



## Report of the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods

**To:** Executive Board

**Date:** 13 October 2010

**Subject:** Response to Deputation Regarding Social Deprivation and Community  
Community Cohesion in Hyde Park

**Electoral Wards Affected:**  
Hyde Park and Woodhouse

Ward Members consulted  
(referred to in report)

### Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call In

Not available for Call In  
(Details set out in the  
report)

### Executive Summary

On 14 July 2010 the Council received a deputation from residents of Hyde Park regarding social deprivation and community cohesion in the area. It requested that the Council investigate these issues and identify solutions to overcoming these challenges. The report welcomes the spirit of this deputation and recognises the positive nature of community involvement that it signifies.

The report provides a response to this deputation and seeks to address the issues raised and clarify the Council's approach to tackling deprivation and cohesion in Hyde Park.

The report concludes that the Hyde Park area faces a range of challenging issues relating to population density, economic activity, low income and health. Whilst trends relating to housing quality, community cohesion, environmental management and crime show recent improvements resulting from initiatives being delivered by the Council and its partners, deep seated problems, including those identified in the delegation remain.

The report advises that the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods will lead an urgent response to these concerns and agree clear actions to tackle them, in consultation with Ward Members and local residents.

## 1.0 Purpose of This Report

- 1.1 The deputation from residents of Hyde Park to Council on 14 July 2010 raised a number of specific issues relating to social deprivation and community cohesion in the Hyde Park Area. Each of the issues raised in the deputation have been considered in turn, along with a response to each issue and an outline of current and planned initiatives the Council and its partners are taking to address these local challenges.
- 1.2 The statistical information referenced in this report relates to the Lower Super Output Areas listed at Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.

## 2.0 Main Issues

The Inner North West Area Committee and local area management team provide local leadership and support to the work of council services and partner agencies in the Hyde Park area. The area committees local Area Delivery Plan is revised annually and seeks to ensure that the Council and its partners work together to join up resources and address the types of local priorities raised in the deputation - the aim of the council to date has been to use information received from the community and other sources to provide focus on improving priority outcomes at neighborhood level through a number of service providers, partners and delivery agencies. This approach will be considerably strengthened by dedicated and locally accountable environmental services through the proposed neighborhood management team for the area.

### 2.1 Population Density

- a) Deputation Quote:  
*"A major factor in Hyde Park's suffering is its high level of population density. Hyde Park is the most crowded area in Leeds. Hyde Park has more than 1.5 times the population density as the next area down the list. There are an average of 186 people per hectare living in Hyde Park where the average in Leeds overall is 12"*
- b) Response:  
Hyde Park is without question one of the most densely populated areas in the City with 124 people per hectare compared to just 14 people per hectare on average for the city according to 2008 mid year data. Four of the city's eight most dense LSOAs are located directly in the Hyde Park area, two of which have 223 people per hectare.
- c) The historic layout and housing style of tightly packed Victorian terraced neighbourhoods along with the conversion of many of these family homes to Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMOs) does much to contribute to this population density. There is little prospect of this changing in the foreseeable future. Through local planning policy such as the Leeds Unitary Development Plan (2006) and the Leeds Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2009) new housing developments must take into account planning policy in relation to issues such as housing density, standards, design (which also includes safety and crime issues), affordable housing etc. The Council's Building Control team also ensure the relevant building standards and regulations are met.
- d) In relation to the Inner North West Area in particular, new housing development must respect local character in terms of design and scale, and also meet area specific demands, for example, providing affordable homes for families and looking at how suitable accommodation can be found for students. UDP policy H15 states that in

areas with a high density of student accommodation like Hyde Park, planning permission will be granted for housing intended for occupation by students where certain criteria are met. These include that:

- "The stock of housing accommodation, including that available for family occupation, would not be unacceptably reduced in terms of quantity or variety".
  - "There would be no unacceptable effects on neighbours' living conditions..."
- e) This policy has been cited as a reason to refuse schemes which have involved the loss of family housing in the area. This has, since 6th April 2010, been used alongside the Town and Country (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) (national legislation) to resist the conversion of individual family houses falling under the C3 (Dwelling Houses) use class to small HMO's which now fall under the new C4 (HMOs) use class. This new legislation is however currently under review by the Coalition Government.
- f) There are also several local planning strategies developed with the support of the Inner North West Area Committee and the local communities that demonstrate a significant commitment by ward members and local people to inform how planning policy is applied in the area. These strategies are taken into account when planning decisions are made. Relevant documents include: the 'Far Headingley, Weetwood and West Park Neighbourhood Design Statement' (adopted Feb 2005) the 'Headingley and Hyde Park Neighbourhood Design Statement ' (due to be considered for adoption later in 2010), and the 'Little Woodhouse Neighbourhood Design Statement ' (currently in production). The Kirkstall Vision document also includes planning themes and informs local planning activity.

## 2.2 Houses of Multiple Occupancy

- a) Deputation Quote:  
*"Hyde Park is full of tiny terraced houses that have been converted from family homes into HMOs crammed with as many people as possible. Many houses have been carved up with tiny bedrooms, with no common rooms and no yards. This sub-standard housing is rife in our communities".*
- b) Response:  
The built environment in Hyde Park area is characterised by a significant proportion of HMO's. These are defined by the Housing Act 2004 as residential properties housing five or more persons from at least two households on three or more floors and must be licensed by the local authority.
- c) There are 3000 licensable HMO's in Leeds, and around 90% of licence applications relate to properties in the Inner North West, many of which are located in the Hyde Park area. The property inspections of these HMO's completed to date have seen a very high compliance both with licence conditions and Housing, Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) conditions.
- d) The Council monitors housing trends closely and employs a broad range of legislative and planning controls on HMO's. Therefore, while the housing stock in the Hyde Park area is dominated by a very large number of HMO's, the area has seen the quality of this housing stock rise in recent years. It should be noted however that the

government is reviewing legislation relating to HMO licensing which may result in fewer properties requiring a licence.

## 2.4 Community Tensions

a) Deputation Quote:

*“ The people living in Hyde Park come from wildly different population groups...These groups have very different customs, needs and living styles and this can provoke high levels of tension in the area”.*

b) Response:

Hyde Park is a diverse community both in terms of ethnicity and age, with 28% of the population from BME communities and a very large student population. Students and permanent residents tend not to have the same sense of belonging to the neighbourhood, and with over 40,000 students living in the Hyde Park and surrounding area, some local tensions do occur. Noise nuisance is one example, over 19% of the city's noise nuisance calls to the Out of Hours noise team originate from Inner North West Leeds.

c) A wide range of community cohesion projects are being supported by the Council. These include a multi-faith forum, a cricket competition for BME young people, and inter-generational activities involving older people visiting local primary schools. The Inner North West Area Committee has provided grant aid to a number of inter-generational activities and volunteering projects delivered by local voluntary sector organisations and the student unions of both The University of Leeds and Leeds Metropolitan University.

d) Work is also being carried out to build positive relationships between the police and Muslim communities which are particularly important after the area's connection to the London bombings on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2005. The Shebab project is an innovative scheme to inspire young Muslims by introducing role models from sport and culture and running citizens' workshops and Scholars' talks to counter extremist ideologies.

e) The recent Leeds City Council Residents Survey (Oct 2009) identified that 86% of respondents from Hyde Park and Woodhouse agreed that 'People from different backgrounds got on well together in their local area' compared to just 74% in Headingley and 78% for the City as a whole. This suggests that despite being a diverse area, community tensions are less pronounced than the deputation would suggest. There is a clear recognition however, that the Council should continue to work to improve relations amongst the various sections of the community.

## 2.5 A Large Student Population

a) Deputation Quote:

*“The number of students and young people has been growing each year for 10 years and the rest of the population has been declining. Over 80% of the population in Hyde Park is aged 16-29.” .... A high rate of student turnover translates to “week levels of commitment by students to the area which can be evidenced by the lack of care for houses and gardens, rubbish and rubbish bins strewn on the streets...”*

b) Response:

Hyde Park does have an exceptionally large percentage of young people with 73.9% of the population being aged 16 to 29 in certain parts of the area. That's compared to just 26% for Leeds as a whole.

- c) This primarily student population does put pressure on environmental services throughout the year, but this effect is particularly pronounced in the weeks leading up to the 30 June when most student tenancies end on the same day at the end of the Academic year, as almost 40,000 students clear out their houses. Large volumes of waste are left piled in streets, bin yards and back alleyways.
- d) The Council co-ordinates a steering group to oversee the management of a 'Student Changeover Action Plan'. The Inner North West area committee provides significant funding each year to deliver this work in addition to the considerable resource being provided from other council departments and other agencies. This work encourages better communication and joint working between services and co-ordinates several initiatives aimed at tackling the increased waste which include: a student led recycling scheme; additional refuse collections, and early morning patrols to target prolific identify theft from the large volumes of waste.
- e) The Area Committee provides funding for a number of projects aimed at improving environmental quality in Hyde Park including: a dedicated Environmental Enforcement Officer for the Headingley and Hyde Park area; providing additional refuse and enforcement services during student changeover, and Parkswatch officers to enforce the byelaws on Woodhouse Moor.
- f) The University of Leeds and Leeds Metropolitan University have both published community strategies as a recognition of their responsibilities to the locality. They jointly manage a Neighbourhood Helpline to respond to issues relating to their students' conduct in the local community including, noise, waste, transport and antisocial behaviour - the service dealt with 250 cases in the 2009/10 academic year. Both universities and their student unions also deliver the Green Streets programme during Student Changeover at the end of June each academic year. This Area Committee funded programme works to limit the amount of waste entering landfill and enables 1200 hours of student volunteer time to help reduce the impact of student exodus on the local community.

## **2.6 Poor Quality and Diversity of Local Businesses**

- a) Deputation Quote:  
*"Instead of thriving small businesses, exciting retailers and restaurants with delicious wholesome food, our main streets are lined with cheap and unhealthy takeaways letting agents and boarded up shop fronts".*
- b) Response:  
Hyde Park Corner, Woodsley Road and Headingley District Centre are thriving shopping centres that include a number of independent retailers. Shopping policies in the UDP aim to protect these district centres and other local shopping centres by retaining a sustainable mix of units (between retail, takeaways, cafes, estate agents, other services for example). Planning restrictions can only act as a control function and cannot affect existing retail units retrospectively. The Council can and does seek to attach conditions to planning permission to restrict opening times and waste management of businesses like takeaways to reduce the negative impact on the local community.

- c) The Council has adopted a Cumulative Impact Policy that includes parts of Hyde Park, Headingley and Weetwood which aims to reduce the problems associated with large numbers of premises providing licensable activities located in close proximity.
- d) The Inner North West Area Committee has also funded a range of town and district centre improvements in Hyde Park and at Woodsley Road aimed at improving the quality of key shopping areas.

## 2.7 Hidden Deprivation

- a) Deputation Quote:  
*"Hyde Park has a hidden layer of poverty...the student population skews the characteristics of the neighbourhood. The jobless rate of 25 to 49 year olds is 1.5 times the average of Leeds. The jobless rate of 50 to 65 year olds is more than twice the Leeds Average. Only 21% of the population is counted as being economically active."*
- b) Response:  
 The large student population can mask some deprivation but on closer inspection of the data contained in Appendix 2 it is clear that in comparison to other parts of the city, Hyde Park suffers from a broad range of social deprivation particularly relating to education, economic activity and health, along with some persistent challenges relating to crime and anti-social behavior.
- c) **Education** - The high number of undergraduate and postgraduate students skew the statistics about educational attainment since they are, by their very nature, qualified above the average level for the general population. However, the exam results from primary and secondary schools in the area shows that Hyde Park is well below the Leeds Average for Foundation Stage, Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 attainment. Persistent absenteeism from secondary school pupils and the number of young people not in education, employment or training are both higher than the Leeds average. Hyde Park is covered by the Open XS Extended Services Cluster, which is supported by Education Leeds to improve the attainment of pupils in the area through the delivery of a range of school based improvement initiatives such as the provision of Parent Support Advisors in each of the 5 primary schools in the areas as well as Learning Mentors in each school. There is also an active local action plan to tackle the numbers of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET's) as well as a series of out of school and holiday activities to support learning and improve aspiration for learning within the community.
- d) **Economic Activity** - Students are generally not allowed to claim benefits which are a major component of the key statistics on low income, and are not considered to be "economically inactive", so their presence in large numbers within the area masks levels of disadvantage. However, the Council's benefits database (July 2010) indicates that Hyde Park is more deprived than the city average in relation to the number of households in receipt of benefit and the percentage of children in workless households.
- e) Unemployment is a significant issue in all inner city wards, including Hyde Park and Woodhouse. Support services for long-term jobseekers are provided by Jobcentre Plus and supplemented by the Council through information, advice and guidance sessions delivered largely through Jobshops and other public service delivery points.

This provision is currently under review to ensure it is effectively targeted to the areas of greatest need and will look to address any lack of provision locally.

- f) The Council also delivers the Future Jobs Fund programme to provide young people with training and work experience through a 6 month programme with local employers. Of the 270 young people benefiting from the scheme across the city to date, 19 have been from the Hyde Park and Woodhouse ward. The Burley Lodge Centre also runs a debt and financial advice service for local residents and tenants of West North West Homes.
- g) **Health** - Recent data provided by NHS Leeds shows that residents of Hyde Park are more likely to suffer from poor health in certain circumstances. The number of hospital admissions related to alcohol and the number of deaths related to Coronary Heart Disease are both almost twice the Leeds average in some sections of Hyde Park. While smoking related illnesses and low birth weight are better than the rest of Leeds in certain areas, infant mortality is almost twice the city average, and low birth weight is a problem in certain sections of the population.
- h) The West North West Health and Wellbeing Partnership which includes representatives of NHS Leeds, Adult Social Care, Children's Services, and the third sector has recently been created to respond to local health priorities and concerns such as those highlighted above. The partnership has recently agreed a work programme to help tackle the poor health outcomes within Hyde Park with particular focus on tackling health inequalities.

## 2.8 Crime and Community Safety

- a) Deputation Quote:  
*"Crime, especially burglary and theft from vehicles is a problem in Hyde Park. Where crime in Leeds overall has been reduced by over 9%, in Hyde Park it has grown by 11%.....The amount of Anti-social behaviour has also risen this year."*
- b) Response:  
Figures from Safer Leeds show that overall crime across Hyde Park and Woodhouse ward has increased by 7% compared with the previous year. A Burglary Task Group chaired by Safer Leeds was set up in June 2009 to drive forward the delivery of burglary reduction efforts in the area. Figures show this has led to burglary levels reducing in recent months and has resulted in 33 less burglaries in July 2010 compared with July the previous year.
- c) The Council and West Yorkshire Police acknowledge that burglary is a particular issue of concern in Inner North West Leeds, recent operations and initiatives in Hyde Park and Woodhouse have led to a downward trend for burglary. The Inner North West Area Committee has also provided grant aid to enable the neighbourhood policing team to deliver a range of burglary reduction initiatives including the Capture Car and Capture House programmes which uses high tech equipment to track and trace property stolen in the area and leads to offenders pleading guilty earlier because of the weight of evidence against them.
- d) The Inner North West Crime and Grime tasking group led by the Council and the Neighbourhood Policing Team co-ordinates a multi-agency response to a broad range of community safety issues including noise nuisance, crime and anti-social behavior. Other work in the area includes: Signpost, which supports and works with families to

reduce offending; Youth Service and Positive Futures, working with young people providing alternatives pathways to crime and anti-social behavior, and the Leeds University Union, recruiting Student Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators to talk to fellow students about crime prevention and take an active role in safety and security of the area they live.

### **3.0 Implications for Council Policy and Governance**

3.1 The council and its partners currently deliver a wide range of strategies, services and interventions designed to tackle and respond to the issues and concerns raised in the deputation. Further interventions will continue to be made through both the local area committee and improved city-wide locality management arrangements.

### **4.0 Legal and Resource Implications**

4.1 There are no specific legal and resource implications; however the Council will need to continue its efforts to tackle the issues highlighted in this report which are currently being delivered against identified resources in the 2010/ 2011 budget.

### **5.0 Conclusions and Next Steps**

5.1 There are a range of current actions and interventions being delivered and planned by the council and its partners to address the issues highlighted in the deputation. The Council acknowledges that because of the very particular circumstances which exist in the neighbourhood, Hyde Park faces difficult challenges which affect the quality of life of residents and that 'normal' service levels may not be sufficient to tackle some of these.

5.2 In response to the delegation the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods and Housing, together with the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods and his senior team, will work with Ward Members and local residents to agree urgent short and longer term actions to achieve sustainable improvements for the neighbourhood. The Council will do more to enable local people to influence how services work and how local problems are tackled. Local community and voluntary groups will be invited to play an active role.

### **6.0 Recommendations**

Executive Board is asked to:

6.1 Note the contents of this report.

Background Papers:  
Housing Act 2004

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Hyde Park Map  
Appendix 2: Hyde Park Statistical Profile  
Appendix 3: Hyde Park Delegation Speech Text