

**Report of the Community Planning Officer**

**Report to the Inner North West Area Committee**

**Date: 13<sup>th</sup> February 2014**

**Subject: Community Planner Update Report**

Are specific electoral Wards affected?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): Headingley Hyde Park and Woodhouse Kirkstall Weetwood		
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: N/A Appendix number: N/A		

**Summary of main issues**

1. The objectives of the Community Planner role include providing advice to ward members and community groups on planning matters, working with the inner north west Area Committee (INWAC) Planning Sub Group to respond to local planning issues, and working with council officers from a range of service areas to co-ordinate planning responses in the inner north west area.
2. The community planner work programme over the last 12 months has included working with the INWAC Planning Sub Group to co-ordinate responses to local planning issues, respond to local and national planning consultations, and provide advice and assistance to local community groups on neighbourhood planning. The Community Planner has provided officer support to the steering group of the Far Headingley, Weetwood and West Park Neighbourhood Design Statement (NDS), continued to assist colleagues in the Planning Enforcement team working on the letting board code, worked with colleagues to develop local planning policy in relation to Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), and attended the private sector strategic working group to engage with landlord groups and university representatives on relevant issues. In addition to this the day-to-day duties of the role make up a significant proportion of the community planner workload.

3. If Area Committee determine to continue funding for the community planner post for 2014 to 2015 there are a number of emerging projects and themes which are likely to form part of the future work programme alongside the continuation of many of those above. The most significant of these will be in response to the increasing enthusiasm for neighbourhood planning in inner north west Leeds and the opportunities this gives communities to shape new development through the creation of Neighbourhood Development Plans. The Community Planner resource will continue to assist the Planning Sub Group in making representations to local and national planning consultations, particularly in relation to the emerging Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy and Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD), and work to assist the steering group of the Far Headingley, Weetwood and West Park NDS through to the adoption of this document. The Community Planner will also continue to assist colleagues on local planning policy relating to HMOs and letting boards, provide assistance to ward members for community meetings for significant planning applications, and continue to update the community planner website as a source of local planning information for community groups and local residents.

### **Recommendations**

4. Members are asked to note the contents of the report and comment as they feel appropriate.

## **1 Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 The report is intended to give an update to Ward Councillors on the community planner work programme for the past 12 months. The report will also introduce those emerging projects and themes which are likely to be central to discussions at the inner north west Area Committee (INWAC) Planning Sub Group over the next twelve months and introduce the proposed work programme for the community planner over this period, if Area Committee determine to continue funding the post.

## **2 Background information**

- 2.1 The overall objectives of the Community Planner role are outlined below:

- To advise and assist Ward Councillors, community groups and individuals on planning related matters;
- To work with the INWAC Planning Sub-Group to raise awareness of area specific planning related issues and to support the planning related initiatives of the Area Committee;
- To work alongside Council officers from a wide range of service areas to co-ordinate planning responses in the inner north west area.

- 2.2 In order to meet these objectives over the last 12 months the Community Planner work programme has included the following:

- The co-ordination of the INWAC Planning Sub Group; including the setting of the agenda to discuss significant planning applications, changes to national and local planning policy and other planning mechanisms, and the ongoing monitoring of 'community-led' planning documents.
- Drafting a response on behalf of the Planning Sub Group and Area Committee to the Council's Local Development Framework Core Strategy consultation (Policy H6).
- Drafting a response on behalf of the Planning Sub Group and Area Committee to the Council's (Draft) LDF Site Allocations Development Plan Document consultation.
- Briefing members of the Planning Sub Group and Area Committee on the proposed changes to permitted development in December 2013.
- Advising local community groups on neighbourhood planning on behalf of the Planning Sub Group looking at the main issues surrounding the introduction of a Neighbourhood Development Plan in inner north west Leeds.
- Supporting the steering group of the Far Headingley, Weetwood and West Park NDS in the drafting of the latest version of their Neighbourhood Design

Statement including being the officer representative throughout the supplementary planning document (SPD) adoption process.

- Supporting the enforcement of the revised Letting Board Code including addressing the display of letting boards and related advertisements in the Area of Special Advertisement Control and the Voluntary Code area. This included working with colleagues in the Planning Enforcement team and volunteers from the Private Rented Sector.
- Working with colleagues in the Forward Planning team on new House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) related planning policy following the introduction of the Article 4 Direction in Leeds including representing the Council in national discussions on planning responses to HMO issues.
- Attending meetings to engage with landlord associations and university representatives on relevant planning matters such as the Council's Article 4 direction and Letting Board Code.
- Continuing to use the community planner website on the Council's web pages to provide an information resource for local community groups and residents.

2.3 As well as the above, the Community Planner resource has continued to be well used by ward members, community groups, and local residents as a first point of contact for planning related issues. Responding to these queries has formed a significant proportion of the Community Planner workload.

### **3 Main issues**

3.1 There are a number of emerging and existing planning projects and themes which are anticipated to be priorities in inner north west Leeds over the next twelve months. The INWAC Planning Sub Group will continue to respond to these priorities through its monthly meetings. The Community Planner post will continue to support the group with a work programme over the next twelve months based on the following themes.

#### **INWAC Planning Sub Group**

3.2 The community planner post will continue to co-ordinate the INWAC Planning Sub Group to discuss significant local planning applications and issues and monitor the use of community planning documents such as Neighbourhood Design Statements. The group will also have a key role in informing and engaging community groups on neighbourhood planning.

#### **Neighbourhood Planning**

3.3 Neighbourhood planning represents a new and significant opportunity for local communities to engage in the planning system through a range of new planning mechanisms. Over the last 12 months the Council has designated twenty four neighbourhood planning areas across the city, twenty one of which are in parished areas and three are in non parished areas (Holbeck, Adel and Beeston). These areas are now looking to draft Neighbourhood Development Plans, with

approximately twenty other communities across the city also displaying considerable enthusiasm.

- 3.4 In relation to Neighbourhood Planning, it is acknowledged that the wards within inner north west Leeds do have particular issues which are common to inner urban areas. Neighbourhood Planning brings communities together in non parished areas and can help deliver local objectives as well as broader corporate objectives; Neighbourhood Planning is a real opportunity for local communities to benefit from CIL funding and Area Committee have an important role to play in supporting local communities in the inner north west.
- 3.5 The Community Planner has continued to work with the INWAC Planning Sub Group to advise and support local community groups in relation to neighbourhood planning. Over the last 12 months, the Community Planner has attended two inner north west (area wide) neighbourhood planning events to discuss issues and potential boundaries. The meetings were well attended by approximately 60 local residents, business owners, student groups and third sector organisations as well as ward members from across the area.
- 3.6 The Community Planner has subsequently attended 11 smaller meetings of the Burley Top Community Association, Little Woodhouse Community Association, Oblong (Woodhouse), Women Dignity All Together Community Group (Little London), North Hyde Park Neighbourhood Association, Far Headingley Village Society, Weetwood Residents Association, Kirkstall Forum and, Cardigan Triangle to discuss neighbourhood planning and offer specific advice to groups on how to progress with neighbourhood planning.
- 3.7 In inner north west Leeds a number of local groups are progressing well with the development of Neighbourhood Plans and a high number of groups have expressed an interest in neighbourhood planning.
- Hyde Park and Woodhouse ward - it is anticipated that the first application for designation of the neighbourhood forum and boundary will be made shortly (Spring 2014) from the Little Woodhouse community. South Headingley, North Hyde Park and Woodhouse communities are actively working towards agreeing a joint vision, carrying out an analysis of local issues and drafting boundaries. It is anticipated that if discussions progress an application for designation of the neighbourhood forum and boundary could be made in spring/summer 2014.
  - Headingley ward - a neighbourhood planning event has been organised for late February which aims to bring neighbouring community groups together to explore any scope to collaborate on neighbourhood planning. It is anticipated that an application for designation of the neighbourhood forum and boundary will be made in spring/summer 2014.
  - Weetwood ward - local groups have been raising awareness of neighbourhood planning and increasing engagement however progress has been slower than other wards due to pressing local issues such as the emerging revised Far Headingley, Weetwood and West Park Neighbourhood Design Statement which is due to be adopted in the spring 2014. It is

anticipated that if discussions progress an application for designation of the neighbourhood forum and boundary could be made in summer 2014.

- Kirkstall ward - Burley Top Community Group are about to start work on the analysis of local issues and creating a draft vision. Further discussion is required in relation to possible boundary areas between the numerous interested community groups with the aim of establishing potentially 3 or 4 Neighbourhood Forum. It is anticipated that if discussions progress an application for designation of the neighbourhood forum and boundary could be made in spring/summer 2014.

- 3.8 The Planning Sub Group and Community Planner resource will continue to provide support to these groups. It is anticipated that supporting local community groups to meet their neighbourhood planning aspirations will form a key part of the work programme of both Planning Sub Group and the Community Planner over the next twelve months. The Planning Sub Group will continue to monitor issues arising in relation to neighbourhood planning and is committed to providing support to local community groups wherever possible.

### **Community Led Planning Documents**

- 3.9 The steering group of the Far Headingley, Weetwood and West Park Neighbourhood Design Statement (NDS) have drafted a revised and updated version of the document which is now in the final stages of the supplementary planning document (SPD) adoption process. The Community Planner was responsible for managing the statutory public consultation period of six weeks from the 8<sup>th</sup> November to the 20<sup>th</sup> December 2013. The Community Planner will continue act as the officer representative throughout the adoption process and the document is expected to be adopted in spring 2014.
- 3.10 Planning Sub Group will continue to monitor the uptake of the other community led planning documents in the area through its monthly meetings.

### **Planning Policy Consultations**

- 3.11 The Planning Sub Group will continue to provide responses to local and national planning consultations where appropriate. The Group's previous comments have proved effective by resulting in significant improvements to planning policies in the LDF Core Strategy over the past 12 months. Over the next 12 months the Core Strategy is expected to be adopted by the Council following the public examination period in Autumn 2013 with work also progressing on the Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD). Both of these documents will have a significant influence over planning decisions in inner north west Leeds over the next 15 years.

### **Article 4 Direction and HMO Planning Policy**

- 3.12 The Community Planner will continue to represent the Area Committee in local and national discussions related to HMO planning legislation and policy. This includes working with the Planning Policy team in relation to the drafting of

relevant local planning policy and working to engage with community groups, landlord groups, the universities, student groups and other interested parties.

### **Letting Boards**

- 3.13 The Community Planner will continue to support the Planning Enforcement team in the enforcement of the recently revised letting board code in the Area of Special Advertisement Control (also known as the Regulation 7 direction area) and work with landlord organisations in the voluntary code area.
- 3.14 The Area of Special Advertisement Control is due to be renewed in early 2015 and the lead in process for the renewal of the direction will begin in spring 2014. This will involve a significant amount of work as part of an application to the Secretary of State which will be carried out and managed by the Community Planner in consultation with local ward members and community groups. Alongside the renewal of the Area itself the Community Planner will work with local ward members and community groups to proposed potential boundary changes to the area for consideration by the Secretary of State.

### **Drop-In Sessions for Significant Planning Applications**

- 3.15 The Community Planner will continue to provide officer support for community drop-in sessions to discuss significant planning applications with local residents and community groups.

### **Community Planner Website**

- 3.16 The Community Planner will continue to use the Community Planner website as an information resource for local residents and community groups.

### **Housing Strategy**

- 3.17 The Community Planner will continue to liaise with officers from Housing Services, on behalf of the INWAC Planning Sub Group, in order to progress discussions in relation to housing priorities in inner north west Leeds.

## **4 Corporate Considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and Engagement**

- 4.1.1 This report is intended to inform ward members in inner north west Leeds of the community planner work programme. As such this report has not been subject to public consultation.

### **4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration**

- 4.2.2 There are no negative equality impacts as a result of the proposals discussed in this report. The Community Planner resource is used to support all ward members, community groups and residents in inner north west Leeds. As such it has not been necessary to prepare an Equality Impact Assessment.

### **4.3 Council policies and City Priorities**

4.3.1 This report does not have any direct implications for Council policy.

#### **4.4 Resources and value for money**

4.4.1 The community planner is funded from the Wellbeing Fund and works alongside existing Council resources.

#### **4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

4.5.1 There are no specific legal implications as this report does not relate to a key or major decision.

#### **4.6 Risk Management**

4.6.1 There are no significant risks identified in this report.

### **5 Conclusions**

5.1 The community planner resource has continued to be well used by ward members, community groups and local residents over the past twelve months. Those projects and themes outlined in section 3 of this report are anticipated to form the core work programme of the community planner post over the next twelve months alongside the day-to-day duties of the role.

### **6 Recommendations**

6.1 Members are asked to note the contents of the report and comment as they feel appropriate.

### **7 Background documents**

7.1 None.