

Report of Chair Inner West Community Committee

Report to Full Council

Date: 14th January 2015

Subject: Inner West Community Committee Update

Are specific electoral Wards affected?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): Armley Bramley and Stanningley Kirkstall		
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: Appendix number:		

Summary of main issues

This report provides an update on the new Inner West Community Committee's progress so far including an update on:

- The first three themed Community Committee Meetings
- The work of the Community Champions
- Key successful projects.

Recommendations

Members are asked to consider and reflect on the content of this report and receive a presentation from the Chair of the Inner West Community Committee.

1 Purpose of this report

2 The purpose of this report is to update Full Council on the progress, early outcomes, opportunities and challenges of the newly formed Inner West Community Committee. It also highlights a number of key pieces of work supported by the committee.

3 Background information

4 **The Inner West Community Committee** was a newly formed Committee this municipal year and includes **Armley, Bramley & Stanningley and Kirkstall wards**. This has meant realigning budgets and workstreams from the previous Area Committees to reflect the priorities of this new area. Partners have also worked to realign their own structures to reflect the new area.

5 Our city and its communities are facing massive and increasing social and financial challenges, including health inequalities, an ageing and more diverse population and poverty and financial exclusion. In a time of dwindling budgets but increasing challenges, the council must work more intelligently and more flexibly than ever before. **Community Committees** offer the opportunity to look afresh at our understanding of local needs, aspirations and potential. The challenge and focus for the new community committees will be to **genuinely involve the communities they represent in the decisions that affect them**.

6 Main issues

7 Themed meetings

8 **The Inner West Community Committee** identified a number of **themes** that Members wanted their future meetings to focus on. These were:

- District Centre Sustainability (held in July 2014)
- Increasing the voice and influence of young people (held in October 2014)
- Parks, Outdoor Play and Recreation (held in December 2014)
- Family Health (January 2015)
- Mental Health(March 2015)

9 **District Centre Sustainability**

10 The **first themed meeting in July** was on **district centre sustainability**. Discussions centred on Armley Town Street, Bramley Shopping Centre and Kirkstall District Centre.

11 A number of **challenges** were identified in relation to the district centres including a lack of retail mix, the impact of betting shops, high cost money lenders and the number of off licences; the attractiveness of the town and district centres for both day and evening trade and the impact of transport infrastructure and the volume of traffic on the town and district centres.

12 A range of partners from Planning Policy, City Development Major Projects, Economic Development, Strategic Asset Management, Employment & Skills, Environmental Services and the Police and Community Safety helped to set the

scene from different service perspectives and giving both a local and city wide flavour to discussions.

- 13 The Community Committee is working to **respond to these challenges**, they have recently **provided wellbeing funding to UpBEAt**, Bramley Elderly Action's Community Interest Company, to enable them **to develop a Community Shop in Bramley Shopping Centre**. The shop will act as a location where people can receive verbal information (e.g. drop-ins and surgeries) and written information (e.g. a community noticeboard, leaflets, flyers, newsletters). Information and advice will be provided by a wide range of local organisations including Bramley Credit Union, the West Leeds Debt Forum, resident groups and Bramley Elderly Action. Second hand goods will be sold from the shop. It is hoped that this will **reduce the impact of high cost lenders** in the area. The Community Committee is also working with the **new owners of Bramley Shopping Centre** to look at opportunities for promotion and development of centre and exploring the possibility to **provide hub type facilities to local people**.
- 14 The Inner West Community Committee have match funded a **'Money Buddies' scheme**. Volunteers are trained to provide one to one support to people in debt, enabling them to negotiate with their creditors, make savings, switch utility/mobile phone supplier and borrow money at a reasonable rate of interest.
- 15 The Community Committee support local community events that help **increase the footfall** to the local area impacting on local trade and awareness of local facilities. The **annual Kirkstall Festival** is one of the biggest community festivals in the City with well over 10,000 visitors attending each year and is now in its 34th year. The Festival is run by a group of dedicated volunteers who commit hundreds of hours of time each year to ensure the success of this popular event. A Wellbeing grant contributes towards the costs of staging the event including marquee hire, stages, equipment, skips, safety and promotion of the event. Other events supported by the Inner West Community Committee include **Armley Fun Day** and **Bramley Carnival** as well as **Festive Lights** for all three district centres.
- 16 **Increasing the Voice and Influence of Young People**
- 17 The **October Community Committee focused** on how to **increase the voice and influence of young people** through the Community Committees. Young people attended the meeting with youth workers to present information on their views of their local communities and how they would like to be engaged with. Lively discussions focused on how children and young people, partners and local residents can work together with the Community Committee to deliver actions which support this theme. Some of the concerns identified by the young people included dog fouling and feeling safe at night. As a direct response to the young people's concerns at the meeting, **Housing Leeds** has **improved lighting** in a number of local ginnels.
- 18 The **young people** described ways in which they would like to be **engaged with**. Suggested methods include greater use of social media, texting, emails, promoting events through schools communication mechanisms and asking questions at fun days. Young people would like to be part of designing and delivering services and the way services are promoted and advertised. They would like the Community

Committee to develop channels through a central hub for young people to have their say, perhaps through the establishment of a local Young People's Board.

- 19 The Community Committee is working to **respond to these suggestions**, a new **Children and Young People's Board** is being launched across all three wards. The young people will be able to make recommendations on local priorities for young people and consult directly with the Community Committee.
- 20 The **Youth Activity Fund** has been used to support after school and holiday activities for young people. The Community Committee funded a wide variety of projects including nature trails, performing arts sessions, skateboarding and cultural trips. The Community Committee has also piloted the co-commissioning of YAF projects alongside **Bramley Cluster of Schools**. This is currently being evaluated for possible expansion.
- 21 **A year-long programme of engagement in schools, youth group settings and community events** is currently being worked up to consult with a wide range of young people of all ages. The engagement suggestions made by the young people will be explored and tested in the delivery of this programme of work. Building on this year's successful engagement programme, where **Elected Members visited** a number of **youth providers** to see assess how **activities** were being accessed, young people's involvement will improve their direct influence on the future investment of the Inner West **Youth Activities Fund**.
- 22 **Parks, Outdoor Play and Recreation**
- 23 An additional **December Community Committee** focused on **Parks and Greenspace**. Discussions at the meeting focused on four main subject areas: Parks & Greenspace; Play; Volunteering; development of a Kirkstall Valley Park.
- 24 Broad ranging discussions were held at the meeting on what makes a good park and how they could be made better. Also on how to make play opportunities exciting and imaginative including in areas where there is limited greenspace. The importance of volunteers to local greenspaces was highlighted and discussions about how to best support and promote groups in the area. The concept of a Kirkstall Valley Park was endorsed and the need for a business plan highlighted.
- 25 What's worked well:
- Engaging with services in a new way of working, developing more of a partnership approach to planning the themed meetings.
 - Engaging the community - the new meeting format and the development of more customer friendly discussion reports has made it far easier for members of the community to be involved in the themed meetings.
 - Role of Community Champions – through their active role in shaping themes and progressing work.
 - Development of the sub group infrastructure in response to the themed meetings - two new sub groups have been established focussing on Children and Young People and the Environment.

- Community co-optees – there are now seven co-optees on the Inner West Committee. The co-optees often provide a different perspective on discussions, their role is to contribute to the development of themed discussions and challenge where necessary.
- Venues – the choice of venues for the Community Committee meetings is ever more important in creating an inviting atmosphere for the community to get involved in debate and discussion.

26 **Community Committee Champions**

27 Community Committee Champions have been appointed to the following positions:

- Employment, Skills & Welfare – Cllr J McKenna
- Children & Young People – Cllr A Smart
- Environment & Community Safety – Cllr K Ritchie
- Health & Well Being and Adult Social Care – Cllr A Lowe (Health & Wellbeing) and Cllr F Venner (ASC)

28 The Community Committee Champions meet bi-monthly through the General Purpose Sub Group. They are working with lead officers through a range of partnership structures to develop clear priorities and play an active role in shaping themes and progressing work:

- General Purpose Sub Group
- Children and Young People Sub Group
- Environmental Sub Group
- WNW Employment, Skills and Welfare Priority Neighbourhood Board
- Locality Community Safety partnership
- Core Health and Wellbeing partnership
- West Neighbourhood Improvement Board

29 Social Media

30 The introduction **of Facebook and Twitter** has allowed the Community Committee to interact with a wider audience by developing a **stronger social connection** with residents who have not necessarily previously engaged with us. Social media has provided a platform to **build relationships** and share useful and interesting information from local media, community groups and residents.

31 The Inner West Community Committee has publicised a range of messages on Facebook around consultation, community events or improvements to an area, which have proven to be very popular, with some posts reaching up to 805 views. With such a great response at a very early stage there is real potential for engagement through social media to further grow.

32 **Key neighbourhood improvement successes:**

33 There is a **West Neighbourhood Improvement Board** (NIB) led by elected members, which covers those priority neighbourhoods of Broadleas, Fairfields, Hawksworth Wood, New Wortley, and Wythers, within the inner west. Chaired by the Deputy Leader of Leeds City Council, this has provided a spotlight on these areas.

34 Some key successes include:

- The Families First programme and a new Destinations Team, established through the NIB, have been particularly successful in **supporting young people** who were **NEET** into employment, education or training. As of January 2014, the Armley Cluster had reduced the number of NEETs by 29 since the start of the Children and Young People's Plan and Bramley had reduced by 17. The Families First programme has a focus on NEET and, for example, in the ACES Cluster, 79% of young people identified as NEET in the Year 1 programme are now in employment, education or training. This approach is now being developed for Hawksworth Wood in Kirkstall.
- A working group was established to **tackle drug dealing in the tower blocks**. Partners included the police, anti-social behaviour unit, community safety, housing and homeless charities. The group secured the country's first injunction against 'persons unknown' to deter rough sleepers and people entering the blocks to buy drugs.
- The neighbourhood partnership identified **anti-social behaviour** by young people living in the flats on the Broadleas as an emerging issue. The partnership went on to look at the reasons behind this, and it was clear that young people needed a different kind of approach to give their tenancies the best possible chance of success. Instead of waiting until issues occur; the housing officer now conducts a joint visit with Connexions workers from Barca to support the young person. In a few short months this has proved a big success with a number of customers being supported into work and training.
- **Bramley Our Place** and the **New Wortley Our Place**, along with the **HAVA Board** in Hawksworth Wood have been supported to develop their community led partnerships and draft neighbourhood plans to deliver local improvements to the communities they serve.

35 **Corporate Considerations**

36 **Consultation and Engagement**

The Inner West Community Committee holds both formal meetings and workshop sessions attended by the general public. It has three Community Forums, Citizens at Bramley and Stanningley, Citizens @ Armley and Citizens @ Kirkstall that meet throughout the year. These means of engagement with local people are supported by a variety of community events and fun days plus ongoing consultation in some of the priority neighbourhoods. Social Media is also now being used to engage with the local community. The Committee will continue to support and enable local people and communities to engage and interact on issues that are important to them.

37 **Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration**

All projects funded from Well Being must have an equal opportunities policy and outline which equality group the project will work with, and how equality and

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

38 Council policies and City Priorities

The projects outlined in this report contribute to targets and priorities set out in the following council policies:

- Vision For Leeds
- Children and Young Peoples Plan
- Health and Well Being City Priority Plan
- Safer and Stronger Communities Plan
- Regeneration City Priority Plan

39 Resources and value for money

There is no new resource implications detailed within this report. In all requests for funding from Community Committee applicants are asked to consider value for money during the application process.

40 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

There are no legal, access to information or call in implications arising from this report.

41 Risk Management

There are no risk management issues of any significance arising from this report.

42 Conclusions

43 The Area Committees were established in 2004 to improve service delivery at local level and deliver projects and programmes of work on priority issues in the locality. The Community Committees have since built on the successes of Area Committees and developed on the engagement and involvement of local communities in the decision making process.

44 These first three themed meetings have allowed the Community Committee to work with a bottom-up approach by engaging with partners and members of the community to envision ways to strengthen the town and district centres, improve local parks and greenspace and increase the voice and influence of young people..

45 The Community Committee already has good relationships with its local communities and utilises its available funding streams to support local projects. It recognises that there are challenges ahead especially with engaging with hard to reach groups, but will continue to strengthen its positive working relationships with stakeholders to improve local services and facilities.

46 Recommendations

Members are asked to consider and reflect on the content of this report and receive a presentation from the Chair of the Community Committee.

47 Background documents¹

48 None

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.