

Report of: The West North West Area Leader

Report to: The Inner North West Community Committee – Headingley; Hyde Park & Woodhouse; Weetwood

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Topic Report

Summary of main issues

Community Committees replaced Area Committees in 2014/15; with a new approach seeking to strengthen local democratic engagement and involvement in local decision-making. In order to facilitate this approach, the Community Committee agreed to hold meetings on themed topics. This approach will continue in the 2015/16 municipal year and this report outlines proposals for this year's topic discussions.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

1. Choose a number of topics to support the Community Committee's focus of work over the coming year.

1 Purpose of this report

The purpose of this report is to put forward a number of themed topics for Members to consider. These topics will form the basis of discussion for Inner North West Community Committee engagement activity in 2015/16.

2 Main Issues

- 2.1 After discussion with Members, the Area Support Team have put forward a list of suggested topics for the 2015/16 municipal year. Further discussion has taken place with the Chair of the Inner North West Community Committee and the following proposals have been made:

Environment

2.1.1 Local Highways and Parking Issues

Members have raised this as a potential topic for consideration, given the high volume of traffic and parking problems in the area.

A parking survey for the Hyde Park area was undertaken in October 2012, when University students had returned from summer break. Some comparative surveys were also completed during the summer months in 2012 to determine the difference in parking demand when most students are not in residence.

The survey found that the introduction of resident permit zones would be expensive (especially as it would require introduction over a large area) and of limited benefit, as the majority of parked cars tended to belong to residents and that the high numbers were largely due to multiple cars at addresses and the density of HMOs.

There were some issues identified with parked cars on the hill of Hyde Park Road and on Brudenell Road, but there were some resident objections to proposals for a resident permit zone.

It is proposed that this matter goes to the INW Environment Sub Group to allow for Elected Members, Council Departments and partner organisations to explore the matter further.

2.1.2 Community Safety and Anti-Social Behaviour; focus on graffiti

Elected Members and members of the Inner North West Environment Sub Group have raised concerns about the growing level of graffiti in the area. It has been suggested that this may be a topic that Members may wish to explore further with partners to try and identify a means of reducing this problem, whilst also considering other community safety and anti-social behaviour issues that affect the area.

Following discussions with the Chair, it is proposed that this matter be considered by the Inner North West Community Committee as a topic discussion at its meeting on 17 December 2015.

Health & Wellbeing

2.1.3 Social isolation

Social isolation is a topic that has been looked at by both the Outer North West and Outer West Community Committees.

Reducing social isolation can have tangible health benefits, with research highlighting the influence of social relationships on the risk of death as comparable to well-established risks such as smoking and alcohol consumption.

Generally social isolation is identified as a specific issue for older people however among other vulnerable groups it is sometimes treated as an 'aspect' or 'dimension' related to other issues, but not necessarily as an issue in its own right.

Although this is not proposed for an Inner North West topic discussion this municipal year, it may be something that Members wish to look at in more detail at a Sub Group meeting.

2.1.4 Improving accessibility; focus on housing, town centres and highways

This was raised as a potential topic for discussion following the Community Committee meeting in May 2015.

The proposed topic would look at how physical access can be improved for people in the local area. This could include working with local businesses to see how improvements could be made to make their shops more accessible, how improvements could be made to pavements to make them easier for people with disabilities to navigate, or look at how landlords could make improvements to student housing to make them better physically accessible for all.

It is proposed that local businesses, landlords, Leeds University and Students Union and Leeds Beckett University and Students Union, local charities, LCC Housing and LCC Highways and other organisation be invited to a topic discussion on the matter. This could be used as an opportunity to learn more about physical accessibility problems in the area and take forward some outcomes to make improvements.

Following discussions with the Chair, it is proposed that a topic discussion be held on this matter at the next meeting of the Community Committee meeting on 10 September 2015.

Community Safety

2.1.5 Domestic violence

The local Community Safety Partnership, Safer Leeds, has identified domestic violence as a key priority area within the Safer Leeds Strategy 2013/14. Linked to this, The Safer Leeds Executive agreed to develop a new Domestic Violence and Abuse Strategy and Action Plan for the city and set up a multi-sector Leeds Domestic Violence Strategy Group to lead on this task.

In addition, the Scrutiny Board for Safer and Stronger Communities developed terms of reference in September 2013 for an inquiry into tackling domestic violence and abuse and produced its findings in June 2014.

The inquiry highlighted that domestic violence and abuse is an issue for every community and can affect individuals from any background or socio-demographic.

Some Community Committees have therefore been keen to look at this issue in a local context to explore what work is currently being carried out and consider what new initiatives could be developed to tackle this problem.

The Community Committee is asked to consider whether they wish to develop this as a topic for a future meeting.

Children & Young People

2.1.6 Engagement with Children and Young people

In July 2014 the Inner North West Community Committee held a topic discussion on Children and Family Health. It was suggested that a good follow up topic to this would be to consider how the Community Committee can better engage with children and young people.

It is proposed that the Inner North West area hold a stand-alone event in early 2016, potentially at one of the Universities, to look at this topic in further detail.

By way of example, the Outer North West Community Committee held a stand-alone event for young people at Trinity University, Horsforth which proved to be successful and helped forge better relationships with partner organisations, clusters, schools, the University and young people.

Attendees of the event included Elected Members, Clusters, School staff and pupils, Council departments and Trinity University staff. A full day event was held which comprised of a question and answer session with Councillors in the morning and workshop sessions with young people in the afternoon with a tour of the University to finish. Local primary and secondary schools were invited to attend the event and the day was also used as an opportunity to learn more about what activities young people would like to see Youth Activities Fund monies spent on.

Following discussions with the Chair, it is proposed that the Inner North West Community Committee hold a stand-alone event on this topic in early 2016, with the March 2016 Community Committee meeting also focussing on this topic.

2.2 The Community Committee are asked to agree which topics they would like to focus on in 2015/16. It is recommended that in this first year there are three community committee topics chosen, with the possibility of an additional 'stand-alone' topic. The proposals made above have been made following discussion with the Chair.

2.3 Each topic will form the basis for a broader conversation with the Area Leads, the local community and stakeholders outside of the formal Community Committee meeting.

3 Corporate Considerations

3.1 Consultation and Engagement

The Area Support Team have met with Members to discuss potential topics for the 2015/16 municipal year.

3.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

Equality, diversity, cohesion and integration are key issues for the Area Committee and the community engagement plan will take this into account with a number of actions identified to help address these. Equality impact assessments will be undertaken on specific initiatives and decisions as required.

3.3 Council policies and City Priorities

The Best Council Plan 2013-17 identifies three key outcomes that need to be achieved if we are to achieve our best council ambition. These cover the need to improve the quality of life for our residents, particularly those who are vulnerable or in poverty; the need to make it easier for people to do business with us, and the need to achieve savings and efficiencies required, to continue to deliver frontline services. The proposals in this paper

are intended to make a significant contribution to the delivery of our best council outcomes and will help achieve a number of the stated objectives.

3.4 Resources and value for money

There are no specific budgetary implications arising from the proposals in this report at this time. However, the report does identify as one of the key principles for Community Committees the need to delegate and devolve more decision making and resources to local areas. Therefore there could be resource implications and these will be considered as part of the council's normal budget arrangements as decisions are taken to delegate service responsibility and/or funding.

3.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

There are no specific legal, access to information or call-in implications arising from this report at this point in time. In developing the Community Committee proposals, further consideration will need to be given to required changes to the Council's Constitution. In considering the potential of community representatives being more formally involved in Community Committee meetings, consideration will need to be given to the requirements of the Local Government Act 1972, section(102)(3) to ensure it is done in the most appropriate manner.

3.6 Risk Management

There are no risk management issues relating to this report.

4 Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Choose which topics they wish to focus on to support the Community Committee's focus of work over the coming year.