will include a slipper swap and advice surgeries from the such partners as the Neighbourhood Police, Fire Safety, Care & Repair, Bramley Elderly Action, Fuelsavers and Wheatfield's Hospice.
- 3.49 Wyther Local Area Management Project (LAMP) Group
- 3.50 NEET workers operating from the Wyther House have been inundated and have a waiting list, alternatively numbers have been very low at the surgeries held by Jobs and Skills, this is mirrored in their outreach work too.
- 3.51 The current focus of Wyther Improvement Group partners is to support the community cohesion work and the qualitative research being undertaken in the local area.
- 3.52 Community Centres
- 3.53 There are five community centres in Inner West, these being Moorside Community Centre, New Wortley Community Centre, Fairfield Community Centre, Strawberry Lane/ St. Batholomew's Centre and Wyther Community House. All of these are leased to independent organisations who manage the centres via their management committees. The exceptions are Strawberry Lane/ St Batholomew's Centre, which is vested with Environments and Neighbourhoods Directorate of Leeds City Council and Wyther Community House, which is managed by West North West Homes Leeds. The Heights Centre, which although located in Outer West, is part of the Inner West Community Centre Consortia group and is close to the Armley ward boundary.
- 3.54 The community centres are a valuable asset in engaging with residents in deprived communities. They offer many services and facilities, as well as being a local focus from which partner agencies can deliver initiatives, such as worklessness and health. However within the next 12 months most of the community centres (with the exception of Strawberry Lane/ St Batholomew's) will run out of funding. Consequently a Community Centre Consortia group has been convened to address the impending funding issues and deliver a more sustainable management model.
- 3.55 To date a proposed business model has been drawn up as to how the community centres can be managed. This involves a lead organisation taking responsibility for managing the centres and co-ordinating the day to day running (recruitment, legal issues such as health and safety, organisation of staff etc.), which will free up community centre staff and volunteers to engage with local people and to develop and deliver programmes of work. A similar model exists in Huddersfield and has proved to be very successful; a visit by the Community Centre Consortia group has taken place.

- 3.56 To address the lack of funding a bid to support the five community centres of New Wortley, Fairfield, Moorside, Wyther Community House, and the Heights has been submitted to four organisations who were interested in the initial bid. The organisations are Lankelly Chase, HBOS, Porticus UK and Tudor Trust. These have only recently been submitted and it is hoped that a response will be heard by the end of September.
- 3.57 A bid is also being drafted to the Hardship Fund which has recently been launched by central government to help voluntary sector organisations who are feeling the effects of the economic downturn through the reduction in charitable donations and the reduction in local business undertaken through them. BARCA-Leeds are the lead organisation, with support from Area management Team, in making this bid for the partnership of community centres most affected in inner west Leeds.
- 3.58 The bid is to support the delivery of much needed services in four community centres of New Wortley, Fairfield, Little London and Wyther Community House. This is in response to £16.9M released by the government to assist local groups who have not been able to secure funding/charitable donations due to the credit crunch. The bid is for £164K to secure the posts of four Community Development Workers and funding for activities from each of the venues.

Enterprise and Economy

Armley Town Street Town and District Centre Regeneration Scheme (TDC) and Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI).

- 3.59 Progress to Phase 2 of the Armley Town Centre improvement scheme is now underway, with works on site. This scheme seeks to improve the vitality and viability of Armley town centre for workers, residents and visitors, reverse the physical decline and increase the popularity of the area as a desirable place to work and shop. It will also contribute to improving the general appearance of Armley town centre and is an element of the West Leeds Gateway Regeneration Programme (WLGRP).
- 3.60 The works include resurfacing pavements, replacing kerbs, street furniture and public art. SEC will install the Heritage style lighting columns, and there will be hanging basket brackets to at least four columns on Town Street. It is envisaged that works will be completed by November of this year.
- 3.61 The businesses effected so far have expressed no concerns or complaints to the Town Centre Manager or the contractor, other than they are very pleased with the way it looks.

Christmas / TDC Celebrations

- 3.62 The Town Centre Manager is looking at the feasibility of organising a large Christmas celebration on Armley Town Street in early December. This would be a joint celebration of the Christmas light switch on and the opening of the Town and District Centre scheme. It is envisaged that it will be a large scale event that will require the closure of part of Town Street. Meetings have been held with Metro and First Bus.

Both stated that they have no concerns over any road closures proposed, and provided some useful information and advice.

Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI)

- 3.63 The Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) is located within the Armley Conservation Area which covers most phases of the town's development from the 17th to the 20th century. It will strengthen the heart of the town by repairing and replacing the shop frontages to commercial properties and reviving the Town Moor. This will help to complement the work planned under the Town and District Centres scheme, which focuses on improvements to public realm surrounding the THI targeted shops frontages. Two THI officers have been appointed; Jessica Ashton and Wyn Jones, Wyn Jones will cover the Armley THI scheme.
- 3.64 All of the target properties have been informed of the general THI grant situation. This has resulted in some additional interest in the THI grant scheme from property owners who have not previously expressed an interest.
- 3.65 In order to agree grant percentages property revaluations and estimated scheme costs are currently being revised which should enable the THI Monitor to confirm grant figures by mid-October 2009. A Shop Front Design guide is also going to be submitted to the THI Monitor by mid August.

Transport

- 3.66 A number of issues have been raised in Rodley by local residents regarding the condition of the footpaths. Highways have met with the local residents in Rodley to review the issues and concerns raised by the local residents.
- 3.67 There are approximately 13,000 street lengths within the city boundary and Highways have a limited budget with which to maintain the streets. In accordance with our Policy Statement and Plan, all streets are inspected on an annual basis to gather information on condition and use. From this information Highways develop a list of planned works on a ward by ward basis, the streets are listed in order of priority i.e. those streets Highways feel are most in need of repair are at the top of the list. There is a consultation process where Highways invite Ward Councillors to consider the lists. In this years consultation document Highways are proposing six schemes in the Bramley and Stanningley Ward, at a cost of around £233,000.

4.0 Implications for Council Policy and Governance

- 4.1 The Area Delivery Plan for Inner West is administered through the West North West Leeds Area Management Team.
- 4.2 Well-Being projects develop from Inner West's Leeds Area Delivery Plan and through consultation with Area Committee members. The plan helps to fulfill the Council's Corporate Plan objectives by aiming to create better neighbourhoods and confident communities.

5.0 Legal and Resource Implications

- 5.1 In order to meet the Area Committee's functions, funding is supplied via Well Being budgets and the Community Centres Budget.
- 5.2 In order to meet the Area Committee's roles, funding is in the main supplied by other Leeds City Council Departments mainstream budgets, and external partner agencies e.g. the Police and Primary Care Trust, which is in turn reflected by the fact that the Area Committee's role here is to influence, develop and consult. However, wellbeing funding has resourced some projects here e.g. area based regeneration schemes and conservation area reviews.

6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 The functions and roles of the Area Committee aim to:
- Improve the quality and value for money of Council service delivery
 - Improve the quality of democracy and find new ways to facilitate citizen participation in local government through the development of links between Ward Members and their communities.
 - To co-ordinate policy and service delivery between the local service providers.

7.0 Recommendations

- 7.1 Inner West Area Committee members are invited to:
- note the contents of the report and comment on any aspect of the matters raised
 - suggest items for inclusion on future agendas

Background Papers

Executive Board Report July 2008.