

WEST (INNER) AREA COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 18TH DECEMBER, 2013

PRESENT: Councillor C Gruen in the Chair
Councillors T Hanley, J Harper, A Lowe
and J McKenna
Co-optees Boutle, Bowes and Ritchie
Apologies Councillor

54 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

There were no appeals against the refusal of inspection of documents.

55 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There were no resolutions to exclude the public.

56 Late Items

Supplementary information was received in relation to Item 14 - West and North West Locality Team – Six month Performance Update. (Minute No. 67 refers)

With agreement from the Chair a late item was admitted to the agenda entitled Annual Report – for the Parks and Countryside Service. (Minute No 68 refers). Prior to the meeting, it had been determined that this update report be submitted to the December meeting, rather than the next scheduled meeting in the new year.

57 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no Disclosable Pecuniary Interests declared at the meeting, however:-

In relation to the item 16 entitled, 'Wellbeing Fund Report' Councillor J McKenna drew the Committee's attention to the fact that he was a Governor at Swallow Hill Community College. Also in relation to the same item, Councillor C Gruen drew the Committee's attention to the fact that she was a Governor at Leeds West Academy. (Minute No. 69 refers).

58 Apologies for Absence

No apologies for absence were received.

59 Open Forum / Community Forums

In accordance with paragraphs 6.24 and 6.25 of the Area Committee Procedure Rules, the Chair allowed a period of up to 10 minutes for members of the public to make representations or ask questions on matters within the terms of reference of the Area Committee.

On this occasion there were no comments made.

60 Minutes - 6th November 2013

That the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 6th November 2013 be approved as a correct record.

61 Matters Arising

Minute No. 48 – Community Forum Minutes

Clarification had been requested on what action the 'Out of Hours Noise Nuisance Team' would take if a property had a red flag status.

Outcome

If a property has a red flag it is because one of the following has happened:

- Case Officer / Police Officer reported violence and aggression taking place at the property involving the tenant.
- Officers have witnessed or been involved in an incident of violence and aggression while visiting the property.
- The complainant had informed that the occupant had been violent and aggressive. In which case, it became a Police issue, the procedure for which was to record the details and advise the complainant to contact the Police direct.

When the team received a call on a Red Flagged property, Officers would attend where possible and try and witness noise from a safe distance (ie, slowly drive by a property if on a street with the vehicle window down). The Red Flag would be removed as and when Case Officers informed the team of a new tenant in the target property / when issues had been resolved.

62 Area Panel Minutes - 7th October 2013

The Area Committee considered the minutes of the Inner West Area Panel meeting held on 7th October 2013.

That the minutes of the 7th October 2013 be noted.

63 Minutes - Area Chairs Forum - 4th October 2013

The minutes of the Area Chairs Forum meeting held on 4th October 2013 were considered by the Area Committee.

That the minutes of the 4th October 2013 be noted.

64 Community Forum Minutes

The minutes of the Armley Community Forum meeting held on 19th November 2013.

That the minutes of the 19th November 2013 be noted.

65 Housing in Inner West

Three reports respectively entitled Housing Leeds Involvement in Area Committees, Housing Leeds – Housing Service Review Update and Private Sector Housing Service had been submitted by the Director of Environment and Housing.

The Chair thanked Officers for the comprehensive reports and for attending the meeting.

Housing Leeds involvement in Area Committees

This was the first report produced by the new Housing Leeds Service following the decision to terminate the role of the former Leeds ALMO's and bring housing management services back into Council control within the Environment and Housing Directorate.

The report noted that Housing Leeds provided a range of housing management services in the West and North West of Leeds. The Inner West Area Committee was coterminous with the Inner West housing management area comprising 5,500 properties in the Armley and Bramley / Stanningley Wards.

The Neighbourhood Performance Manager presented this report and highlighted a number of issues outlined in the report including:

New Council Housing, the Broadleas was one of the 10 shortlisted sites for development under the Council Housing Growth Programme which had been approved by Executive Board. Developments were at an early stage with consultation ongoing with Ward Members.

Contractor performance has now stabilised with Mears now recognised as contractors for the area, following their take over of Morrisons FM (Facilities Management). Performance continues to be an issue and repair enquiries formed the basis of many Member enquiries and the majority of formal complaints. Indicators were improving and performance in relation to gas repairs continued to be good. Discussions were ongoing with Mears to re-establish the contractor repairs surgeries at local offices which were planned as a response to the STAR survey.

The STAR survey, undertaken in December 2012, was the most comprehensive tenant satisfaction survey undertaken across the city. Citywide, overall tenant satisfaction increased 74% over the preceding period, however it was noted that there were marked variations both across the city and within the former WNWhL area. Three areas in particular produced lower levels of satisfaction, one of which was Armley, satisfaction levels in Bramley were above average. In West Leeds a correlation was identified linking low levels of satisfaction to areas with high concentrations of multi storey accommodation.

An officer from the High Rise Management Team was in attendance at the meeting and updated the Members on the work being undertaken to increase tenant satisfaction for those living in multi storey blocks.

It was noted that the team worked with customers, the Leeds Anti-Social Behaviour Team and the police, alongside various other agencies such as BARCA. Work taken place included, upgrades to CCTV at the Clydes and Wortley blocks, fob access to a number of blocks, secure communal doors to prevent unauthorised access, cleaning and re-decorating of communal areas. Property Maintenance Cleaning had been charged with providing an enhanced level cleaning of the outside of and the communal areas within the multi storey blocks.

Housing Leeds – Housing Service Review Update

The Interim Chief Officer, Housing Management, Housing Leeds presented the report on behalf of the Director for Environment and Housing.

The report provided Members with an update on the progress with regard to the service integration of the housing service into the Council's Environment and Housing Directorate.

On the 1st of October 2013 1,200 staff were TUPE transferred into the Environment and Housing Directorate.

A review of the service was currently taking place and it was proposed that the new structure would contain 3 Chief Officer posts detailed below;

Chief Officer – Strategic Housing

- Responsible for strategic housing issues across the City, including private sector housing
- Housing options and housing need assessments across the City
- Lead role on policy issues
- Interface with Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)
- Lead on environmental sustainability, fuel poverty and climate change.

Chief Officer – Housing Management

- Tenancy management across the city
- Delivery of an Allocations and Lettings function, including policy planning
- Tenancy involvement including the strategic interface with LTF
- Income management and arrears recovery (including welfare change)
- Delivery of an older peoples housing service through sheltered provision
- Tenancy sustainability through independent living support teams

Chief Officer – Property and Contracts

- Delivery of the responsive repairs service and Capital programme
- Management of the internal DLO
- Procurement and contract management

- Commercial asset management
- Construction Health and Safety

The review had been used to look at the different ways of working across the city and to identify the model of best practice that could be used to ensure a consistent service model was adopted, to avoid confusion and inconsistency. The integrated model of service delivery would also include;

- Location of face to face service (links to Customer Services)
- Office opening times
- Impact of Universal Credit
- Tenancy sustainability and support
- Housing needs assessment
- Management of MSF's
- Generic v Specialist
- Investment strategy
- Business growth
- Links to Police Review
- Poverty strategy
- Social contract
- Sharing best practice

It was noted that a number of formal briefing sessions had taken place with staff and Trade Unions and more were to be arranged throughout the process. Frontline staff had been engaged through a series of operation workshops and a regular briefing was circulated to all staff.

A customer communication plan had been developed which would conclude with a tenants' conference in early February 2014.

Individual briefing sessions were to be provided to Members on request with formal consultation taking place through the Housing Advisory Board.

It was envisaged that the new service model for the delivery of housing services in Leeds would be fully operational from 1st April 2014.

The Director of Environment and Housing entered the meeting at 17:30 and stayed for the duration answering a number of questions posed around each of the reports on the agenda linked to his Directorate.

(Cllr Lowe left the room at 17:43 returning at 17:49
Cllr. Harper arrived at the meeting at 17:48)

Private Sector Housing Service

The Head of Housing Partnerships presented the report on behalf of the Director of Environment and Housing

The submitted report updated the Area Committee on the work of the Council's Private Rented Sector service and introduced a new initiative to focus on the sector in the Edinburghs area of Armley.

It was proposed to adopt Armley as the second LNA area targeting 130/140 properties in the Edinburgh area of the ward.

Overall the following activity had been undertaken in Inner West:-

- A total of 79 requests for service (related to housing disrepair) had been received in Armley and a further 13 for Bramley between 01/04/2013 and 04/12/13.
- Leeds 12 had been a priority area for increased take up accreditation by landlords. Since 01/04/2013 there has been a 12% increase in bed space coverage in the area. This was due to the proactive promotion of the scheme within the area.
- There were 24 licensable HMO's in Armley and a further 2 in Bramley. All have been subject to compliance inspections since mandatory licensing was introduced by the Housing Act 2004
- A total of 119 properties in Armley had been inspected by officers in Armley and a further 12 in Bramley between 01/04/13 and 04/12/13. These inspections covered disrepair complaints and applications for licensing or were linked to the private sector letting scheme or Housing Bond scheme run by Housing Options.

The Leeds Neighbourhood Approach (LNA) was a model adopted by the Council to work with small neighbourhoods to try to make them more sustainable. The approach works with the owners of properties on a street by street basis looking at 150/200 properties at any one time.

The aim was to improve the area via a multi-agency approach with partners, led by Private Sector Housing.

A review of potential areas was undertaken and it was agreed that the Edinburghs in Armley be the next location for the LNA. The private rented sector was the main form of tenure within the area. Initial investigations have revealed that approximately 20% of the stock was multi occupancy housing that fell outside of mandatory HMO licensing requirements (mainly converted flats and bedsits). Despite the poor quality of the accommodation very few complaints were received from residents and there is a low level of landlords who are accredited.

It was proposed that the initial engagement with the area would occur in early January 2014. All owners, residents, managing agents etc. would be contacted to outline the approach and would be offered the opportunity to engage with the Council and its partners. Any landlord or empty property owner who did not engage with the approach would then be subject to full enforcement action by the Council and partners from around the middle of February.

The content of the reports brought about a number of questions and lengthy discussions relating to all the issues covered in the reports.

Including;

- The issue of pets specifically dogs in high rise blocks
- The tenure type of the proposed new builds
- The energy efficiency of the proposed new builds
- Incidents of hate crime within the West Inner area and how Leeds Housing was to tackling the issue.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the Area Committee noted the content of all the reports.
- (b) That Members be updated on the review of Housing Leeds, with a report on tenant satisfaction brought to a future meeting.
- (c) That the Committee offer support on the Neighbourhood Approach initiative in Armley, and encourage the sharing of local knowledge of issues around the private sector across the two wards.

66 Annual Community Safety Report

The report of the Director of Environment and Housing was presented by the Area Community Safety Co-ordinator. Also in attendance was Acting Up Inspector Steve Williamson of West Yorkshire Police.

This report was the annual community safety report which provided Members with details of the community safety activity undertaken during the last 12 months. The report also provided details of crime data.

The strategic assessment for 2013/14 highlighted a number of priorities for Leeds including;

- Strengthening the partnership approach to support a more focused approach to tackle domestic abuse
- Continued focus on reducing domestic burglary and its impact across the city
- Effectively tackle and reduce anti-social behaviour in our communities
- Improve understanding and the approach to deal with Child Sexual Exploitation
- Tackling substance misuse
- Reduction of re-offending

Members were informed of;

- a new approach working with the clusters to identify children affected by domestic violence.
- Awareness sessions on Child Sexual Exploitation were taking place for staff and these sessions were being extended to Ward Members. The sessions covered risks with social media, networking sites, raising parents awareness, and where and how to report concerns.
- Work ongoing at Ley Lane to address issues of anti-social behaviour

- Work with BARCA to address small pockets of anti-social behaviour on the Fairfields.
- Repeat victims of crime in the Armley area - ways to address this issue were being considered.

Discussion took place around the issues mentioned above including the distrust of the police within the Armley / Wortley area and the work that was currently ongoing to address this.

Members were advised that;

- Chief Inspector Fran Norton was hoping to attend Area Committee meetings in the New Year.
- Pudsey Police Station was now to remain open and an invite was extended to officers and Members to take an opportunity to work there as there was plenty office space
- Community Safety would have a new Chief Officer – Superintendent Sam Miller

RESOLVED – That the content of the submitted report be noted.

67 Environmental Services Update Report

(Cllr. Lowe left the room at 18:40 prior to the start of this item, returning to the room at 18:45 during the item).

(Cllr Hanley left the meeting at 18:30 prior to the start of this item).

The report of the Director of Environment and Housing was presented by the Locality Manager West and North West Leeds.

The report provided the Area Committee with an update on performance against the service level agreement (SLA) between West Leeds (Inner) Area Committee and the West North West Environmental Locality Team. The report covered the period from 1st July 2013 to 3rd December 2013.

Members attention was drawn to the introduction of new waste collection arrangements in Armley and Bramley and Stanningley which had now moved to alternate week collections.

Members were informed of a number of activities that had been taking place over the past few months including;

- An increase in fly tipping specifically in the area of the Aviary's and Cedar's
- Assisting in the work with Community Safety
- Cleaning of gulley's and pavements
- Leaf clearing particularly after the recent storms

Discussions took place with Members providing the Locality Manager with issues that were regularly raised by residents in both Wards.

The Director of Environment and Housing also informed the Committee that in future two Officers would be attending the Area Committee meetings on a regular basis to update Members, one for Housing related issues and one for Environmental related issues.

RESOLVED – That Members' comments on the performance of the West North West Locality Team since July, and guidance provided in respect of direction to service delivery, be noted.

68 Parks and Countryside Annual Report

The report of the Director of Environment and Housing which provided Members with an annual performance for Parks and Countryside Services was presented by the Trading and Operational Support Manager.

The report provided the Area Committee an overview of the service and set out some of the challenges faced along with key performance management initiatives. In particular the report set out at an area level progress made in attaining Leeds Quality Park standard.

Discussion took place in relation to the fact that none of the community parks within the West Inner area met the Quality Parks Standard. Members raised this issue requesting that guidance be provided.

The issue of Section 106 funding was discussed and it was noted that, Area Support were currently liaising with Parks and Countryside Services and other related departments in relation to this and other funding streams.

Members were advised of work starting on Rodley Park

Members asked to be provided with a set of clear guidelines in relation to the issue of trees both on private and council grounds.

Discussion took place around issues that had been raised by residents including litter on recreational areas after local football matches.

RESOLVED – That the content of the report, together with the Area Committee's priorities for investment in community parks, playing pitches and fixed play facilities, as discussed at the meeting, be noted.

69 Wellbeing Fund Update Report

The report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) advised the Area Committee of the balance of the Inner West Wellbeing

revenue and capital budget 2013 /14 and the position statement on small grants and skips budgets.

The report also asked the Committee to consider the exchange of the Capital receipts Incentive Scheme monies to revenue, detailed proposals for new wellbeing projects and sought approval for the authorised officer to make a delegated decision on the allocated Youth Activities Fund monies, in line with the delegated decision procedures.

The Committee were provided with further information in relation to the Apprenticeship Scheme.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the Area Committee noted the balance of the Wellbeing Revenue and Capital Budget for 2013/14 be noted;
- (b) That the exchange of the Capital Receipt's Incentive Scheme monies to revenue be approved.
- (c) That approval be given to the top up of the small grant and skips budget by £1,200.
- (d) That the following be agreed in respect of the submitted Wellbeing applications:

Application	Amount	Approved / Refused
Warrells Court Fencing	£4,110	Bramley Ward Members to seek other options in relation to this issue
Apprenticeship Scheme	£4,000 from Armley £6,500 from Bramley (in order to balance out the overall contribution from each ward)	Approved
POMOC	£2,000	Approved
Saturday Night Project – additional sessions	£3,000 (half of this to come from the Youth Activities Fund)	Approved

- (e) That the decisions required in respect of commissioning projects for the remainder of the Youth Activities Fund budget be delegated to the authorised officer (Chief Officer (Citizens and Communities)), subject to initial consultation with the Area Committee Chair and also the Committee's Area Lead for Employment.