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## Report of the Outer South Area Committee

**Date:** Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2007

**Subject:** Priority Neighbourhood Development Worker

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### Electoral Wards Affected:

Ardsley & Robin Hood  
Morley North  
Morley South  
Rothwell

Ward Members consulted  
(referred to in report)

### Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Council  
Function

Delegated Executive  
Function available  
for Call In

Delegated Executive  
Function not available for  
Call In Details set out in the  
report

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## Executive Summary

This report outlines the progress of the Priority Neighbourhood Development Worker (PNDW) in the Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (NIP's) of Eastleighs Fairleighs, John O' Gaunts, Newlands and Denshaws and initial work agreed by the Area Committee for the Phase Two NIP's . Outputs and outcomes are reported in Appendix A. It outlines a general summary of work as well as recommending for funding to the end of this financial year.

### 1.0 Purpose Of This Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Outer South Area Committee of progress made in relation to community development in the Neighbourhood Improvement Areas which in turn contributes to Narrowing the Gap and Community Cohesion agenda. In particular the report recommends the extension of the PNDW post for a further six months so as to ensure that groups can be sustained and work can be initiated in the Phase Three NIP's.

### 2.0 Background Information

2.1 Following Area Committee approval the PNDW was established in November 2007, working for the Area Management Team and the Outer South Area Committee but under the management of the voluntary organisation South Leeds Health for All (SLHFA).

The key function of the post is to support successful community engagement as part of the NIP process. This would include supporting community groups and individuals, building capacity in groups and delivering on projects in the NIPs. In February the Area Committee considered a report which outlined the role of the PNDW and how it would be evaluated as well as detailing areas of work in the first phase of NIPs with a view to start work in the Phase Two NIP's from May 2007.

### **3.0 Main Issues**

**3.1** Over the last 6 months the PNDW has enabled groups to engage more effectively within their communities, empowering the groups to affect the decision making process and developing effective mechanisms to do this. The outputs and outcomes achieved in each area by the PNDW are recorded in an evaluation model for each area which is detailed in Appendix A.

### **3.2 Eastleighs Fairleighs**

The PNDW started work in December and it soon became apparent through talking to local residents and parents taking their children to school that residents had a negative perception of their area. Residents complained of problems with anti social behavior, lack of provision of services for children and young people and a lack of community spirit. In response, the PNDW worked hard doing outreach work in the area to get as many contacts as possible for the first Resident Meeting. Subsequently the Residents Association has flourished. Meetings are held every month chaired and minuted by the group and guest speakers are invited accordingly.

Key to the success in this area has been the establishment of a small steering group to organise a community event in March. Residents involved with the group have also benefited from the project as they have developed their skills in using the Internet, contacting business & commerce, negotiation skills and importantly being encouraged to use their own initiative and problem solving skills. The success of the community event has inspired the group to carry on and make positive contributions to their community. The group's decision to call the event 'Tingley Fun For all ' signifies that the group feel part of the wider community and encourages people from the rest of the community to see the area in a positive light. Money raised at the event has spurred the committee on to look at future activities such as regular coffee mornings, a summer trip and a further mini community event.

The work of the PNDW has also had a significant impact on the implementation of the NIP action plan. Resident representatives now attend the steering group meeting and attendance from agencies has increased generating more commitment to the aims and objectives of the NIP which has seen new projects initiated. It is also worth noting that library membership has increased locally and that discussions with Early Years are ongoing with regard to future provision for the area.

It is envisaged that the PNDW will continue to provide support to the Resident Association Committee as it is still fragile, but will withdraw from attending the NIP to be replaced by representatives of the residents.

### **3.3 John O'Gaunts**

Initial work in the area by the PNDW indicated that despite a sense of community spirit among some residents, there was a real sense of marginalisation and exclusion from the wider community. It was clear from talking to residents that they had been let down in the past by main stream agencies and that previously little had been achieved as a result of their involvement. Therefore there was a real mistrust of outside agencies which proved a difficult barrier to breakdown. Work has been undertaken to consult the community and build up a good rapport with local residents, this was achieved by working in partnership with Early Years and consulting residents through operation CAVA.

As a result resident meetings have seen a good attendance, but issues raised have often been contentious with the conduct of meetings becoming difficult. The PNDW has engaged committee members in formal training as well as meeting members before meetings to give them encouragement and support. Unfortunately, at the last meeting three committee members did not attend and attempts to contact them have been unsuccessful. However, after encouragement from the PNDW the vice chair led the following meeting – nervously but successfully. He has since shown enthusiasm and a commitment to this role, and also attended the last NIP meeting. The PNDW will continue to recruit the appropriate number of committee members.

The PNDW is currently working with local residents to plan a community day, meeting the steering group on a weekly basis. Like the residents group, the group consists of residents from the hard-to-reach. Residents have been involved with the planning process from the beginning, putting forward ideas of what activities to have at the event, organising for people/groups to come along to the event, making decisions on how to prioritise costs in order to devise the budget, successfully seeking sponsorship from local businesses, planning the logistics of the event and promoting the event within their local community. Residents involved with the planning group seem to enjoy being involved with all of the decision making and are showing a keen pride and responsibility for the event, however, they need continuous support from the PNDW who will be leading the event.

Due to the complex nature of the issues in this area, it is anticipated that the PNDW will need to offer substantial ongoing support to this group.

### **3.4 Newlands and Denshaws**

Much of PNDW time has been devoted to providing support and confidence building to the already established Residents Association rather than initiating new projects. The Newland Denshaws and Rydals Residents Association have a dedicated management committee but which lacked the confidence to work in partnership with mainstream agencies and had limited knowledge of fund raising etc. While the group had organised an event in the past it was small scale with limited partnership work. The PNDW has concentrated on building the capacity of local residents and the committee group through formal and informal training. Despite their enthusiasm, the management committee initially lacked a knowledge of how to organise such an event, for example, they were unsure of how to write letters to seek sponsorship for

funding, devise a health and safety plan, plan the logistics, get other community groups involved etc. The PNDW showed them how to go about organising such an event by initially leading on planning and then a more overseeing role as the committee members' confidence developed. This proved to be successful, as the management committee soon led on the event while the PNDW supported, this meant daily support from shadowing to phone calls and emails.

The event itself went well, over 30 questionnaires were completed by residents on how they wanted to improve the area and various officers from agencies were able to provide information on issues relating to the NIP. The event has given the Resident Association the confidence, knowledge and experience they need to play a more proactive role in their community in the future.

As part of the NIP, the PNDW has encouraged Early Years to start consultation with local parents and then to plan future provision of services to support families in need.

The Residents Association no longer need support from the PNDW as they have the contacts and capacity necessary to deal with issues in their community. Therefore the PNDW will withdraw from the NIP to focus on other areas.

### **3.5 Oakwells Fairfaxes**

Initial outreach work began in early May through contacting the school, speaking to agencies and discussions with Drighlington Parish Councillors. Residents would seem to have a mistrust of agencies and feel marginalised from the rest of Drighlington. The PNDW has met with former members of Fairwells, Oakwells and Residents Association who had ceased to meet for various reasons.

Residents from Oakwells Fairfax tend not to participate in activities that are provided in Drighlington, reasons for this have not previously been addressed and thus a divide has remained between Oakwells Fairfaxes and the rest of the community of Drighlington. The PNDW has explored this further and initial research of the area indicates that when Oakwells/Fairfaxes residents have attended groups, they have not felt welcome. It is not uncommon for residents from deprived areas to experience feelings of exclusion which can be due to self esteem and confidence issues as well as the failures of mainstream services to tailor their service to attract the hard to reach. This poses a challenge to the PNDW and the agencies involved with the NIP as it's essential that these barriers are broken down requiring resources and time.

In light of the above significant work will need to be undertaken by the PNDW to develop basic of skills such as self-confidence, interpersonal skills and raising aspirations. It is only when this is achieved that residents will consider engaging in local activities and groups and the wider community as a whole. Changing attitudes and stereotypes can not be achieved overnight, but education, discussion and debate about the issues and the needs of deprived communities through existing community groups can develop a better understanding.

The first residents meeting organised by the PNDW took place in May and attendance was poor. This was probably due to past problems and confirms that the PNDW

needs to spend more time on outreach work and also achieve a quick win to demonstrate to residents that agencies are now committed to working to improve the area.

Support will be needed in the area by the PNDW, agencies, Ward Councilors and Parish Councilors if sustainable change can be brought to the area.

#### **4.0 Implications For Council Policy and Governance**

4.1 The role of the Priority Neighbourhood Worker and NIPs detailed in this report is inline with 'Narrowing the Gap' and the Councils commitment to community cohesion.

#### **5.0 Legal and Resource Implications**

5.1 There are no new legal implications arising from the contents of this report.

#### **5.0 Conclusions**

The development of the PNDW role has, through the NIP programme, provided the direct support required by groups and individuals to sustain their positive involvement in the NIP process and beyond. The community development that has taken place has been a catalyst for further work in the NIPs as agencies have had the opportunity to consult with residents and gain a greater awareness of what is needed in the area.

Intensive work has been carried out over the last 6 months in Eastleighs Fairleighs, John O'Gaunts and Newlands and Denshaws. Plans for Oakwells Fairfaxes have been developed and initial outreach work has already taken place. Work in Wood Lane and the Harrops has been initiated and will be the subject of a further report.

Further to the Area Managers report with the appointment of the Project Officer (temporary) to the Outer South Area Management Team, capacity now exists to begin work in the phase three NIPs which include: Springbanks and Moorlands (Gildersome), Northfields (Ardsley and Robin Hood) and parts of Oulton and Woodlesford (Rothwell).

To ensure the sustainability of existing groups and current initiatives, it is requested that the PNDW post be extended to the end of this financial year.

#### **7.0 Recommendations**

7.1 The Area Committee is asked to note and comment on the report

7.2 The Area Committee is asked to approve £13,062.50 to extend the Priority Neighbourhood Improvement worker post to the end of the financial year.