

NORTH WEST (INNER) AREA COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, 21ST FEBRUARY, 2013

PRESENT: Councillor J Akhtar in the Chair

Councillors N Walshaw, C Towler, B Atha,
J Illingworth, J Bentley, S Bentley and
J Chapman

Officers:

Joanne Clough – Park and Countryside Service
Steve Carey – Leeds Benefit Service
Lynne Hamshaw – West North West Homes
Ryan Platten – Community Planning Officer
Jane Maxwell – West North West Area Leader
Stuart Byrne – West North West Area Support
John Grieve – Governance Services

Members of the Public:

D Alcorn – Leeds Met Students Union
A Vickerson – Leeds Met Student
J Feather - Dig 2 Ride
S Sayers – Dig 2 Ride
L Mawson – Dig 2 Ride
Amanda Jordan – University of Leeds
Sue Buckle – SHCA
Dawn Carey Jones – Local Resident
Amit Roy – Hyde Park Unity Day
Josh Booth – Hyde Park Unity Day
Hayley Miller Hyde Park Unity Day

54 Late Items

There were no late items

55 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

56 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from: Councillors: M Hamilton, G Harper, J Walker and L Yeadon.

57 Open Forum

- (i) BMX Trial and Dirt Jump Track – Members heard representations from “Dig2ride”, a Charitable company set up to promote BMX cycling in the Kirkstall area. The Group wish to use the former municipal waste tip at Dobbie Row, Kirkstall as a BMX trial and dirt jump track for the local community. It was reported that the Group had encountered difficulties in obtaining insurance and were now seeking the assistance of the Area Committee in securing indemnity insurance for the site.

RESOLVED -

- (a) To support “Dig2ride” in obtaining the necessary indemnity insurance for the site
- (b) That the issue be referred to the City Council’s Insurance Manager with a view to assisting in the insurance arrangements

(Councillor Illingworth declared an interest in this item as a Trustee of the Company “Dig2ride”)

- (ii) Hyde Park Unity Day – Members heard representations from the organisers of the Hyde Park Unity day. This annual event brings together local residents and community groups to participate in a variety of activities throughout the day. Event organisers were now seeking the support of the Area Committee to extend the current hours of operation from 7.00pm until 9.00pm which other similar events currently had.

RESOLVED –

- (a) To support an extension of the hours of operation for the Hyde Park Unity Day from 7.00pm until 9.00pm.
- (b) That the views of the Area Committee be made known to West Yorkshire Police and the Parks and Countryside Service.
- (iii) Former Ash Grove Social Club – Sue Buckle (SHCA) thanked Members for their support in objecting to a recent planning application to convert the former Ash Grove Social Club into four residential flats with car parking. Ash Grove residents were grateful for Members involvement with this application.
- (iv) Student Safety on Woodhouse Moor – Members heard representations from Leeds Met Student’s Union who were concerned about the safety of students when crossing Woodhouse Moor and Beckett’s Park at night. There were no paths with adequate lighting across the parks and keeping to the paths around the parks extended the walking distance.

In responding, Councillor Akhtar said that the fact that there was no paths or adequate lighting across the parks was a deliberate one. Students were encouraged to use the main footpaths around the parks which were well light and was a safer pedestrian route.

58 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 13th December 2012 be accepted as a true and correct record

59 Area Chairs Forum

The minutes of the Area Chair's Forum held on 2nd November 2012 were received and noted.

60 Area Committee Update Report

The Assistant Chief Executive (Customer Access and Performance) submitted a report which provided an update on the recent Sub Group business and the current position relating to other project activity. The report also referred to progress on the referral of the West Park Centre to Scrutiny Board (Sustainable Economy and Culture), the condition of Batcliffe Wood House and information on the Community Centre Pricing Policy.

The following appendix accompanied the report:

- Inner North West Community Centre Pricing Policy (Directly Managed Centres)

Stuart Byrne, West North West Area Support Team, presented the report and responded to Members queries and comments

Detailed discussion ensued on the contents of the report together with the appendices which included:

- The decision made by Scrutiny Board (Sustainable Economy and Culture) to not investigate the closure of the West Park Centre until after the Executive Board had met on 24th April 2013
- Batcliffe Wood House – Possible refurbishment of the property with a view to future lettings

Commenting on Batcliffe Wood House, Ben Fisher from Leeds University Student Union said he was aware there was a restriction about the property, being let to students, could this be reviewed?

In responding Councillor Atha suggested there would be no objections to mature students occupying the property

RESOLVED –

- (i) To note and action and Key Messages arising from the Sub Groups as outlined in Section 3 of the submitted report
- (ii) To request that Scrutiny Board (Sustainable Economy and Culture) timetable their investigation of the West Park Centre at the earliest opportunity
- (iii) To recommend that the City Development Directorate review and consider Batcliffe Wood House for inclusion on the Derelict and Nuisance Property List
- (iv) To note the information provided in the Community Centres Pricing Policy

61 Park and Countryside Service - Annual Report

The Chief Officer Parks and Countryside submitted a report which provided an overview of the Parks and Countryside Service and highlighted some of the challenges faced along with key performance management initiatives. The report also sought to provide a positive way forward for delivering the extended role of the Area Committee together with progress made in attaining Leeds Quality Standard and the investment required to attain and retain that standard.

The following appendix accompanied the report:

- Detailed Residents Survey Information

Joanne Clough, Trading and Operations Manager, Park and Countryside Service, presented the report and responded to Members queries and comments.

Detailed discussion ensued on the contents of the report together with the appendices which included:

- Area profile of the Service
- Community Parks
- Events in Parks
- Leeds Quality Park Status
- Performance Indicator Assessments
- Planned improvements for the next 12 months
- Streetscene Grounds Maintenance
- Scrutiny Board's examination of contracts

In passing comment Councillor Atha suggested that funding for the next 12 months appeared to come from Section 106 contributions and not from the Parks and Countryside budget. He said that it was a concern that maintenance of the city's parks should rely on Section 106 monies. Further information on this issue was requested to be brought to the Environmental Sub Group for discussion.

Referring to Community Parks and the annual number of visits, the Chair highlighted Hartley Avenue Park as a popular hangout for teenagers which deterred other users from using the facilities. The Chair suggested that such parks should be reclaimed back for family use.

Councillor S Bentley commenting on the Leeds Quality Park Standard sought clarification on the suggested costs to achieve LQP Standard.

In responding Mrs Clough said the figures quoted in the submitted report were the projected costs to achieve and maintain LQP status up to 2020.

RESOLVED –

- (i) That the contents of the report be noted
- (ii) To support the planned improvement works at
 - Woodhouse Moor – Fencing works to the corner of Clarendon Road & Moorland Road
 - Lovell Park – General Park improvements
 - Burley Park – Refurbishment of play equipment, new artificial cricket wicket, wildflower meadow, new bins, benches and picnic tables, entrance improvements, horticultural improvements and path resurfacing

62 Welfare Reform - Impact on Council Tenants

The Chief Executive East North East Homes submitted a report which provided an update on the Welfare Reform changes that impact on Council Tenants due to be implemented in April 2013. The report also summarised the work that was currently being undertaken to prepare tenants for those changes and for future changes that would impact later in the year.

The following appendix accompanied the report:

- A breakdown of the numbers affected by ward, together with value of cuts in Housing Benefit (Appendix 1)
- Social Sector Size Criteria – Update on contacts. Visits undertaken to date (Appendix 2)
- The Terms of Reference of a Scrutiny Board Working Group set up to consider the collection and recovery issues arising from the introduction of the reform and the changes to Council Tax Benefit (Appendix 3)

Steve Carey, Chief Revenues and Benefits Officer, Leeds Benefit Service presented the report and responded to Members queries and comments

Detailed discussion ensued on the contents of the report together with the appendices which included:

- The introduction of a “Universal Credit” which would replace a range of existing means tested benefits and tax credits for people of working age starting in October 2013
- Benefit Cap
- Discretionary Housing Payments:

People with disabilities living in significantly adapted accommodation

Foster carers and kinship carers

People requiring additional rooms to accommodate access to children arrangements

Pregnant women taking in a new tenancy that takes account of the expected birth

- Localised Council Tax Support

Councillor S Bentley asked if a room could be kept vacant if there were Armed Forces personnel in the family.

In responding Mr Carey said this particular issue had already been raised, with the Government who had indicated that they were not minded to change the policy.

Councillor Atha congratulated Mr Carey and his team commenting that the report addressed many of the issues raised.

RESOLVED – To note the work carried out to date by the ALMOs and the Council in preparing for the introduction of Welfare Reform changes.

63 Community Planner - Update Report

The Community Planner submitted a report which provided an update on the Community Planner Work Programme for the past 12 months. The report also identified emerging projects and themes which were likely to be central to discussions at the North West (Inner) Area Committee (INWAC) Planning Sub Group over the next twelve months and introduced the proposed work programme over this period.

Ryan Platten, Community Planner presented the report and responded to Members queries and comments.

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

- The work of the North West (Inner) Area Committee Planning Sub Group
- Neighbourhood Planning
- Community led Planning Documents
- Planning Policy Consultations
- Article 4 Direction and HMO Planning Policy
- Letting Boards
- Drop-In Sessions for significant Planning Applications

Councillor Walshaw, Chair of the Planning Sub Group expressed his thanks and appreciation to Mr Platten. He said the Sub Group had achieved a great deal and he was looking forward to the year ahead.

RESOLVED – That the contents of the report be noted

64 Area Leadership Team Update Report

The Assistant Chief Executive (Customer Access and Performance) submitted a report which provided an update on the work programme for the West North West Area Leadership Team. The report also set out background information in the development of the Leadership Team together with issues and challenges that were currently being addressed.

The following appendix accompanied the report:

- Details of the Membership of the West North West Area Leadership Team

Jane Maxwell, Area Leader, West North West, presented the report and responded to Members queries and comments.

Detailed discussion ensued on the contents of the report together with the appendices which included:

- Jobs and Skills – Focus on employability, NEET and Welfare Reform
- Health & Wellbeing – Focus on health inequalities (Alcoholism, suicide and improving life expectancy)
- Communities – Focus on neighbourhood improvement and the Place Agenda including the environment and community safety (specifically burglary)

RESOLVED – That the contents of the report be noted.

65 Wellbeing Fund 2012-13 - Update Report

The Assistant Chief Executive (Customer Access and Performance) submitted a report which provided an update on the budget position for the Wellbeing Fund for 2012/13. The report also sought approval for a variance in the agreed terms of a previously approved project.

The following appendix accompanied the report:

- 2012-13 Wellbeing Statement

Stuart Byrne, West North West Area Support Team, presented the report and responded to Members queries and comments

Detailed discussion ensued on the contents of the report together with the included appendix:

- The Wellbeing Programme for 2012-13
- Large projects
- Small grants

RESOLVED –

- (i) To note the current budget position for the Wellbeing Fund for 2012/13
- (ii) To approve the variance in terms of the remaining balance of Caring Together Moving Forward project to contribute towards project costs for 2013/14
- (iii) To approve the decommissioning of the Open XS Work Well Drop In Sessions project and return the £2,000 for reallocation (2013-14 Wellbeing Fund)
- (iv) To note the current position of the Small Grants and Skip pots and those Small Grants that had been approved since the last meeting

66 Date and Time of Next Meeting

RESOLVED – To note that the next meeting will take place on Thursday 7th March 2013 at 2.00pm in the Civic Hall, Leeds