

Final report on the Neighbourhood Improvement Plan for Cottingley

Executive Summary

This report sets out the achievements of the Cottingley Neighbourhood Improvement Plan, some tasks that still need to be carried out and evaluates the NIP process.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

1.1 The purpose of the report is to inform the Inner South Area Committee of the achievements of the Cottingley Neighbourhood Improvement Plan (NIP), set out the tasks that are still to be carried out and evaluate the process.

2.0 Background Information

2.1 The Area Committee approved a report on 20 September 2005 which provided a profile of the Cottingley Estate, identified some of the key issues for priority action for Area Committee funding and set out the draft action plan.

2.2 The 20 September 2005 report identified the process of consultation in drawing up the action plan. Consultees included:

- Tenants and Residents Association of Cottingley (TRAC)
- Cottingley in Bloom
- West Yorkshire Police
- Leeds South Homes
- Cottingley Primary School
- The Church in Cottingley/Cottingley Community Centre

2.3 in addition approximately 46 local residents were asked about their priorities for the area immediately following a clean up day on 5 June 2005.

2.4 The proposed neighbourhood plan was also discussed by various agencies and residents at a meeting held on the estate on 10th August 2005.

2.5 In January 2006 a survey of residents was carried out to identify priority concerns and these informed the action plan.

2.6 The NIP was directed by a steering group chaired by Councillor Congreve; those regularly attending meetings included representatives from Streetscene, the Primary School, the Church in Cottingley/Cottingley Community Centre, the West Yorkshire Police, Leeds South Homes, TRAC, Cottingley in Bloom, South PCT. Representatives from Parks and Countryside, Highways Services, Libraries and Early Years Centre attended particular meetings. The steering group held 8 meetings during the lifetime of the NIP.

2.7 The main themes identified in the action plan as it developed were:

- Keeping the area cleaner
- Green environment
- Children and Young People
- Traffic and movement
- Facilities
- Estate maintenance
- Community issues
- Community safety
- Health

Should members wish to see it, the full action plan is available from the Area Management Team.

2.8 The main achievements through the NIP process are:

Keeping the area cleaner

- Environmental crime – the dumping of rubbish etc – and the fining of local residents for these crimes has been publicised through the newsletters together with information and advice about keeping the area clean and encouraging use of the bulky collection service.

Green environment

- The raised planters in front of Cottingley Towers have been cleared of tree roots, new topsoil put in and new plants have been put in.
- Overgrown trees and shrubs have been cut back
- An audit has been carried out of overgrown gardens and action has been taken to improve the position by taking action against the tenants concerned
- Cottingley in Bloom is being supported with funding from the Area Committee to pay for publicity to recruit additional members and to purchase bulbs and by the Priority Neighbourhoods Support Worker.

Children and Young People

- Weekly activities for young people aged 13 + and for those aged 9 – 13 years have been started at the Community Centre by the Youth Service.
- A tea-time club has started for those aged 0 – 11 years and their families

Traffic and movement

- The 54 bus to connect the area with Holbeck has been trialled.

Facilities

- The roof of the shops is being repaired, the shopping centre is being painted, new lights are being installed and new glazed panels. This major face-lift for the shopping centre was carried out with funding from the Inner South Area Committee.

Estate maintenance

- The paving in the area around the shops and pub has been improved.
- The old playground has been removed and the area has been cleared of glass.
- The derelict Portakabin next to the Community Centre has been removed by the Community Centre.

- The lighting in the underpass has been repaired and the missing barrier has been replaced.

Community issues

- Three editions of a newsletter for the estate have been produced by Area Management Team and distributed.
- A survey of residents' priorities for improvements has been carried out and the results have been fed in the action plan.
- TRAC (Tenants and Residents Association of Cottingley) is being supported

Community safety

- Two PCSOs are now dedicated to the estate.
- The Police have a mountain bike funded by the Area Committee which helps the Police save time travelling to and from the estate and in patrolling the estate and getting to hotspot areas quickly.

Health

- A part-time female practice nurse now works at the GP's surgery (with PCT funding).
- Health promotion sessions are being run at the GP's surgery (with PCT funding).

2.9 Although the NIP meetings have now finished, various action points will be completed over the coming months with the Area Management Team taking the lead in taking action or co-ordinating the work of others. This includes:

- New edition for Newsletter – scheduled for January 2007
- Welcome boards for the estate will be designed and installed with funding from the Area Committee
- Cottingley in Bloom will produce a greenspace masterplan for the area.
- Encroaching undergrowth on perimeter to be cut back.
- Potholes in car park near shops to be made good.
- Continued support for Cottingley in Bloom and TRAC
- Ensure the ditch between playing field and higher ground on Cottingley Drive is cleared of rubbish

2.10 There are a number of traffic and movement issues that will be pursued with the relevant Council sections. These are not likely to be resolved in the next few months.

- Cottingley Drive at the Cemetery corner - scheme to provide bollards on verge areas and waiting restrictions
- Cottingley Approach near no. 27 and the sub-station - scheme to provide bollards on verge areas and waiting restrictions
- Cottingley Approach at junction with Beechcroft View – parking on footways and grass verges to be investigated – double yellow lines and bollards to be provided if justified.
- Dropped kerbs on Cottingley Approach and Cottingley Crescent
- Cottingley Drive culs-de-sac – the current 'keep clear' markings to be converted to waiting restrictions
- Car parking outside Primary School – zig zag lines to be provided, possible 'pedestrians' sign

- Insufficient car parking by the Station – ensure study carried out by Development Department

3.0 Main Issues

- 3.1 A number of issues arose during the NIP which Members should be aware of as they have implications for the other NIPs. The Cottingley estate with its population of approximately 1,400 households and 3,000 people is larger than some of the NIPs. However, it would not have been sensible to have several NIPs on the estate given that most of the issues addressed affect the whole estate.
- 3.3 The action plan developed over time as new issues were brought to the Steering Group. This did demonstrate flexibility and willingness to address new issues. However, this did result in an ever lengthening action plan with issues being raised requiring a lot more time to resolve than was first envisaged for a NIP. The residents' survey gave useful information and priority issues but might have raised higher expectations about what could be achieved within a short time period originally intended for the NIP.
- 3.3 Although the NIP proved a useful focus for resolving issues, some issues relating to service delivery by Council Departments have not been easy to resolve and yet are important to local people. The NIP process does make demands on staff in Council Departments and in other agencies in attending meetings of the steering group which can affect their willingness to engage in NIPs; we might be able to lighten the load in future NIPs by inviting representatives from various Departments/agencies to meetings covering specific issues.
- 3.4 Various issues were raised during the NIP process which could not be addressed within what was intended to be a short-term process (of 6 -12 months).
- Long term issues: Some of the issues raised by local people are clearly long term - e.g. problems with the lack of sufficient parking on the estate
 - Resources issues: Some issues demanded resources out of kilter with the Area Committee's well-being budget – e.g. the provision of a new playground.
 - Structural/strategic issues: Some of the problems in Cottingley are structural e.g. the way the estate is largely cut off from its natural hinterland by roads and railways
- 3.5 Some issues e.g. problems in refuse collection were important to local residents and needed to be in the NIP but there was not a particular clearly achievable and realistic action point that was put in the NIP, and consequently was not delivered on.
- 3.6 The Area Committee's ability to use its well being funding for various projects was vital for securing various improvements and for providing an incentive for the other agencies to stay focused on the area's problems.
- 3.7 There does need to be some continuing input into the area even though the NIP has been completed to support various initiatives and community organizations. The Priority Neighbourhood Development Worker will partly contribute to this.

4.0 Conclusions

- 4.1 The steering group agreed that this has been a successful NIP with a considerable number of achievements; some outstanding tasks will be carried forward for completion in the next few months.
- 4.2 There are some implications for the NIP programme including the need for focused actions which can be achieved over a relatively short timetable – approximately six months – and the acceptance that longer-term and/or structural issues cannot be resolved via the NIP process.

5.0 Recommendations

- 5.1 The Area Committee is requested to note the content of the report, and consider the implications for future NIPs.