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## Report of the Director of Neighbourhoods and Housing

### Executive Board

Date: 24<sup>th</sup> January 2007

Subject: RESPECT AREAS AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR LEEDS CITY COUNCIL

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**Electoral Wards Affected:**

ALL

**Specific Implications For:**

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call In

Not Eligible for Call In

(Details contained in the report)

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Respect is a major government initiative that broadens the drive to address anti-social behaviour. This report outlines the implications for Leeds City Council on becoming a Respect Area and highlights the activity planned and already underway in Leeds that will contribute to this agenda. The Home Office will announce Leeds to be one of the first 40 Respect Areas during the week commencing 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2007.

## **1.0 Purpose Of This Report**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Executive Board with information on the implications on Leeds becoming a Respect Area.

## **2.0 Background Information**

2.1 The Respect Action Plan builds upon the previous work to address anti-social behaviour (asb) by broadening (“deepening, widening, furthering”) the approach to tackling asb.

2.2 There are some basic principles in the plan:

- Implementation cannot be achieved by government alone
- Every citizen has a responsibility to behave in a respectful way
- The public are concerned that the values of the majority are not shared by the selfish minority
- To truly tackle disadvantage we must offer the support and challenge needed to tackle anti-social behaviour and its causes
- We must pass on decent values and standards of behaviour to our children

2.3 The plan is split into six sections

1. Young people
2. Schools
3. Support for parents & families
4. Housing
5. Neighbourhoods
6. Enforcement against asb

## **3.0 Main Issues**

3.1 Over the last few months discussions have taken place between the Respect Task Force and officers within the council in relation to Leeds becoming a Respect Area. On 15<sup>th</sup> December in a letter to Paul Rogerson, Joe Tuke, Director of the Respect Task Force wrote to say that he had been impressed by the commitment and capacity shown by Leeds City Council and confirmed that we would be announced in the week beginning 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2007 as amongst the first 40 Respect Areas.

3.2 The Respect Task Force have committed to providing Respect Areas with:

- specialist help and advice on delivering against the five key themes;
- support on local events and communications on Respect;
- help in facilitating Face the People sessions.

3.3 A formal response in acceptance of Respect Area Status was made by the council on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2007

3.4 Confirmation of Respect Area status represents a commitment on the council's part to take the lead in driving forward all aspects of the Respect Action Plan in addition to a specific commitment to deliver against five key initiatives. The key initiatives are:

- Family Intervention Project
- Establishing parenting programmes
- Demonstrating openness and accountability through Face the People Sessions
- Using the full range of tools and powers
- Adoption of the Respect Housing Standard

- 3.5 Establishing a **Family Intervention Project (FIP)** that challenges and changes the behaviour of the most problematic households perpetrating anti-social behaviour.
- 3.6 Amongst the range of measures within the Support for Parents and Families section of the Respect Action Plan is the government's commitment to establish a national network of intensive family support schemes (as a mandatory outcome in LAAs, with £28m extra funding start-up funding). These projects may take a range of forms but the impetus behind the government's commitment has largely been derived from the success of projects such as the Dundee Families Project. The aim of these projects is to intervene and work with those families who by virtue of their anti-social behaviour are at risk of homelessness or eviction
- 3.7 In Leeds the Signpost project was developed to reduce anti-social behaviour in the worst affected neighbourhoods. The project is a multi-agency service which works intensively with young people (aged 9 to 14 years) and their families who cause the most problems. In the vast majority of cases the young people will have been served with an ASBO or Acceptable Behaviour Contract (ABC) or be at severe risk of such intervention being pursued. The service has achieved some very encouraging results to date.
- 3.8 Wherever possible, support to families should take place without recourse to eviction. However, there are a small number of families who have failed to adjust their behaviour despite being offered support, whose behaviour is so disruptive that it is unreasonable to expect local neighbours and communities to have to endure it. For these families, eviction needs to be considered as an option. It is unrealistic to expect that the process of eviction would in itself bring about significant change in the behaviour of these families. In addition, evicting families can clearly have adverse consequences for members of the family and, in particular, the children.
- 3.9 The Leeds FIP project proposes that where eviction is unavoidable, families should be offered an alternative tenancy along with detailed contractual requirements, which make very clear the expectations of the family to change their behaviour, whilst also being equally clear about the extensive quality support that the family will be offered by the council to assist them to modify their behaviour.
- 3.10 In view of the likely demand and cost of such a service consideration has been given to developing a dispersed tenancy scheme suitable for 5-6 of the city's most challenging families at any one time. To be accepted families would need to satisfy the following essential criteria:
- Council/RSL tenants
  - At the point of eviction the primary reasons for eviction must be anti-social behaviour.
  - Must be a household with child/children 0-16 (Respect Task Force criteria)
  - Can be either parents and/or young people who are engaged in ASB (Respect Task Force criteria)
- 3.11 In developing the scheme, Children Services, Legal Services and ALMOs have been consulted. In order to operate the FIP, there will be the need for minor

amendments to be made to the existing lettings policy and these will be included in the revision of the lettings policy due to come to Executive Board in March.

### **3.12 Establishing parenting programmes**

There are a number of new initiatives being developed in Leeds across all tiers of need which meet the requirements under the Respect Area criteria. These initiatives will be co-ordinated through the developing parenting strategy which draws together the various family support activities and parenting programmes incorporating the broad spectrum of services, ranging from preventative and early intervention services (such as early years children's centres) through to the more intensive family intervention services (e.g the FIP) outlined within the Respect agenda. Children's Services are leading on the parenting strategy.

### **3.13 Demonstrating openness and accountability through Face the People Sessions**

Extensive community engagement activity is already undertaken through Safer Leeds, divisional community safety partnerships, the council (especially through area management) and a wide range of partners. We are examining how to improve and build on these in the context of co-ordinated community engagement mechanisms employed by the LSP, the council and partners. Recognising that communication with local people and local agencies is vital; Safer Leeds is in the process of reshaping a communications plan that will set out various methods to raise awareness of crime and disorder issues and increase public reassurance through targeted communications. The Safer Leeds Partnership Team is looking at how Face the People can be incorporated into the current processes involving Neighbourhood Policing Teams and Intensive Neighbourhood Management.

### **3.14 Using the full range of tools and powers**

The council has a dedicated Anti-Social Behaviour Unit working towards delivery of the city's ASB strategy and its key elements of prevention/diversion, enforcement and resettlement and support. The ASBU works with a wide range of partners to deliver this strategy and we are confident that we can demonstrate our use of the full panoply of the tools and powers available for tackling the causes and symptoms of anti-social behaviour. We have recognised there are some tools available to us that we could use more widely, such as Individual Support Orders, demoted tenancies and parenting orders and we have already reviewed our procedures to improve our use of these measures.

### **3.15 Adoption of the Respect Housing Standard**

We will work to deliver the Respect Standard for housing management in 2007 through the Arms Length Management Organisations (ALMOs), the Tenant Management Organisation, the Leeds Housing Partnership Executive and the Leeds Tenant Federation (LTF). We will promote the principles of the housing management commitments to private rented sector landlords through our accredited landlord scheme, covering 14,000 bed spaces in the city.

## **4.0 Implications For Council Policy And Governance**

- 4.1 The Respect action plan states that, in order to deliver the plan, "strong local leadership will be required and a consistent approach taken to tackle anti-social behaviour in all areas".

- 4.2 A report to CMT approved recommendations to identify lead officers for the different elements of “non negotiable” elements of the Respect Action Plan and to agree that departments consider how they can contribute, and do all they can to contribute, to implementing the Respect agenda.
- 4.3 A small officer group has now been established from all the key departments co-ordinated by Leeds Community Safety. Neil Evans, Director of Neighbourhoods and Housing, is the Council’s champion for Respect.
- 4.4 Many of the elements of Respect are being progressed in line with existing policies and strategic objectives.
- 4.5 In relation to the development of the FIP, Strategic Landlord Services, Legal Services and ALMOs have been consulted and it has been recognised that there will be the need for minor amendments to be made to lettings policy. These changes will be included in the revision of the lettings policy due to come to Executive Board in March 2007.

## **5.0 Legal And Resource Implications**

- 5.1 Although there are – to quote the plan – “significant resources in programmes supporting the Respect drive”, many of these funds are already committed.
- 5.2 Some additional resources have already been secured for delivery of elements of the Respect Action Plan. These include £250,000 for the establishment of a Parenting Pathfinder Scheme (now known as All Relative) and an additional £50,000 for a parenting professional to support the All Relative scheme.
- 5.3 There is also an expectation that additional resources (up to £250,000) will be made available to Respect Areas for general parenting provision. It is unclear what new money (for instance, for family support) will come to Leeds, but whatever does come from Respect will be short-term (until March 2008).
- 5.4 The Council’s contribution to the plan will be met within existing resources.

## **6.0 Conclusions**

- 6.1 Respect is a major Government Initiative which aims to tackle both the symptoms and causes of anti social behaviour.
- 6.2 Leeds has been at the forefront of tackling anti social behaviour for many years and has been identified as a key authority to drive forward the Respect Agenda.
- 6.3 There are some additional resources being made available to Respect Areas providing the opportunity to develop, enhance and/or refocus services to deliver the Action Plan.
- 6.4 Becoming a Respect Area will give the Council impetus to influence all relevant partners to ensure that the approach to dealing with Anti Social Behaviour is comprehensive and coherent.

7.0 **Recommendations**

- 7.1 Executive Board are asked to endorse the commitment to the Council becoming a Respect Action Area.
- 7.2 To support the activities developed and being developed in response to the Council's commitment to become a Respect Area.
- 7.3 To approve the establishment of the Family Intervention project.