

Report of: Shaid Mahmood, West North West Area Leader

Report to: Inner North West Community Committee (Headingley, Hyde Park & Woodhouse and Weetwood wards)

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For Decision

Making the most of local assets and ensuring community influence

Purpose of report

1. This report presents a discussion paper on the Community Committee topic of 'Making the most of community assets and ensuring community influence'. The topic was chosen to look at how community centres are adapting to improve their long term sustainability and discover what lessons can be shared between facilities to support community engagement and service delivery.

Main issues

2. The Inner North West area has wide variety of community buildings from council run centres to new facilities run by the voluntary sector, and many church halls. This topic will focus on the more traditional community centres which aim not only to be a base for people to meet and participate in activities, but to also be outward facing, engaging with the community and providing services that meet local needs.
3. The majority of centres in the Inner North West are run by local charities. Hyde Park and Woodhouse has a good spread of centres across the ward, and Headingley has two well established centres in the Cardigan Centre and HEART. Weetwood ward has just one centre, the council run Meanwood Community Centre just within its border, and a community room next door to the St Vincent's Charity shop on Silk Mill Drive.

4. The discussion paper at Appendix 1 summarises the offer in each ward, and asks how community centres within the Inner North West area can collaborate, share best practice, and promote community involvement. It is hoped that the learning from this topic will shape services in the future and help create a successful new facility at Little London.
5. The community engagement plan at Appendix 2 outlines how the Community Committee will listen to the views of local residents on community centres and seek their ideas for future provision.

Corporate considerations

6 a Consultation and engagement

Each community centre in the Inner North West will be asked to support a survey of users, and a wider consultation will be organised for non-users.

6 b Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

Community centres play a vital role in promoting community cohesion by providing a neutral space for residents to meet and participate in activities. One of the discussion points is on how centres involve the local community to deliver services that meet their needs, and this will explore potential barriers to participation.

Conclusion

7. Community centres are a vital resource for local residents and deliver a range of services in easy to access locations. The Inner North West area benefits from some excellent facilities run by the third sector and it is hoped that their experiences will support any centres that are struggling and shape the new offer at Little London.

Recommendations

8. The Community Committee is asked to consider the questions raised in the discussion paper attached at Appendix 1 and make recommendations as to how centres can:
 - a) work together more collaboratively
 - b) involve local residents in shaping the offer at each centre and
 - c) make changes to improve their sustainability