

Report of Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities)

Report to South Leeds (Inner) Area Committee

Date: Wednesday 19th March 2013

Subject: Neighbourhood Improvement Officers Report

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes Middleton Park; City and Hunslet; Beeston & Holbeck	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input 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? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. To provide Members with an update on the Neighbourhood Improvement Officer (NIO) project from July 2013 –February 2014.
2. To provide Members with an overview of work carried out in their wards.
3. To provide members with an update on work to strengthen community infrastructure across the wards and respond to thematic issues.
4. To provide members with an outline of future working arrangements for the Neighbourhood Improvement Officer Project in Inner South.

Recommendations

5. Members of the Inner South Area Committee are requested to:
 - a) note the contents of this report and make comment as appropriate;
 - b) make comment on and approve the overall structure for the future working arrangements for NIOs
 - c) consider and approve two years of funding from 1st April 2014 to 31st March 2016 subject to an annual review of the project and Executive Board approval of the delegated Wellbeing Budget. The NIO workers to be employed by Health for All Leeds.

1. **Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 To provide an overview of work carried out at neighbourhood level across Beeston & Holbeck; City & Hunslet; Middleton Park.
- 1.2 To provide members with an update on work to strengthen community infrastructure and area wide projects.
- 1.3 To outline proposals for future working arrangements for The Neighbourhood Improvement Project 2014/15.

2 **Background Information**

- 2.1 The Neighbourhood Improvement Officer project employs 1.4 workers across the Inner South. With a resource of 2.5 days for City & Hunslet, 2.5 days for Middleton Park and 2 days for Beeston & Holbeck. Funded through the Well-being budget, Health for All employ the NIOs with line management provided through the South East Area Support Team.
- 2.2 In July 2012, an NIO for Beeston and Holbeck ward joined the team and delivered work in Cottingley, and subsequently in Holbeck, 6 monthly progress reports are presented to the Area Committee, the last one being presented in June 2013. The NIO has focused on facilitating the Cottingley Neighbourhood Improvement Plan and on supporting the development of Holbeck Neighbourhood Plan.
- 2.3 In July 2013 a second NIO was appointed to cover City & Hunslet and Middleton Park Wards, with work split 2.5 days per week per ward.
- 2.4 In addition to neighbourhood based work the NIOs have also provided support to projects that have an impact across all three wards. These include, South Leeds Foodbank, South Leeds Debt Forum and South Leeds Community Network.

3 **Main Issues**

Beeston and Holbeck Ward

- 3.1 Cottingley: Supported Area
 - 3.1.1 The Cottingley Neighbourhood Improvement Plan (NIP) ran from May 2012 until June 2013, chaired by Cllr Adam Ogilvie and held monthly meetings working toward an action plan. The NIP was facilitated by the Neighbourhood Improvement Officer, who supported the development of projects, facilitated meetings and sub groups. The NIO also provided support and guidance to the Tenants & Residents Association Cottingley (TRAC), developing the capacity of residents to organise and represent their area.
 - 3.1.2 Key successes through the NIP include various community events (winter wellbeing, fun days, trips), the development of a Youth Forum, funding of children's holiday activities, the establishment of a computer drop in and environmental improvements including phase 1 of a refuse and recycling project.

3.1.3 In June 2013 the group agreed to meet quarterly and developed an exit plan to manage and complete on-going projects. **(See Appendix 1)** The area also remains a supported area with the NIO continuing to support TRAC and being a key contact for those delivering work in Cottingley. Key areas still to be progressed are outlined below.

- **Children's Activities:** Holiday provision delivered over 2 weeks in the summer with 72 children attending. NIO to facilitate meeting between providers and TRAC to iron out problems and ensure future delivery.
- **Employment & Skills:** A computer drop in launched on the 24th January, organised by Housing Leeds and Union Learn. There is potential to develop further community learning opportunities for Cottingley residents through partners Leeds City College and The Point.
- **Refuse & Recycling:** Early results from Phase 1 of this project indicate a drastic improvement in estate cleanliness and positive engagement from residents in new processes. A full evaluation report and future plans are due to be shared with officers and ward members in January; these plans will be shared with the Cottingley NIP group and feedback taken. There will be a focus on effective communication with residents as well as operational arrangements.
- **Support to TRAC:** Is on-going. At an AGM held in October a full committee was voted in including several new committee members. The NIO continues to work with the group on plans for the coming year, including a Neighbourhood Watch scheme.

3.2 Holbeck Neighbourhood Plan

3.2.1 Since the last NIO report to the Area Committee in June 2013 updates have been provided through the Summary of Key Work report. The NIO work to support Holbeck Neighbourhood Plan includes:

3.2.2 **Facilitation of the Community Projects Group:** The group organised a well attended firework display at Holbeck Working Men's Club, feedback from which was excellent. The group also organised a Christmas Lights Switch On event to follow the Holbeck Christmas Gala. The NIO organised a meeting between Hammond and Associate solicitors to discuss possibilities for pop up spaces in empty buildings in the area - the group wait to see if appropriate properties would be available through this scheme.

3.2.3 **Organising publicity:** Work with the publicity group to develop regular communication with residents, through a website, newsletters, posters and banners; the distribution of a Christmas Events flyer for Holbeck which included events from a range of partner groups and agencies and is a regular contributor to the website.

3.2.4 **Holbeck Neighbourhood Forum:** Assisting in the organisation of Forum meetings, attends support group meetings when required and has facilitated visits from other Neighbourhood Planning groups and stalls at community events.

- 3.2.5 **Partnership working:** Developed relationships with key local partners and encourage their involvement in the forum this includes the Community Liaison Officer at Keepmoat, opportunities to work in partnership are sought where possible.

Middleton Park Ward

- 3.3 The Ward Councillors asked that the NIO focus on some specific projects, updates on these are given below. Work is also guided by the priorities identified through the Belle Isle and Middleton Neighbourhood Improvement Board. The NIO has made efforts to establish contacts with local organisations and community groups.

3.4 Middleton Youth Partnership

- 3.4.1 Working with Middleton Community Group and Ward Councillors to establish a broad based partnership to develop youth provision in the area. The group's initial focus was on converting the former Middleton Marauders changing rooms into a youth club; however the partnership is now taking a broader view of youth provision in Middleton as a whole. The youth partnership is currently developing proposals to bring the sports pitches back into use and will explore the feasibility of building a skate park on the site.

- 3.4.2 The NIO has helped to service the meetings and has provided basic development support around governing documents. The NIO will continue to offer capacity building support to the group, around training, funding and working with young people. The NIO has been in contact with local schools and other partners to build support for Middleton Youth Partnership.

3.5 Manor Field Hall

- 3.5.1 The NIO has provided basic assistance to the voluntary management committee around improvements to the community facility. Support has been given to submit a successful application for Community First funding. The group was awarded £2,495 towards the costs of internal redecoration and new equipment.

- 3.5.2 Worked closely with Ward Councillors to establish a formal ground lease for Manor Field Hall. The lease would give the community group security of tenure which would enable them to apply for further funding next year to carry out external landscaping improvements.

3.6 Belle Isle and Middleton Neighbourhood Improvement Board (NIB)

- 3.6.1 The NIO has attended three meetings of the Belle Isle and Middleton NIB and will help support local action around the NIB priority themes for example work instigated following a presentation on dementia.

Dementia Friendly Belle Isle and Middleton

- 3.6.2 The NIO organised an initial dementia awareness session for local groups. The session was led by Peter Smith the driving force behind Dementia Friendly Rothwell. The session was attended by 28 people drawn from organisations operating within Belle Isle and Middleton. The aim of the event was to give people a

better understanding of dementia and stimulate ideas for action that could be taken locally. The session also promoted the Alzheimer's Society's Dementia Friends initiative which gave participants further routes for involvement.

- 3.6.3 Following this session BITMO and Trinity Network have entered into a joint venture to deliver a new reminiscence session "Dinner and a Movie". Their first event took place in February which 42 older people attended, including 10 service users from the Alzheimer's Society. This new activity will also help to promote Trinity Network's existing Dementia Café. BITMO have also organised a follow up training session for their team delivered by The Alzheimer's Society.
- 3.6.4 Middleton Elderly Aid have established a new weekly memory afternoon as part of their social offer to older people in Middleton.
- 3.6.5 The NIO organised a follow up meeting with local organisations and the Alzheimer's Society in February. The aim of this event was to strengthen the connections between local organisations and specialist Dementia support available in Leeds. Progress will be monitored through the NIB.

3.7 City and Hunslet Ward

- 3.7.1 The NIO has supported the establishment of a C&H Neighbourhood Improvement Board, has established links with local community groups and has responded to a number of requests for capacity building support around funding, project development and organisational support. These are referred to below.

3.8 City and Hunslet Neighbourhood Improvement Board

- 3.8.1 The NIO contributed to facilitating and planning two workshops held with good input from a wide cross section of local organisations. An action plan has been developed which will inform future integrated locality working across the ward. The NIO will continue to support the development of this partnership.
- 3.8.2 There are a number of projects that would benefit from additional funding, proposals are currently being developed. The NIO is currently supporting the development of these project proposals which will be submitted soon for Wellbeing funding.

3.9 Hunslet Tenants and Residents Association

- 3.9.1 The NIO has:
- Made links with this established tenants and residents group
 - Provided assistance in successfully applying for a Community First grant to develop a weekly Thai Chi class
 - Supported the group by providing information on local initiatives at their monthly public meetings.

3.10 Hunslet Carr Resident Association

- 3.10.1 The NIO has provided support to this group including assistance in developing a constitution which they recently adopted. This will enable the group to bid for small grants to support their ideas for local action. The group are looking into the

feasibility of working with Hunslet Carr Primary School to improve a piece of derelict land and create a community garden.

3.10.2 The NIO also organised a walkabout with an officer from the locality team, this has led to a number of minor environmental improvements in the area. The group now have a direct relationship with a named contact within the LCC Locality team, this has made it easier for local residents and LCC to respond quickly to environmental concerns in the neighbourhood.

3.11 Hemmingway Garth

3.11.1 The NIO worked with Housing Leeds and Groundwork Leeds on community consultation with residents living around Hemmingway Garth. Led a team of volunteers who carried out door-to-door questionnaires about design proposals for the "Urban Oasis" project.

3.11.2 Following this event Groundwork Leeds have developed a scheme for the site. Phase one of this project (fencing, CCTV, and improvements to the entry doors) work will start on site before April 2014. Phase two of this project will include landscaping and environmental improvements, funding for these elements will be secured during 2014.

4 Area Wide Projects

4.1 South Leeds Foodbank

4.1.1 The NIOs have helped volunteers to begin distributing food. As the group get more established it is anticipated that further distribution centres will be established in Hunslet, Beeston as well as in Outer South Leeds.

4.1.2 The NIOs have helped to build connections between this volunteer led group and other local support agencies including Leeds City Council. The NIO has also helped the group apply for Wellbeing Funding to develop their service. In the first four months of operation Leeds Foodbank provided food to 820 people, 55% of which were children.

4.2 South Leeds Debt Forum

4.2.1 The NIOs are supporting the development of The South Leeds Debt Forum. The debt forum draws its membership from across South Leeds with the aim of developing stronger partnership working around the issue of debt, money management, financial literacy and welfare. Representatives from key local partners have developed an initial action plan to direct the work. The forum will meet every two months and is supported jointly by the NIO and a representative from Housing Leeds.

4.3 Community Celebration Event

4.3.1 Building on the success of the 2013 Celebration Event, and agreement from Area Committee, work is being progressed to hold a 2014 celebration event for those volunteering their time to improve their communities. The Neighbourhood Improvement Officers are working with other members of the Area Support Team

and key partners to organise this event. The Inner South event will take place at Civic Hall on 11th June, 6-8pm.

4.4 Community Engagement and Capacity Building

4.4.1 The NIOs promote relevant opportunities (from both LCC and the voluntary sector) including training, funding and events to South Leeds groups (examples include widespread distribution of Leeds Let's Get Active promotional materials, encouraging groups to take advantage of the Library Service Information Bus and providing venues with Welfare Reform Guides and promoting WYTS financial fitness project). The NIOs contribute to integrated locality working through participation in relevant development forums such as Third Sector goes Local and Transform Leeds.

4.4.2 The NIOs are well networked across Inner South Leeds and provide assistance to organisations through signposting and networking. Examples include meeting with the Latvian Community Centre to signpost them toward relevant funding, training and support or making links between Canopy Housing and the LCC Locality Team.

4.4.3 The NIOs work closely with the Community Involvement Teams at Housing Leeds, Leeds Federated and BITMO - quarterly meetings are held to share information on projects and work together on project delivery and support to groups.

4.5 South Leeds Community Network

4.5.1 The NIOs along with Involvement and Improvement Officers from Housing Leeds have been working with a community group called South Leeds Community Network (SLCN). They aim to provide networking opportunities for community groups across South Leeds in order to share information, ideas and best practice. Two meetings have been held in the last 6 months, at venues in Inner and Outer South Leeds, both events were well attended by groups across the area.

4.5.2 The NIOs have provided some basic assistance to this group by distributing invites and providing capacity building support to enable the network to support itself. The network meetings have a different theme each time, the most recent event looked at funding for groups and safeguarding training. The next meetings theme will be community events.

5 Neighbourhood Improvement Officer Project - Forward Plan

5.1 The project has made a positive contribution to neighbourhoods and communities across Inner South. It has strengthened the work of the Area Committee by providing a crucial outreach resource to support communities and develop projects alongside elected members, LCC colleagues and external partners.

5.2 The following section of this report restates the aims of the project, outlines the principles underpinning neighbourhood improvement work and provides proposals for future working arrangements for the NIO project. The proposals are intended to provide elected members with further clarity on the role and demonstrate how the NIOs will support future locality working arrangements, including the move to Community Committees.

5.3 The NIO project will continue to provide bi-annual reports to the Inner South Area Committee and have regular communication with ward members.

6 Overall aims of the NIO project:

6.1 More people getting involved in their local community by encouraging and supporting people to develop their skills and knowledge to motivate them to take action to enable positive change within their communities.

6.2 Build sustainable communities working alongside partner organisations to deliver positive results for local residents, improving the resilience and sustainability of neighbourhoods.

6.3 To encourage active participation in local democratic structures for example Community Committees.

6.4 Outlined in the following table are examples of how the NIO project will meet these aims.

Neighbourhood Improvement Officer Project Objectives

- Develop local responses to neighbourhood priorities.
- Provide support which encourages and enables communities to do more for themselves.
- Develop the capacity and confidence of local residents to take action to improve their area through a transparent process that is open and simple to access.
- Improve community cohesion through effective engagement and participation.

Work Stream	Actions	Examples
<p>Neighbourhood Based Community Development Work</p> <p>Targeting support at community groups within a locality and acting as a key contact for those planning work in an area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisational support, group development & training • Signposting & networking - improving links between local groups and the wider third sector in Leeds, develop the capacity of groups to support one another • Funding advice • Communicating opportunities - develop ways of effectively communicating relevant news and opportunities to communities and organisations in Inner South. For example, developing a social media presence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support to Resident Associations • Responding to ad hoc requests for support • Support for Holbeck Neighbourhood Forum and Plan • Manor Field Hall community centre
<p>Issue Based Community Development Work</p> <p>Identifying and supporting those projects that can develop responses to area wide priorities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organising around thematic work • Recruiting relevant representatives from communities and agencies • Linking in relevant support available across LCC and wider third sector to thematic work • Mapping of need and services • Group development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Leeds Debt Forum • South Leeds Food Bank • Developing NEET provision • South Leeds Community Network • Winter Warmth Project

<p>NIO Project Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build trust in local services/council by giving people experience of key decision making. • Build upon and enhance existing neighbourhood working. • Bring forward new people to engage as citizens. • Support Ward Members in their roles as community leaders alongside other local community leaders. 		
<p>Work Stream</p>	<p>Actions</p>	<p>Examples</p>
<p>Neighbourhood Improvement Boards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - City & Hunslet - Beeston & Holbeck - Belle Isle & Middleton <p>Supporting established and emerging Neighbourhood Improvement Boards, with a particular focus on project development and community engagement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen links between the NIB's and the local community. The NIOs will ensure that there is effective information exchange between communities and NIB's • Support specific community engagement work around NIB priorities where appropriate • Develop and support projects that respond to priorities identified by the NIB's • Contribute to regular review of NIB action plans to ensure the agreed priorities remain relevant • Work with area support team colleagues in coordinating and servicing the NIB's 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dementia work progressed through Belle Isle & Middleton NIB • Working with partners to develop projects identified in the C&H NIB action plan
<p>Support to Community Committees</p> <p>The specific working arrangements for Community Committees are still evolving, it is anticipated that the NIOs will have an active role to play in supporting engagement with local residents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote and raise awareness of Community Committees with local residents and community groups • Actively encourage local residents to attend meetings and make contributions in the open forum • Support meaningful community engagement at local events, e.g. galas / events around a theme or local issue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of Community Committee's through Social Media channels. • Support groups to apply for Wellbeing funding

7 Corporate Considerations

7.1 Consultation and Engagement

7.1.1 This report is a product of consultation with members, residents and partners and presents a proposal for Members to consider.

7.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

7.2.1 Internal and statutory partners are committed to equality and cohesion and all projects they are involved with will have to considered these issues.

7.3 Council policies and City Priorities

7.3.1 The work outlined in this report contributes to targets and priorities set out in the following council policies.

- Vision for Leeds
- Children & Young People Plan
- Health and Wellbeing City Priority Plan
- Safer and Stronger Communities Plan
- Regeneration Priority Plan

7.4 Resources and value for money

7.4.1 There are no resource implications as a result of this report.

7.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

7.5.1 Legal implications as a result of this report will be reflected in any subsequent Funding Agreements and Contacts to Tender that arise from projects funded from the Well being Budget.

7.5.2 All decisions taken by the Area Committee in relation to the delegated functions from the Executive Board are not eligible for Call In.

7.5.3 There are no legal implications as a result of this report.

7.6 Risk Management

7.6.1 All proposals requested Well being Funding complete a section in the application process outlining the risks associated with the project and how they will be managed.

8 **Conclusions**

- 8.1 This report provides a 6 monthly update on the work of the NIOs across the three wards of Inner South Leeds. The report demonstrates that the NIOs have made significant contributions to locality working.
- 8.2 Members have been provided with a forward plan for how future work will be determined and how the NIO project will develop.

9 **Recommendations**

- 9.1 Members are asked to:
- (a) note the contents of the report and make comment as appropriate;
 - (b) comment on and approve the overall structure for future working arrangements for NIOs
 - (c) approve two years of funding from 1st April 2014 to 31st March 2016 subject to an annual review of the project and Executive Board approval of the delegated Wellbeing Budget. The NIO workers to be employed by Health for All Leeds.

10 **Background documents**¹

- 10.1 There are no background documents associated with this report.

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available for inspection on request for a period of four years following the date of the relevant meeting. Accordingly this list does not include documents containing exempt or confidential information, or any published works. Requests to inspect any background documents should be submitted to the report author.