

Localism Project Plan: Update July 2012

- The key objective of the localism project was to get up-and-running two Neighbourhood Development Plans in the locality and thus provide a template for remaining Town and Parish Councils to follow. Specifically it was mooted in the Localism Project Plan that there be a Neighbourhood Plan established in Harewood Ward (involving Barwick-in Elmet and Scholes Parish Council) and one in Wetherby Ward (involving Boston Spa/Bramham/Clifford Parish/Thorp Arch and Walton Parish Councils – this being a joint planning venture). The full detail of how this would be delivered was set out in the Localism Project Plan (endorsed by the North East Outer Area Committee on 19.09.11).
 - In October 2011, a Neighbourhood Planning Project Board was established to oversee the formation of both Neighbourhood Development Plans. To date, the board has met seven times and has successfully ensured that any emerging best practice on neighbourhood planning has been shared amongst the six pilot parishes, and in turn, the remaining nine Town and Parish Councils in both Harewood and Wetherby Wards.
 - A second Neighbourhood Planning Project Board has recently been established involving Aberford and District, Bardsey-cum-Rigton, Collingham-with-Linton, East Keswick, Harewood, Scarcroft, Shadwell and Thorner Parish Councils and also Wetherby Town Council.
 - At the time of writing nine Parish Councils have officially registered their intention to produce a Neighbourhood Development Plan with Leeds City Council, with more to follow suit in the near future.
 - Despite not meeting the ambitious deadlines set out in the Project Plan, the Parish Councils in both Harewood and Wetherby Wards are making significant progress with their Neighbourhood Development Plans to the extent that their work is being held-up as examples of best practice, not only in Leeds but nationwide.
- The second key plank of the localism project was help secure additional funding for Parish Councils to use on projects that will benefit the local community.
 - In the September 2011, the Localism Officer circulated a proforma asking Parish Councils to come forward with a Priority Project they would like help with.
 - A rolling research project was then instigated by the Localism Officer to help identify funding sources that could be used by Parish Councils with some success, most notably helping to secure funding from Grantscape, POCA, Leeds Community Foundation's Jubilee Fund and £20,000 from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) for a Neighbourhood Planning Frontrunners Grant.
- The third strand of the localism project was to ensure that the Town and Parish Councils in both Harewood and Wetherby Wards have suitable levels of information, guidance and support to take advantage of the localism agenda as and when the relevant legislation comes on-stream.

- Since taking up his post in July 2011, the Localism Officer has given a PowerPoint presentation on the Localism Act to all the areas Town and Parish Councils.
- Furthermore, the Localism Officer has attended 39 Town and Parish meetings (including steering group and public meetings) specifically relating to neighbourhood planning.
- The Localism Officer has attended Harewood and Wetherby Ward Member meetings, meetings of the Town and Parish Forum and meetings of the Outer North East Area Committee to talk about neighbourhood planning.
- In December 2011, the Localism Officer helped organise a city-wide event on neighbourhood planning involving Leeds City Council's planning department, the Princes Trust and Locality.
- The Localism Officer also has a fortnightly meeting with Leeds City Council's designated neighbourhood planning leads Ian MacKay and Heather Suggate.