

NORTH WEST (INNER) AREA COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, 13TH DECEMBER, 2012

PRESENT: Councillor J Akhtar in the Chair

Councillors M Hamilton, J Walker,
N Walshaw, G Harper, B Atha,
J Illingworth, L Yeadon, J Bentley,
S Bentley and J Chapman

Officers:

Stuart Byrne - West North West Area Support
Anne Chamber -Head of Corporate Property Management
Neil Charlesworth - Community Asset Officer
Jason Singh - Locality Manager (West North West)
Juliet Duke - West North West Homes
John Grieve – Governance Services

Members of the Public

Sue Buckle – SHCA
Amanda Jackson – University of Leeds
Rose Black – Leeds University Union
Ben Fisher – Leeds University Union
Stuart Long – Leeds University Union
Howard Eaglestone – Local Resident
Bill McKinnon – Friends of Woodhouse Moor
Isobel Sidebottom – NHPMA
Tony Green – NHPNA
Ken Torode – WPRA
Doug Kemp – WPRA
Janet Kemp – WPRA
Victoria Jaquiss – West Park Centre Refugees
Douglas Gilliam – West Park Centre Refugees
John McKenzie – Cardigan Centre

49 West Park Centre - Update Report

The Director of City Development and the Director of Children's Services submitted a report which provided an update on the temporary closure of the West Park Centre, following health and safety concerns.

The report outlined the actions taken to ensure that user of the facility were supported in identifying alternative temporary accommodation and set out the way forward in terms of the centre's future.

Anne Chambers, Head of Corporate Property Management and Neil Charlesworth, Community Asset Officer, presented the report and responded to Members queries and comments.

Detailed discussion ensued on the contents of the report which included the following:

- Members disappointment at the lack of detail in the submitted report
- Concerns at the manner in which the building was closed
- Existing user groups had obtained “temporary” alternative accommodation, making it difficult to plan when unsure of future arrangements.
- Financial burden to existing users due to temporary accommodation issues
- The security and winter protection of the building
- Lack of clarity around projected cost to bring building back into use, understand electrical costs to be in region of £150,000 - £170,000, but £931,000 was the estimated costs for urgent works.
- Clarification around the transfer of the building to Asset Management
- Explore other opportunities for the Centre: Creation of a Development Trust/ voluntary sector asset transfer/ Management by external partners
- Grant funding available for community facilities but only open to Voluntary Community Faith Sector Groups
- Use of Section 106 Contributions from local developments
- Defer funding from other projects in the City (Dortmund Square refurbishment) to fund the necessary works to get the Centre up and running
- The wish of the Area Committee that the facility be retained and brought back into use as quickly as possible, to delay may affect the Centre’s future viability
- Concerns around the consultation process about the future of the centre
- To request that the crucial decisions required, be made by the Executive Board at its meeting in February 2013

RESOLVED –

- (i) That the contents of the report be noted
- (ii) To note the intention of the Acting Chief Asset Management Officer to prepare and submit a report on the future of the Centre, to the Executive Board in February 2013
- (iii) That the North West (Inner) Area Committee remain of the view that the West Park Centre is a valuable community asset and should continue to operate as an educational, cultural and community facility
- (iv) That the manner in which the West Park Centre was closed and the decision making process around the future of the centre be referred to Scrutiny for further investigation
- (v) That the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development be made aware of the request for scrutiny