



Report of the Director of Environments & Neighbourhoods Directorate

South Leeds (Outer) Area Committee

Date: Monday 17th December 2007

Subject: Area Managers Report

Electoral Wards Affected:

Ardsley & Robin Hood
Morley North
Morley South
Rothwell

Specific Implications For:

Ethnic minorities
Women
Disabled people
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

Executive Summary

This report details a range of activities taking place within the Outer South Leeds Area, which are not dealt with elsewhere on the agenda.

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 To bring to Members' attention in a succinct fashion, brief details of the range of activities with which the Area Management Team are engaged, and that are not addressed in greater detail elsewhere on this agenda. It provides opportunities for further questioning or the opportunity to request a more detailed report on a particular issue.

2.0 Participatory Budgeting

Background

2.1 Participatory Budgeting (PB) is an umbrella term which covers a variety of mechanisms that delegate power of influence over local budgets and investment priorities to local residents.

2.1.1 The Narrowing the Gap Group chaired by Cllr Harris has asked the Area Managers for South and West Leeds, in consultation with relevant elected members, to pilot the PB approach in one neighbourhood in each area. The objectives for the pilot will be:

- To support the community leadership role of ward members

- To build the capacity and confidence of local residents in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in the city to take action to improve their neighbourhood.
- To appraise the Participatory Budgeting approach in different contexts and consider the potential for wider application.
- To build on existing neighbourhood working.
- To contribute to the mixed communities objective
- Develop priorities that accord with local needs and are supported locally
- Improve the community spirit and the positive perception of local people relating to local councils.

2.1.2 The neighbourhoods identified in each area must be within the 5-10% most deprived category and have existing neighbourhood planning or management arrangements in place to underpin the PB activity.

2.1.3 The Narrowing the Gap Executive identified that one pilot area should target a neighbourhood with little community capacity and the second pilot area should target a neighbourhood that will allow residents from more and less deprived areas to mix.

2.1.4 West Leeds Area Management have identified Broadleas neighbourhood as the area for the pilot to target a neighbourhood with little community capacity.

Process

2.2 It is forecast that the PB pilots will be promoted at the beginning of the New Year. Consultation to identify priorities is expected to be completed by the end of January and applications for projects received by the end of February. A decision for commissioned projects will be agreed by the end of March and all projects to be implemented and delivered by August 2008.

2.2.1 An evaluation of the process will be carried out once projects have been commissioned and then a second evaluation will be carried out on completion. All evaluation reports will be referred to the Narrowing the Gap group in the first instance and then shared with other stakeholders including Area Committees as appropriate. Following comments from Area Committees and the Narrowing the Gap Group a full report on the feasibility of a wider application of PB will be prepared for consideration by CLT.

Steering Group

2.3 A Steering Group has been agreed with representatives from South and West Area Management Teams, an Elected Member to ensure liaison with the narrowing the gap group, Finance Department, Leeds Strategic Partnership, Aire Valley Homes and the Central Regeneration Team. The Steering Group chaired by the South Area Manager convened its first meeting on 5th December.

Pilot Area

- 2.4 Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (NIPs) in Outer South Leeds have benefited from the Area Committee commissioning a Priority Neighbourhood Development Worker (PNDW). Significant progress to develop residents' capacity to form local community groups to target issues in their area has been achieved by the PNDW, with the assistance of Area Management and partner agencies. Experience of consulting residents on priorities and projects is well established following the Area Committee ring fencing a proportion of the Well being budget to each NIP area to fund projects based on locally identified priorities. It is felt that PB will dovetail with this process.
- 2.4.1 The criteria outlined by the Narrowing the Gap group in respect of selecting a second pilot area requires it to be in the worst 10% deprived category nationally and to target a neighbourhood that will allow residents from more and less deprived areas to mix. South Leeds Area Management has identified Oakwell and Fairfaxes (Driglington) as the neighbourhood to carry out the PB pilot in the Outer South.
- 2.4.2 A review of PB schemes in Britain indicates that projects targeting crime and improving the living environment predominate. Oakwell and Fairfax's neighbourhood is in the worst 10% nationally for these two SOA domains. Driglington Parish Council is a dynamic body already linked to the Area Committee and working in partnership with various agencies locally. It should provide an important partner in developing this area of work.

Funding

- 2.5 Each neighbourhood will be given an initial budget of £10,000 to allocate and a further £1,000 to support the process itself. £10,000 match funding has already been secured from Aire Valley Homes (AVH) linked to environmental improvements in the pilot area. The Outer South Area Committee is asked to consider the allocation of £10,000 from Wellbeing funding to support this initiative. This would provide a total funding pot of £30,000.
- 2.6 The Steering Group will discuss and confirm the neighbourhoods for the PB pilots and the process and timeline that the pilots will be operating to, a verbal update will be provided at the Area Committee.

3.0 Staffing

- 3.1 While the Regeneration Section enters the final stages of the restructuring I have to report that Kate Armitstead, Area Assistant Outer South will be leaving the authority on 7th December to join Bradford Youth Service. Kate has made an excellent contribution to work in Outer South Leeds particularly in the NIP areas and Youth Networks. In view of the imminent commencement of interviews as part of the restructuring process a gap of 2-3 months before Kate's replacement is identified is likely.

4.0 Town & District Centre Regeneration Scheme

- 4.1 As reported recently the major part of the Marsh Street works regarding the resurfacing and layout of the car park have been completed. Mouchel Parkman, the project manager for the improvement scheme are currently in discussions with the contractor to resolve issues to do with the invoicing for work. Area Management are conscious of the need to complete all work on this site including landscaping and will bring a report to the February Area Committee to address this.
- 4.2 Work is still progressing on the planning for the regeneration of Morley Bottoms. The results of the traffic survey are expected early in the New Year. The advertising hoarding site has been secured, which should see the construction of the layby with start on site early in the New Year. Meanwhile, officers continue to pursue Section 215 notices on several property owners.

5.0 Cleaner Neighbourhoods

- 5.1 Actions from the second Cleaner Neighbourhoods Sub Group meeting have been incorporated into the action plan (Appendix 1) which assists in aligning work with the Area Delivery Plan (ADP).
- 5.2 Minutes from the 18th October Cleaner Neighbourhoods Sub Group are attached.
- 5.3 The issue of additional street cleansing services across the outer south area was raised by Morley Town Council who have offered £5,000 towards a Glutton street cleaner. This matter is presented for consideration in the Wellbeing report.
- 5.4 The next meeting of the Cleaner Neighbourhoods Sub Group will take place on Thursday 17th January 2008.

6.0 Additional Wellbeing Allocation

- 6.1 In September, the Area Committee received a report on Conservation Audits which reported an additional allocation of Wellbeing funding. The Area Committee asked for a further report to clarify the use of this funding as well as agreeing to spend £1,875 on a survey of the usage of Queensway Car Park in Morley. The November Area Committee received a further report on the allocation of an additional £50,000 to the Area Committee Wellbeing budget and among other things agreed;
- 6.2 Conservation Area Audits
- 6.2.1 The last Area Committee agreed to fund reviews in Morley and Rothwell at a cost of £25,000. However, following consultation with officers in Sustainable Development this figure has now been revised down to £16,000. Area Management are liaising with Morley Town Council and Sustainable Development with regard to the Morley element of this work.

6.3 Morley Town Hall

6.3.1 The November Area Committee considered the following list of priority items which had been compiled by Area Management in discussions with Civic Building staff and asked for further consultation:

Repairs to Mosaic Floor	£20,000
New stage lighting in the Alexandra Hall	£10,000
Replacement of Chairs in the Alexandra Hall	£15,000

6.3.2 While Civic Building officers have suggested that work on new stage lighting and replacement of chairs in the Alexandra Hall would be most beneficial no firm costings are available. Members are asked to indicate their priority for development and receive a further report to consider at the next area committee.

7.0 Public Conveniences, Midland Street, Woodlesford

7.1 These toilets which are managed by City Services but are the responsibility of Area Management have been shut for over a year following complaints from Police and local residents. Property Services have received an enquiry to purchase.

7.2 Ward members have been consulted and indicated their support for disposal, subject to retaining the capital receipt to fund a replacement facility, if required. Colleagues in Property Services have indicate that if this site was deemed surplus to requirements then disposal would be by auction and that a case for any replacement would have to be made to Asset Management Group.

8.0 Recommendations

8.1 The Area Committee is asked to note the above information and make comment as appropriate.

8.2 Consider and approve £10,000 from the Wellbeing budget to support the Participatory Budgeting pilot in Outer South Leeds.

8.3 Following discussions with Civic Building staff officers are asked to bring a further report to the February Area Committee in respect of improvements to Morley Town Hall.