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## Report of the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods

### Inner West Area Committee

Date: 20<sup>th</sup> September 2007

### Subject: Review of Youth Development Worker

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**Electoral Wards Affected:**  
**Armley**  
**Bramley & Stanningley**

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 seeks to review the post of Youth Development Worker which was approved at Area Committee on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2005 to work across both Inner and Outer West areas to support and develop work with young people aged 9-13. It also highlights the success in engaging and supporting the voluntary sector in their provision and improve links with the Youth Service and in working with volunteers to develop their contribution to the provision. However it also recommends that, notwithstanding the success of the work achieved, this post is not renewed beyond current tenure.

#### 1.0 Purpose of This Report.

To detail the progress and success of the Youth Development Worker's post in inner west Leeds over the past 12 months in addressing the gap in youth service provision for those aged 9-13 years and in engaging with the voluntary and community sector.

#### 2.0 Background Information.

2.1 Area Management has a clear remit to link with Services for Young People under its delegated functions and to address the council's corporate objective of 'Creating Better Neighbourhoods and Confident Communities'. To address this priority a Youth Development Officer, Mark Metcalf was appointed to work for 12 months in hot spot neighbourhoods across west Leeds and was funded by both Inner and Outer West area committees. In inner west Leeds the communities were New Wortley, Fairfield and Broadleas.

### **3.0 Main Issues**

#### **3.1 Activities with children aged 9 to 13 years.**

- 3.2 There have been a number of successes – the most obvious being that most of the sessions of face-to-face work have attracted a healthy number of children and young people. The breakfast journalism club organised at St Bartholomew's Primary School on Tuesday's attracted 8 children and combined with the successful session run for young people at the West Leeds City Learning Centre in July, revealed this to be an area which should be explored for future youth and children's work.
- 3.3 The 'Town Street Tales' arts and mural project undertaken with the council's Professional Development Team also had good attendance, partly because many of the sessions have been in schools but also because the quality of work was excellent with more than 25 figures of 'historical importance' prepared for display in Armley Town Street. Work is still ongoing with regard to other parts of the work, but all should be close to completion by the end of October. A very good ½ hour radio programme on the project was broadcast by INTERPLAY in July during the period of the I Love West Leeds Festival.
- 3.4 The numbers attending the summer sports sessions have been very good as has the quality of work – the sessions based around New Wortley Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) were particularly good. In general the behaviour of the children and young people was very good.
- 3.5 Mark was able to build a number of close working partnership arrangements on behalf of the Youth Service with a number of organisations – these include a large range of community organisations (around 10 in all) and an increasing number of schools, (around 8 in all, some of them through the extended schools programme) and West Yorkshire Police. Mark also built relations with a number of local children and their parents/carers.

#### **4.0 Working with the Voluntary and Community sector**

- 4.1 One of the major problems the Youth Development Worker has faced was in establishing new community groups. He had hoped to be able to offer funding advice to new and/or prospective groups. In practice Voluntary Action Leeds are already doing much of this work and have excellent library facilities and access to resources. In some respects Mark therefore found himself unnecessarily 'competing' against other much better resourced bodies.
- 4.2 A second difficulty has been in undertaking "capacity building" – through a series of 'basic skills' sessions (on public speaking, funding, using the press and fund raising). These have suffered through failing to attract enough volunteers and management committee members to make running them worthwhile. Mark has been more successful however in introducing volunteer workers to the Youth Service, and of these several have subsequently gone on to volunteer and to attend a number of

training sessions to help them when working with young people. Most of these however have wanted to work with those aged 13+ rather than those aged 9-13 years.

## **5.0 Implications for Council Policy and Governance**

5.1 The work of the youth development officer supports the City Council's Children and Young People's Development Plan

## **6.0 Legal and Resource Implications**

6.1 None.

## **7.0 Conclusions**

7.1 The youth development worker post in 2006/7 has achieved many of the objectives set when the project was established. The post-holder has built up some excellent relations and developed some new volunteer led organisations which should be sustainable in the future. His recommendation would be for the area committee to fund such groups directly in future to undertake work for 9-13 year olds rather than to provide additional funding for a youth development post as such. Another option may be to make funding available through the recently established West Leeds Youth Work Partnership (WLYWP) which aims to bring all youth service providers in the area, voluntary and statutory, together to agree common principles and joint planning. Over the summer Positive Activities for Young People (PAYP) monies were made available for groups working with under 13s to apply for. Whilst discussions are at an early stage it may be possible to fund such work in conjunction with the WLYWP although resolution is needed in those discussion about the degree of emphasis on under 13s work when most providers are required to work with the 13-19 target age range.

## **8.0 Recommendations**

7.1 The contents of this report are noted.

7.2.1 The Area Committee consider the role of the Youth Development Worker. Officer recommendations are :

- Funding of the Youth Development Worker ceases after the 12 month contract
- Future funding of under 13s voluntary and community youth groups, either directly or through the WLYWP, is the preferred way ahead on a case by case basis, as long as proposed work fits within Area Delivery Plan priorities.