

Report of the Chair Inner North West Community Committee

Report to Full Council

Date: 13 January 2016

Subject: Inner North West Community Committee

Are specific electoral Wards affected?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):		
Headingley, Hyde Park & Woodhouse and Weetwood wards		
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

Summary of main issues

This report provides an overview of the progress, achievements and opportunities for the Inner North West Community Committee over the past year. Key achievements include:

- Hosting four themed meetings around key community committee priorities;
- Various successful projects funded by the community committee;
- The work of community champions and sub groups

Recommendations

Members are asked to note the content of this report.

1 Purpose of this report

- 2 The purpose of this report is to outline the progress, achievements, opportunities and challenges of the Inner North West Community Committee over the period since the last update to Full Council in January 2015.

3 Background information

- 4 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. In 2014 Community Committees were established to build on the successes of Area Committees but to better engage with communities, and in particular increase the attendance and active involvement of local people at Community Committee meetings.

6 Progress

7. The Community Committee has enjoyed some well attended and successful workshops over the past year. Papers for meetings have been refined to make them more user friendly, colourful and engaging. A newsletter has also been developed for the Committee, which has been placed in local libraries, housing offices and Community Centres, to expand the reach of the Committee to new audiences.

8. In June 2015 the Committee held a meeting to look back at the work it had done over the previous twelve months. Over the past year the Committee has also held the following workshops:

- ***Helping local people into work (January 2015)***
- ***Student changeover and the local environment (March 2015)***
- ***Improving accessibility; focus on housing, high streets and highways (September 2015)***
- ***Raising awareness about domestic violence (December 2015)***

9. ***Helping local people into work*** – A presentation looked at local statistics and what initiatives were currently in place to help local people back into work. Roundtable discussions after the presentation focussed on volunteering opportunities, what help and support is available from Job Centre Plus, and explored what barriers there are around getting hard to help families into work.

10. One of the key points to come out of the discussions was how we can better engage with BME communities in the area. Pop up employment facilities in community hubs are now being developed and discussions are ongoing around where further workshops need to take place to better engage with BME communities.

11. The Community Committee were also particularly keen to allocate wellbeing funding to projects that promote volunteering in the 2015/16 financial year. For example, £2,100 has been allocated to the Open XS Volunteering project which helps people claiming out of work benefits get back into employment.



Meeting of the Inner North West Community Committee to discuss local employment issues.

12. ***Student changeover and the local environment*** – Student changeover annually generates high levels of waste and noise nuisance problems, as students leave or move into their rental accommodation. A vast majority of students live in the Inner North West area of the city and sometimes the issues related to changeover can cause problems within the local community. The Community Committee held a topic discussion on changeover and the local environment to see what was working locally and what could potentially be done differently.
13. The topic has a direct impact upon the Community Committee environmental delegation, as the Community Committee has identified a number of unique challenges relating to the changeover period. Through discussions at the Community Committee and the Environment sub group operational changes have been made within environmental services to tackle these challenges.
13. As a result of this, a number of projects have been supported through wellbeing to help combat some of these issues and enhance local service. These projects included nearly £3,500 for the Leave Leeds Tidy initiative which is run by Leeds University, which encourages residents to reuse and recycle unwanted items, and £10,000 for a dedicated noise nuisance patrol, ring-fenced to the LS6 area. Nearly £1,000 was approved for additional dog fouling and littering patrols in the area and just short of £12,000 wellbeing funds for additional staff to be allocated to work on Woodhouse Moor. The Communities Team also worked with Leeds Beckett's University Students' Union to develop a new project which will aim to boost volunteering around changeover time to address environmental issues in the area; just over £5,000 has been allocated to this project.
14. Officers from the Communities Team also regularly meet with partners and Members to discuss plans for student changeover and continue to look at innovative and sustainable ways to improve the local environment in the Inner North West area. Local councillors and members of the public have commented this year that they have seen a reduction in the environmental problems often associated with student changeover.



Leeds Beckett Students' Union, Refloat team. The project aims to reduce the amount of glass sent to landfill during changeover and is funded with Wellbeing monies.

15. **Improving Accessibility; focus on housing, high streets and highways** – At the Inner North West Community Committee meeting in September the Committee looked at how physical accessibility could be improved to housing in the area, and how pavements and roads could be made easier for everyone to use.
16. Presentations were received from: the council's highways department about how the council designs high streets to make them accessible; Leeds University Students' Union about the experiences that disabled students face living in the area; and the RNIB about a pilot project that they were launching in Headingley.
17. The following workshop discussions allowed attendees to look more closely at the issues, build links with local organisations and raise awareness about the difficulties that people with disabilities or mobility problems might face on a day to day basis. The workshops helped raise Member's awareness about issues in the area and some have subsequently become involved in helping to develop the RNIB's pilot project in Headingley.
18. **Raising awareness about domestic violence** – The meeting looked at how domestic violence and abuse affects individuals, families and communities within the Inner North West area and how we can raise awareness about the issue. The meeting was led by contributions from the council's domestic violence team and Behind Closed Doors, a domestic violence charity.
19. Some of the key issues that Members wanted to draw out of the meeting included, looking at how we can encourage those harder to reach groups to report incidents of domestic violence and how more organisations in the local area can be encouraged to sign up to the Leeds domestic violence quality mark. Workshop discussions centred around how such work could be progressed and officers are now actively approaching local organisations to see whether they would like any support and training around domestic violence.
20. **Priority Neighbourhoods**
21. The neighbourhoods of Hyde Park and Little London have been identified as priority neighbourhoods within the Inner North West area. These two areas are amongst the most deprived in the city and improvement plans have therefore been drawn up for these areas, along with some key priorities for targeted project work.
22. The Inner North West Community Committee approved these targeted and measurable improvement plans, that have been drawn up in consultation with

partners and Members, at their Community Committee meeting in December. Work will now start to take place around these priorities.

23. Little London Community Project

24. The Little London Community Project has had a number of meetings with partners and local residents to consider what the key issues are in Little London. Whilst the project is still in its early stages, there has been an encouraging amount of interest from the community and another meeting is planned for February 2016.

25. **Wellbeing projects & Youth Activities Fund**

26. The Inner North West Community Committee has approved wellbeing schemes totalling £106,237 so far this year. A great deal of the funding is spent on local environmental issues such as the Leave Leeds Tidy project run by Leeds University Students' Union and the out of hours noise nuisance project that provides a ring fenced service during peak times of year to the LS6 area. A substantial amount of funding has also been allocated to community events such as the Hyde Park Unity Day and volunteering projects.

27. The Committee has also allocated Youth Activities Fund monies for this year. The majority of this has been spent on summer activities such as Minecraft activities in local libraries and a sports club at Woodsley Community Centre in Hyde Park, run by Al Haqq Supplementary School.



A thank you poster from Al Haqq Supplementary School



Hyde Park Unity Day

Social Media

28. 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. Social media has provided a platform to build relationships and share useful and interesting information from local media, community groups and residents. The Facebook page is specifically

for the Inner North West area, the Twitter page @_YourCommunity is a city wide account for all Community Committees.

29. The Communities Team have 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 around 1,000 views. The most popular posts have been about applications for secondary school places in the city, the proposed expansion of Brudenell School, and a job post for local organisation OWLs.

Community Committee Champions and Sub Groups

30. Community Committee Champions positions are held by the following Members in Inner North West during 2015/16:

- Children & Young People – Cllr Neil Walshaw
- Environment & Community Safety – Cllr Christine Towler
- Health & Well Being and Adult Social Care – Cllr Javaid Akhtar
- Employment, Skills & Welfare – Cllr Jonathan Pryor

31. The Inner North West Community Committee has three sub groups: the Children and Young People's sub group; Environment sub group; and Planning sub group. The sub groups consider issues of a thematic importance to the area and hear locally targeted reports from services. Both the Environment sub group and Planning sub group contain resident members from the three wards that make up the Inner North West areas, while the Children and Young People's sub group is attended by cluster representatives and relevant partners.

32. The **Children & Young People's sub group** meets on approximately a three monthly basis. Members have held a discussion about safeguarding, with a focus on the Prevent agenda. The sub group considers youth activities fund applications and puts forward recommendations to the Community Committee. A children and young people's event is also currently being finalised for 15 January 2016 at Leeds University. Schools from across the Inner North West area have been invited to attend, where a day of engagement activities will take place with young people.

33. The **Environment sub group** meets on a three monthly basis and hears regular update reports from services. The residents that attend the group offer a local resident perspective to the meetings. A strong focus of the group every year is on student changeover; and the Communities Team supports the work of a student changeover group that is attended by services, the universities, local police, Members and residents. The group meets regularly from April through until October to discuss key messages and to see how services can work together on any key issues. This year there has been positive feedback received by both the Environment sub group and student changeover working group regarding the success of managing the changeover process.

34. The **Planning sub group** meets on a monthly basis to discuss major planning policy issues, updates on neighbourhood plans and any key planning applications. The group has strong attendance from local residents that are all part of local neighbourhood forums.

35. The community champions' role is also being developed further through more regular meetings with lead officers from the relevant departments to discuss key priorities for the area.

36. **Corporate Considerations**

Consultation and Engagement

37. The Inner North West Community Committee has good working relationships with the communities it serves. The Committee will continue to support and enable local people and communities to engage and interact with us on issues that are important to them.

Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

38. The Inner North West Community Committee is committed to equality and cohesion. Specific equality impact assessments are undertaken on community engagement plans, specific initiatives and decisions as required. All projects funded from wellbeing and the youth activities fund must have an equal opportunities policy and outline which 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.

Council policies and City Priorities

39. The Best Council Plan 2013-17 includes the key outcome to make it easier for people to do business with us, and the move to community committees makes a significant contribution to the delivery of this.

Resources and value for money

40. There is no new resource implications detailed within this report.

Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

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

Risk Management

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

43. **Conclusions**

44. 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.

45. All themed meetings have allowed the Community Committee to work with a bottom-up approach by engaging with stakeholders to envision ways to strengthen the way in which citizens are involved in local decision making.
46. 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.
47. **Recommendations**
48. Members are asked to note the content of this report.
49. **Background documents¹**
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.