



Report of Business Facilities & Social Enterprise Manager

Report to Inner West Area Committee

Date: 20th October 2010

Subject: Inner West Community Centres Consortium Update

Electoral Wards Affected:

Armley
Bramley and 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 outline the plans to make the Community Centres in the Inner West Priority Neighbourhoods increase sales, turnover and run more efficiently to ensure their long-term sustainability.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

- 1.1 To look at the sustainability options to ensure the Community Centres in the Inner West Priority Neighbourhoods run more efficiently and remain open in the long-term.

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 There are five community centres in Inner West, these being Moorside Community Centre, New Wortley Community Centre, Fairfield Community Centre, Strawberry Lane/ St. Bartholomew's Centre and Wyther Community House. These are leased to independent organisations who manage the centres via their management committees with the exception of Strawberry Lane/ St Bartholomew's Centre and Wyther Community House. Strawberry Lane/ St Bartholomew's Centre is vested with Environments and Neighbourhoods Directorate of Leeds City Council and Wyther Community House 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.

- 2.2 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, for example to tackle worklessness and health issues. Consequently a Community Centre Consortia group was convened by Area Management to address the impending funding issues and deliver a more sustainable management model.
- 2.3 To date the Community Centres Consortium has developed a business model to consider 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.
- 2.4 To address the lack of funding, bids to external funding organisations have been submitted, including a recent application to the Hardship Fund. Unfortunately these applications have been unsuccessful. In view of this, an application was made to the Inner West Area Committee for funding towards a Business Facilities & Social Enterprise Manager to cover the three community centres within the three priority neighbourhoods in Inner West (New Wortley, Fairfields & Wythers), and a pot of funding to help address any issues or gaps in funding between the three community centres.
- 2.5 Since the February Area Committee meeting, the Area Management Team have met with BARCA Leeds, there has been a Community Centre Consortium meeting and subsequent to this the Area Management Team and BARCA Leeds have met with representatives from each of the Community Centres (New Wortley, Fairfields, Wythers) to discuss the BARCA bid and confirm the allocations that were put in the original application. In view of this the Area Management Team has therefore made necessary revisions to the running costs and financial assumptions on which the bid was initially based.
- 2.6 Each centre had originally included **£7,200** for caretaking and cleaning salaries, this gave a total of **£21,600**. However, each centre felt there was greater need for an administration worker rather than a caretaker, therefore it was proposed that after taking out cleaning salaries for each of the centres, the remaining portion of the £21,600 (originally kept for caretaker's salary) be used to fund an administration worker to cover all three centres with an even split of hours for each. This person is employed by BARCA – Leeds. Each Centre felt volunteers would be able to carry out the role of a caretaker.
- 2.7 The total amount approved by Area Committee was **£75,680.32**, of which **£41,500** has been set aside for the Business Facilities & Social Enterprise Manager (this includes the salary and on-costs), the Business Facilities & Social Enterprise Manager was appointed in July 2010 on a 12 month contract. This leaves **£34,180.32**, to cover the cleaning and admin salary of **£21,600**, leaving a total of **£12,580.32** to provide additional revenue support to the centres.

- 2.8 Subsequent to the February Area Committee, further meetings have taken place which has resulted in a re-calculation of the original costings and therefore funding shortfalls for the three community centres. This means that the approved Well Being funds will not cover the funding shortfall. This is a key area of work for the Business Facilities & Social Enterprise Manager to work on.
- 2.9 The Fairfields Community Centre and New Wortley Community Centre have been in receipt of large amounts of funding in previous years. These funding streams have now come to an end.
- 2.10 The impact of this is clear at Fairfields where in 2008/ 09 there were 7 posts (employees) working a total of 160 hours per week (approx). Now there are 2 part time catering jobs and a cleaner working a total of 50 hours per week.
- 2.11 Impact in terms of turnover is also stark, at Fairfield the turnover in 2007/08 was £128,000 where as in the current year from April 2010 projected turnover will be £36,000.
- 2.12 A similar situation exists at New Wortley Community Centre, turnover in 2007/08 was £140,000, where as the current year projected turnover is £55,000. In 2008, 2 full time staff and 4 part time staff were employed working a total of 110 hours per week with a wage bill of £75,000, and now the centre employs 1 full time and 3 part time staff working a total of 65 hours per week, this amounts to a wage bill of £30,000.
- 2.13 The Wyther Community House had been used by BARCA for a number of years as a base to develop community activity in the area. Unfortunately, the building has not lent itself to a useful community building and attendance by residents has been low.
- 2.14 West North West Homes Leeds is currently considering the options for the future of the Community House. This includes consideration of converting the property back into social housing, selling the property as is, and retaining as a Community House and working with agencies to try to bring back into use. A decision on the future will be made at their November 2010 Services and Investment Committee. Consultation has been undertaken with Ward Members and is currently underway with residents. Their views will be used to inform the final decision.
- 2.15 As a result alternative venues are being looked at such as The Venerable Bede Church and Lazer Centre as a base to offer services and activities to the Wythers community. Wyther Community House offered a base for a girls group and a mums group. Both have now relocated to the Venerable Bede Church. It also served as a base for community development led by BARCA - Leeds who have now moved out and are based at Fairfields Community Centre.

3.0 Main Issues for Resolution

Staffing

- 3.1 Both New Wortley & Fairfields employ mainly part time staff, neither has a centre manager and simple functions such as answering the phone can be problematic, as staffing levels can be erratic.
- 3.2 The Fairfield Community Partnership currently employ 2 part time catering staff, working 20 hours each. They are assisted by a dedicated volunteer in the kitchen. There is a cleaner (10 hours) and there are some volunteers who help on an adhoc

basis. The Business Facilities & Social Enterprise Manager has organised a BEST worker to look after the gardens.

- 3.3 At New Wortley Community Centre there is 1 full time catering manager (35 hours), 2 part time catering staff (10 hours each) and a cleaner (10 hours). There are some dedicated kitchen volunteers who work on specific days, the community shop is run on a volunteer basis, and some office administration is organised by a volunteer. BEST have organised a worker to look after the gardens. On occasion there may be a BEST office assistant and a BEST placement in the kitchen. The probation service have also used the centre for offender placements.

Financial Management

- 3.4 The Financial Management System at Fairfields is satisfactory, whilst at New Wortley there is room for improvement and plans are in place to address these issues.

Usage

- 3.5 Both community centres have the capacity to deliver additional activities to utilise their space and resources. The Business Facilities & Social Enterprise Manager is exploring different avenues of increasing usage at each community centre. Please see attached a timetable for both New Wortley and Fairfield showing their current provisions (appendix 1).

Funding Gap

- 3.6 When taking into account income and expenditure at New Wortley Community Centre there is a funding gap of £1500 - £2000 per month. At Fairfields the figure is closer to £1000 per month. This position has remained static for the past 6 months, and this is now becoming more apparent as external funding has ended. The Business Facilities & Social Enterprise Manager is looking at ways of reducing this shortfall and has discussed plans to reduce the shortfall at the most recent Community Centres Consortium meeting.

Community Centre Management Boards

- 3.7 Fairfields Community Centre have a very strong active board with a good mixture of local residents and business professionals who deal with the problems they face in a very transparent and open way. With regards to the New Wortley Management Board, there is scope for some development to enable it to deliver a positive change in the area. West North West Homes have offered to support the Management Board by delivering training on the roles of a Management Committee and support them on how to apply for funding.

Communication

- 3.8 The Business Facilities & Social Enterprise Manager feels that communication with the local community could be improved. From advertising events to the services offered, the community centres often struggle to get the message they want to get out effectively.

4.0 Proposed Areas for Development

Communications and Publicity

- 4.1 The Business Facilities & Social Enterprise Manager is introducing regular newsletters, improving general marketing, trying to improve the delivery of leaflets and expanding social media interaction via Facebook to engage with the local community better. Marketing campaigns are taking place to publicise activities and the café to people outside the Fairfields and New Wortley to try and develop a wider customer base. Options are being looked into to improve signage at both sites. Promotional material, flyers and posters will be distributed in both the local areas. Please refer to appendix 2.

Opportunities for Income

- 4.2 There are some excellent income generating components at both Community Centres. Listed below are the key income generators.

Room Hire

- 4.3 New Wortley generates room hire from H3Plus who hire the main hall for a couple of hours every week paying approx £1,500 every 6 months to put on an elderly heart fitness class, patients are referred by GPs. A few more of these would be very profitable, and putting this type of class into an area of high deprivation would be beneficial. There is additional room hire income from Leeds City Council for meetings, private parties and other groups. Rental is paid by BARCA – Leeds for the development work being organised from the venue, and in October a drugs programme funded by BARCA will start paying income via rent and through the café with a food voucher scheme to help people with drug related problems.
- 4.4 At Fairfields Community Centre, room hire is paid by BARCA for the development work and Youth Service, There is additional room hire from private groups, organisations such as Leeds City Council for meetings, and from private parties.
- 4.5 Room hire banners are being prepared for both sites to advertise the space available.

Community Shop

- 4.6 New Wortley is generating an income of approx £500 per month through the community shop which is located within the New Wortley Community Centre. The shop is open when the centre is open 9am – 3pm, this is staffed by volunteers. This is additional income with little associated extra cost.
- 4.7 The possibility of opening a high street shop is being explored. However, there are other associated costs with this. The Business Facilities & Social Enterprise Manager has negotiated the possibility of a shop on Armley Town Street, this will be rent free for 6 months. There is no need to sign a lease and there is a possibility of qualifying for a 90% discount on rates because it will be a charity shop. New Wortley Community Centre is a registered charity.
- 4.8 If a shop was opened on Armley Town Street, this would run in conjunction with the current shop based in the community centre. The shop on Town Street would initially be staffed by volunteers, with one volunteer being the shop manager. The Community Centre does have a volunteer with retail management experience. The idea would be

to ask for donations from local community centres, as well as trying to source supplies from other social enterprises. The Community Centre would need to purchase fixtures and fittings for the shop, decorate internally and design some shop frontage. The shop would also be a high street presence for the Community Centres and help promote events at the centres on Armley Town Street. There are currently 2 charity shops trading close by on Town Street taking approx £700- £1000 per week.

Café / Outside Catering

- 4.9 The Business Facilities & Social Enterprise Manager believes the social enterprises at each centre are not profitable at the moment, and some development is required in terms of management skills and marketing. The catering at both Community Centres is the key income earner. There needs to be more focus on exploring further catering opportunities at both Community Centres and it could be more beneficial to run both catering units as one.
- 4.10 Fairfields – have started to sell breakfasts/ lunches to the major building site next door, this is generating useful extra income and there is potential to increase this income because the developers have asked the café if they would like to sell breakfast/lunch at other development sites across Leeds. The catering staff have responded positively to suggestions to expand the business and there is a feeling of real progress being made here.
- 4.11 There may be an opportunity to increase the number of luncheon clubs in partnership with Bramley Elderley Action, in particular Swinnow and Stanningley may be looking to using Fairfields in the near future.
- 4.12 New Wortley – run a café 8am – 2pm Monday till Saturday. The café is experimenting with Saturday opening to increase turnover. Profit margins on some food items are not high enough, so they are looking at increasing prices on certain menu items. The Catering Manager is looking at purchasing supplies cheaper and limiting the range of food and drink on offer to higher margin good sellers.
- 4.13 The Business Facilities & Social Enterprise Manager is exploring ways of increasing luncheon clubs. Currently there is one luncheon club and this is a weekly contract with Armley Helping Hands.

5.0 Implications for Council Policy and Governance

- 5.1 The work that has been carried out in the Priority Neighbourhood areas has helped to meet the Council's objectives of narrowing the gap; improving community cohesion and regenerating deprived areas.

Member Consultation

- 5.2 Relevant Ward Members have been consulted on the works of the Community Centres Consortium and the Area Committee through regular updates.

6.0 Legal and Resource Implications

- 6.1 There have been no legal implications arising out of the work in the Priority Neighbourhood Areas. Resource implications have revolved in the main around Officer time, and in the case of the community centres financial support from the Area Committee's Wellbeing budget.

7.0 Equality Considerations

- 7.1 There is a perception that some centres are only accessible to some sections of the community. All centres need to demonstrate that they comply with the Council's equality commitments. This applies to both directly managed centres and leased centres. Advice and guidance and appropriate monitoring procedures need to be developed and implemented to better address this issue. This work will be incorporated within the community centre action plans as they are developed.

8.0 Conclusions

- 8.1 The centres could be promoted under a unified banner by rationalising any promotional / marketing costs. The aim being, to encourage and develop businesses at the centres which could include catering, room hire, and even the possibility of launching businesses such as the Community Shop and Employment Agencies.
- 8.2 The centres could run a more uniform set of services. Centres could run a single reception site manned 9am – 5 pm. This could handle all phone calls to centres/ handle centre bookings and remotely open buildings without the need for someone to be on site. Caretaking and cleaning services could be shared between the sites.
- 8.3 Another possible option is to explore Community Assets. These could be transferred to the organisation responsible for managing them. This would allow the organisation to raise funding to pay for the infrastructure needed to improve the centres. However this approach can be very time consuming and costly.

9.0 Recommendations

- 9.1 Inner West Area Committee members are invited to:
Note the contents of the report and comment on any aspect of the matters raised.

Background Papers

None

Appendix 1: Timetables showing Community Centre weekly usage.

Appendix 2: Artwork for social enterprises and newsletters.