



Cabinet Office

**NICK HURD MP**  
Minister for Civil Society

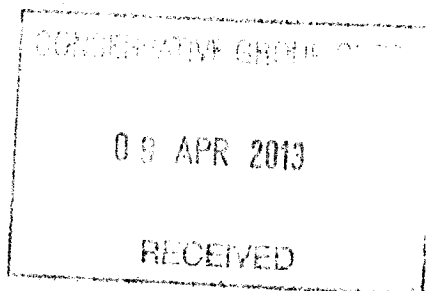
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Our Ref: NMP607341

Councillor Barry Anderson  
Chair, Scrutiny Board  
Safer and Stronger Communities  
2nd Floor (East)  
Civic Hall  
Leeds LS1 1UR



3 April 2013

Dear Councillor Anderson,

Thank you for sending your report of the Community First programme in Leeds. I was pleased to see you had identified the additional value the programme has brought to Leeds, in funding and in match committed by communities, particularly in time.

There is clearly a strong network of community organisations with engaged Leeds City Council staff and councillors involved in the programme. Please pass on my thanks to Leeds Community Foundation, BARCA Leeds and the Area Support Teams particularly for their support of the Community First Panels.

You made some recommendations in your report to improve the programme, including the establishment of a more robust governance framework, and a closer connection between the panels and Council.

I do acknowledge your recommendation that stronger local capacity building and community involvement is needed to ensure the success of the programme. It is important that communities remain in the driving seat for this programme. In response to your and other's feedback on this issue, I have agreed to an additional package of support for the panels which will be tendered shortly. At this point in the programme however, a full review of the governance structure will not be possible.

I will be writing to all local authorities in the next financial year with more information about how the programme is performing on a national scale, and hope that you and other councils will continue to support those individuals rising to the challenge of the Community First programme.

Thank you for your time spent preparing this report. I'm sure that with the support of the Leeds City Council, the Community First panels will go from strength to strength.

**NICK HURD**