

WEST (INNER) AREA COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 19TH FEBRUARY, 2014

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

70 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

The were no appeals against refusal of inspection of documents.

71 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There were no resolutions to exclude the public as there were no members of the public present.

72 Late Items

There were no formal late items. However, it had been noted that the wrong versions of the following items had been published in the agenda.

Item 8 – Matters Arising

Item 15 – Business Plan Appendix 1

Item 16 – Wellbeing Fund Update Report and

Item 16 – Wellbeing Fund Update Report Appendix 1

These items had been published prior to the meeting and Members received copies at the meeting.

73 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

No declarations were made.

74 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

75 Open Forum / Community Forums

On this occasion there were no members of the public in attendance at the meeting.

76 Minutes - 18th December 2013

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 18th December 2013 be approved as a correct record.

77 Matters Arising

Minute no. 65 – Housing in Inner West Leeds

Clarification had been sought on the number of void Housing Leeds properties in Inner West Leeds.

Outcome

The response from Housing Leeds informed the Area Committee that there were 45 void properties, as at the end of December 2013 in the Inner West wards. These were Housing Leeds properties that were currently available to let but were in between tenancies. This does not include any residential properties that were 'taken out of charge' or not available for letting that were empty. These can be properties that were due for demolition, sale, or other reasons.

78 Area Panel Minutes

The committee considered the minutes of the Inner West Area Panel meeting held on 2nd December 2013.

In relation to Diverse Tenants, page 9 of the minutes, the Area Committee sought information as to whether ESOL courses were available to tenants.

In response the Committee were informed that Adult Social Services were currently in the processing of mapping all such courses across the cross the Council, so there maybe courses available in the future.

RESOLVED- That the minutes be noted.

79 Minutes - Area Chairs Forum - 25th November 2013

The minutes of the Area Chairs Forum meeting held on 25th November 2013 were considered by the Area Committee.

RESOLVED – That the minutes be noted.

80 Community Forum Minutes

The minutes of the Armley Forum meeting held on 21st January 2014 and the minutes of the Bramley and Stanningley Forum meeting held on 28th November 2013 were considered by the Committee.

RESOLVED – That both sets of minutes be noted.

81 Business Plan Update Report

The report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) provided the Area Committee with an update on the new initiatives and partnership working within the area that contributes to the priority themes outlined in the Area Committee's Business Plan.

Chief Inspector Fran Naughton was in attendance at the meeting and updated the Area Committee on the changes within the West Yorkshire Police and what it would mean for the West Inner area.

Cllr. Lowe arrived at the meeting at 17:13

The Chief Inspector informed the Committee on a number of changes including:-

- The opening in April 2014 of the new Police Headquarters on Elland Road
- That Inspector Simon Jessop had been appointed for the West Inner area, he is due to take up the role from March
- Sergeant Williamson would be staying in the area working within the team

The Area Committee discussed numerous issues around this topic including the cuts to the service in policing, the hope of stability that the new operating model would bring and partnership working across the area to problem solve.

Members sought information about Dunkirk Hill, Armley. Members were informed that due to issues of anti-social behaviour and crime in the area, trees were being removed from the canal side and replanted with shrubs to make the area a safer space to visit.

RESOLVED- That the Area Committee noted the content of the report and received the verbal update from Chief Inspector Fran Naughton on the forthcoming changes.

82 Wellbeing Fund Report

The report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) advised the Inner West Area Committee of the balance of Inner West wellbeing revenue and capital budget 2013/14 and of the position statement on small grants and skips budgets.

The report also asked the Area Committee to consider new wellbeing applications.

The latest wellbeing budget statement for 2013 /14 was included as Appendix 1 of the submitted report. It informed Members of the current budget and the projects approved to date.

At the December Area Committee it had been agreed that a delegated decision would be made by the Chair on how to spend the remaining Youth Activities Funding for 2013/14. Members attention was drawn to 3.3 of the submitted report to a table outlining the activities selected for funding and the amount to be funded.

Members were asked to approve £418 in order to cover unforeseen additional costs for the Armley Festive Lights 2013. The Committee were also asked to approve an additional £750 per ward into the small grants and skips budget.

RESOLVED- That the Area Committee;

- Noted the balance of the Wellbeing Revenue and Capital Budgets for 2013/14.
- Approved the additional £418 spend for Armley Festive Lights project.
- Approved an additional £750 per ward to the small grants and skips budget.

83 Employment and Skills

The report of the Chief Officer Employment and Skills was presented to the Committee by the Head of Employment and Skills. The report provided the Inner West Area Committee with an overview of the activity and outcomes being delivered and led by the Council's employment and skills service and the Area Support Team.

The Committee were updated on a number of issues including:-

- Inner West Area Committee Position
- Direct delivery through network of Jobshops
- Planned developments in West Leeds and City Centre that would offer jobs and apprenticeships
- Education Business Partnerships
- Pathways Website
- Commissioned services including Young Talent – Headstart programme

Members raised their concerns that the Inner West area did not seem to be sharing in the success of the City. Discussion took place around the issues highlighted in the submitted report about unemployment and low skills base in the Inner West Area.

The Chair welcomed Trisha Hiley Lead Talent Acquisition Manager of Premier Farnells a company located in Armley who was in attendance at the meeting. The representative told the Committee of the difficulties that the company had in employing people from the Inner West area and was attending the meeting to seek assistance from the Committee on increasing employment from the local area. The representative informed the Committee of the variety of posts that the company has to offer including those posts with flexible hours.

The Head of Employment and Skills offered to contact Premier Farnells the following day.

RESOLVED-That the Area Committee would:

- Contribute to shaping the priorities for action with the Area Committee Lead Member Employment, Skills and Welfare.
- Support a review of the existing strategic and operational partnership arrangements within the area for delivery of employment and skills priorities
- Use these to feedback identified needs and inform future delivery through Community Learning and other models where appropriate
- Receive the next annual headline report to include key outcomes and an evaluation of any revised arrangements

84 Welfare Benefit Changes One Year On - Poverty and Financial Inclusion

The Chief Officer, Welfare and Benefits presented his report to the Area Committee which provided the Members with an update on the citywide and local aspects of the main social security benefit changes which were introduced in April 2013.

The Chief Officer informed the Committee on a variety of issues including welfare support scheme, bedroom tax, and benefit cap. He told the Members about the ongoing work to assist and support those who fall into those areas.

Members' attention was drawn to Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) outlined in appendix III of the submitted report. He explained to the Members his concerns that unless people engaged with the revenues service this payment would be withdrawn. The Chief Officer highlighted appendix II of the submitted report which outlined the new Social Contract which is based around high levels of support for citizens but requires citizens to engage with the support.

The Chief Officer updated the Committee on the work around high interest lending and illegal money lending with the development of the Money Information Centre (MIC). He told the Committee that this was not a place but a brand where there would be many organisations and centres which would be badged as MIC, there would be officers in situ who would be accredited to give money advice. It is expected that Armley One Stop Centre and Housing Leeds offices would carry the brand. The Money Information brand is expected to be launched in mid-March.

Cllr. Hanley left the room during this item at 18:22 returning at 18:29

Cllr. Taggart entered the meeting at 18:23

Members were also updated on the setting up of the food aid network which would see the food banks not only distributing food but linking into other relevant services.

Members were informed of the work being undertaken to communicate and prepare people for the roll out of Universal Credit in 2016.

The Area Committee thanked the Chief Officer and his team for the support and help that is being undertaken to address the issues.

Cllr. Lowe left the room during this item at 18:39 returning at 18:40

The Area Committee discussed at length the issues and how they are affecting the West Inner area and how they would address this with people attending their surgeries.

RESOLVED – That the Committee would:

- Note the information about the continuing impact of the welfare reforms and continue to promote engagement with benefit initiatives in Armley, Bramley and Stanningley.
- Work with the Financial Inclusion team to shape local events and support initiatives against high cost lenders.
- Provide comment on the new Social Contract approach of Citizens@Leeds.

85 Armley One Stop Centre - Community Hub Pilot Site

The report of the Chief Officer Citizens and Communities was presented to the Committee by the Head of Face to Face Contact and the Customer Services Manager of Armley One Stop Centre (OSC).

The report provided members with the current position on work taking place on establishing a pilot Community Hub in the Armley OSC.

The Area Committee was informed that Community Hubs will deliver an integrated approach to service delivery maximising the use of the assets and service points that exist across the city. Armley OSC already has principal services which include:

- Registrars
- Library and Information Services
- Welfare Rights
- Credit Union Branch
- Job Shop
- Leeds Counselling Service
- Councillors and MP surgeries
- Youth Offending Team
- Eastern European Outreach Group (POMOC)

It is also expected that the Community Hubs will promote partnership working with the Police, Children's Centres, Metro, and NHS, relevant to local demand. It is envisaged that these services will support the delivery of 'pop up' and mobile provision to reach all priority communities across the city.

The Community Hub will also provide 'wrap around' services which could include literacy, numeracy, language classes, energy advice, debt advice.

The Community Hub will be staffed by an integrated front of house team. The team will initially be made up of officers from Library Services, Customer Services and the Job Shop.

Members discussed the Community Hub with all Members welcoming the concept of the Community Hub. Members made specific reference to the services and partners needed for the area, and offered suggested locations for 'pop up' delivery of services.

RESOLVED – That the Committee

- Supported and defined the work being undertaken with current service partners on site at the Armley OSC to deliver a Community Hub provision for the local community.
- Noted the plans for future closer working with internal and external to the Council to provide a more holistic customer service provision in communities, led by the needs of the local community
- Considered their role in the development of the Community Hub concept within their locality in line with the developments and ideas set-out in Section 3 of the submitted report. This is to include advising on partners for the community hub in Armley and the location of pop-up provision.