



Report of the Director of Environments & Neighbourhoods Directorate

South Leeds (Outer) Area Committee

Date: Monday 25th February 2008

Subject: Priority Neighbourhood Development Worker

Electoral Wards Affected:

Ardsley & Robin Hood
Morley North
Morley South
Rothwell

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

Executive Summary

This report outlines the progress of the Priority Neighbourhood Development Worker (PNDW) project in the delivery of Phase One Neighbourhood Improvement Plans (NIP's) at Eastleighs/Fairleighs, Newlands & Denshaws and John O'Gaunts, Phase Two NIP's at Wood Lane, the Harrops and Oakwells/Fairfaxes, Phase Three NIPs and additional work carried out to support Area Committee priorities. It outlines a general summary of the work and asks the Area Committee to support the project with funding for a further 12 months to continue the work outlined in this report and assist the Area Committee in achieving its community engagement role.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Outer South Area Committee of progress made in relation to community development and capacity building in the Neighbourhood Improvement Areas which in turn contributes to Narrowing the Gap and Community Cohesion agenda. In particular the report recommends the extension of the PNDW post for a further twelve months to continue the work outlined in this report and ensure that the Area Committee fulfils its delegated responsibility of community engagement and supports the further capacity building being undertaken.

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 Following Area Committee approval the PNDW project was commissioned in November 2006 to be delivered by South Leeds Health for All (SLHFA) - a community development charity on behalf of the Outer South Area Committee.
- 2.2 In July 2007, Area Committee approved the extension of the post until March 2008, to continue the support of community groups and individuals, as part of the NIP process.

3.0 Main Issues

- 3.1 Over the past six months the PNDW has continued to work in target NIP areas. This has involved assisting in the further development of the existing Resident Associations by supporting them in planning, organising and managing their own community initiatives and projects. This has enabled further community empowerment in those areas. The PNDW has also carried out developmental work in new areas including the Harrops, Morley South and Oakwells, Fairfaxes, Morley North.

3.2 Phase One. Eastleighs/Fairleighs

- 3.2.1 The NIP continues to meet and develop its action plan with the assistance of partner agencies. Through the NIP action plan, support was provided to the Children's Project to provide a summer activity programme for young children. The PNDW has supported the residents in contributing to the NIP process, with the chair and a committee member attending the bimonthly NIP meetings. The management committee of the TARA are now developed sufficiently to be supported by the Customer Involvement Officer from Aire Valley Homes which will allow the PNDW to focus on other elements of the the NIP action plan and new work areas.
- 3.2.2 The PNDW has provided ongoing support to 'Tingley TARA' (Tenants and Residents Association). The development of the management committee by the PNDW has increased their capacity to prioritise issues, plan and prepare for future meetings and to overcome conflict between competing issues.
- 3.2.3 The Residents Association prioritised two issues; tackling Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) in the community and to improve the sense of community spirit and community engagement.
- 3.2.4 To target the ASB, the Police attend all residents' meetings and as part of the NIP , a Street Awareness is project planned with Aire Valley Homes to be delivered by the Youth Service and West Yorkshire Police. The project is aimed at educating young people about citizenship and the negative effects of ASB. The project will also incorporate sessions with older people by which it is hoped to improve intergenerational relationships in the community.

3.2.5 The PNDW has offered support to the group to organise social events to develop community cohesion. Assistance from the PNDW to prepare for the summer community fun day, the trip to Scarborough and the Halloween party, allowed the organising committee to learn lessons in how to organise events. By the time of the recent Christmas party, the committee organised the event mainly by themselves with very minimal support, thereby demonstrating the successful capacity building that had been achieved to date.

3.3 Phase One. John O’Gaunts

3.3.1 The NIP is progressing well and partnership working between agencies is continuing to develop the action plan.

3.3.2 The PNDW has provided intense support to the John O’Gaunts Residents Association and the NIP area. Initial negative attitudes from residents have been overcome and the group have developed their skills which is enabling them to take greater pride and ownership of the Residents Association and the area. As a direct result of agencies working with the Residents Association the following projects have been developed at their request:

- Environment Week – partnership with Area Management, Aire Valley Homes and Groundwork to meet needs of improving gardens, open greens space and tackling litter. Residents are engaged with the planning and involvement of activities for the week. A master plan will be one of the main outcomes.
- Provision of information on how to report the problem of rats and how the Pest Control Department works – to educate residents, thus in turn reducing the problem of infestation in the area.
- Community Gardening Tool Bank - to tackle untidy gardens and empower the local community, by helping them get involved with planning, organising and managing the scheme.
- Housing complaints have been dealt with more effectively.
- Community newsletter – to improve community communication and engagement by promoting community groups and projects of the area.

3.3.3 Additional projects such as John O’Gaunts in Bloom and the Summer Community Fun Day, are supported by the PNDW, the residents association and the wider community.

3.3.4 The PNDW has developed the capacity of the group by regularly meeting with the management committee to educate them about how the different public sector agencies function and to plan future action. The daytime meetings for the Gardening Tool bank project that include residents who are unable to attend the evening residents meeting have been particularly productive for developing the capacity of residents. Residents have enjoyed planning and problem solving for all various aspects of the project including how the project will be managed and promoted and completing a draft application for funding. Importantly, there has been time during the planning meetings to develop initial ideas put forward by residents, educate residents about related issues, with all residents getting involved with solving potential problems and/or suggesting alternatives. This approach is key to community empowerment and building the confidence of residents – which is often not practical in residents meetings when there is a very busy agenda.

3.3.5 Building on the successful community engagement, the PNDW has now initiated a Job Shop to be delivered in the community by Jobs and Skills.

3.4 Phase One. Newlands and Denshaws

3.4.1 As recently reported, the Newlands and Denshaws Residents Association is well organised and has reached a mature enough level to be supported solely by the Customer Involvement Officer from Aire Valley Homes. The NIP action plan has been completed and Area Management look to embrace further work in this area in line with the Partnership Working and Community Engagement Reports.

3.5 Phase Two. Oakwells/Fairfaxes

3.5.2 Initial background research by the PNDW identified a number of significant barriers to developing a Residents Association in the area:

- Some members of the former Residents Association were victims of ASB – possibly because of their open stance of reporting all crimes to the Police. This may have prevented others from the community from joining the group.
- The former Residents Association folded which, according to former members was due in part to a lack of agency support or interest in their area?
- Residents of Oakwells/Fairfaxes may feel excluded from the wider community the of Drighlington, and the perception may exist that they would not be welcome to Residents meetings.
- There are no specific community groups for people from Oakwells/Fairfaxes and so it may be that organisations have little experience of meeting the needs of Oakwells/Fairfaxes residents – which may differ to those of the wider Drighlington community.

3.5.3 Following this research, the PNDW organised three Residents Association meetings. There was a strong effort to promote each of the meetings by door knocking all houses in the area, distributing leaflets to all houses, and encouraging the learning mentor of Drighlington Primary school to promote the meeting to families from the area. However, the meetings had poor attendance from residents at the first two and no attendance for the last one. In addition, partner agencies who are so important and effective in other NIPs, did not seem to have the resources to be involved with this NIP.

3.5.4 The PNDW subsequently set up meetings with other groups to deliver projects within the NIP area to support children and families. The Children's Project was commissioned to deliver 'Drighlington Summer Playscheme', which was attended by eight families from the NIP area. The Children's' Centres Services South Seven Day Response Team plan to start a community group aimed at supporting families and children from the Oakwells/Fairfaxes area in early 2008.

3.5.5 At the recent Operation Champion, eleven families from the Oakwells/Fairfaxes area said that they would be interested in getting involved with a Tenants and Residents Association or a community group.

3.5.6 The PNDW's planned work for the area in the immediate future is to develop the community capacity of Oakwells/Fairfaxes through the South Leeds Participatory Budgeting pilot. Positive engagement with Drighlington Parish Council in delivering PB will provide an opportunity to work successfully in this area.

3.6 Phase Two. The Harrops

3.6.1 PNDW completed background research and outreach work in the NIP area. The first residents meeting took place with eleven residents from the area attending. Various issues at that meeting were raised by residents, including: incidents of ASB, problems with street cleaning, unkempt gardens, the development of Hembrigg Park, and the need for there to be more activities for young people.

3.6.2 Following requests from residents, the second meeting was held at a different venue, however, there was a drastic drop in attendance with only four residents attending. Subsequently, further work is planned to identify alternatives for progressing work in the area.

3.7 Phase Two. Wood Lane

3.7.1 Research found a long established, well organised and mature residents association not requiring any detailed work. Area Management continue to work with Property Services regarding the upgrading of shops on Manor Road/ Wood Lane.

3.8 Ward Forum Research

3.8.1 As agreed at the September Area Committee background work for the ward forum research has started. The PNDW has carried out research to compile a database of community groups in each ward across the Outer South area. An existing database has been revised by looking in the local press and asking local residents for groups that they are aware of. The PNDW then attempted to contact all community groups to conduct research on; the regularity of meetings, number of members, partnerships formed and funding sources.

3.8.2 The PNDW will be involved in further consultation work to be carried out in Ardsley and Robin Hood. Consultation with Councillors, key community members and community groups will aim to identify current means of consultation at ward level, and if improvements can be made.

3.8.3 Ward Forum work will be influenced by Partnership Working and Community Engagement Reports which will be discussed elsewhere on the agenda.

3.9 Morley Literature Festival

3.9.1 The PNDW was heavily involved with the promotion of Morley Literature Festival in the town and in the wider community. The PNDW was consulted for evaluation purposes on the event and how best to engage with the NIP areas in future festivals. Based on this evaluation future festival events will be located in the community and the PNDW will be a key resource in facilitating this.

3.10 Morley & Rothwell Tasking

- 3.10.1 Tasking in Morley and Rothwell is led by the local Neighbourhood Policing Teams. The meeting include Anti Social Behaviour Unit, Aire Valley Homes, West Yorkshire Police, Probation and Area Management sharing information to co-ordinate and support crime issues in the Outer South.
- 3.10.2 The PNDW attends both the Morley and Rothwell tasking meetings on behalf of Area Management. This provides a direct link between the NIPS, tenants and residents associations, and tasking. The PNDW attendance also provides a link between Area Management and crime prevention agencies. Tasking meetings allow the PNDW to inform agencies of relevant projects occurring in relevant areas and communicate relevant issues from Tasking back to Area Management where necessary.

4.0 Future Role of PNDW

- 4.1 Area Management Review report presented at the December Area Committee outlined proposals from the Councils Executive Board on a review of the Area Committees role and responsibilities. The review identified effective community engagement as a key responsibility of Area Committees.
- 4.2 The primary role of the PNDW is to engage with the community to develop the capacity of the residents in priority areas. Building on the successes demonstrated in this report it is planned to continue to identify and record the needs and views of the residents. This data will then be available to assist the Area Committee to meet local needs through influencing service planning and priorities.
- 4.3 The PNDW has effectively created a strong sense of ownership among communities in some areas. However, in addition to needs already identified in NIP areas, community development is necessary across the wider Outer South area to encourage participation in the decision making process. Moves to a type of Ward Forum engagement necessitates the continuation of this project.
- 4.4 The PNDW will play a key role in the delivery of the Participatory Budgeting (PB) pilot in Oakwells and Fairfaxes and the wider Drighlington community. PB has been initiated by the Narrowing the Gap Board aiming to;
- build the capacity and confidence of local residents in a disadvantaged neighbourhood (Oakwells/Fairfaxes),
 - develop projects to meet local needs,
 - encourage neighbourhoods from different socio-economic backgrounds to mix.
- The pilot started in December 2007 and it is planned to be completed in September 2008.
- 4.5 The PNDW is a significant resource to promote the initiative, deliver consultation and training events to build the capacity of individuals and community groups and contribute to the organisation and delivery of the 'Decision Day'.

4.6 The phase three NIPS, Wood Lane, Northfields and Oulton and Woodlesford have not been actioned due to resource implication. The PNDW plays a key role in reviewing phase 3 and to also consider engaging the wider community.

5.0 Implications For Council Policy and Governance

5.1 The role of the PNDW and NIPs detailed in this report is in line with 'Narrowing the Gap' and the Councils commitment to community cohesion.

6.0 Legal and Resource Implications

6.1 There are no legal implications arising from the contents of this report.

6.2 The project has funding until the 31st March 2008. Resource implications will be that in agreeing the continuation of the PNDW post, the Area Committee is agreeing to commit part of the 2008/09 Well being Budget, subject to confirmation of the budget.

7.0 Conclusions

7.1 The Area Committee's development of the PNDW project has provided direct support to groups and individuals to develop and sustain their involvement in the NIP process and beyond. The community development and ongoing support to residents groups has been a catalyst for further work in the NIPs as agencies have had the opportunity to consult with residents and to learn about the needs of the community.

7.2 The PNDW provides a critical resource to Area Management enabling them to effectively achieve its community engagement function and support residents in actively participating in the decision making process. Input from the PNDW is essential for the delivery and success of the participatory budgeting pilot and the development of Ward forums. These actions are vehicles to further support the role of the Ward Councillor as a community champion.

8.0 Recommendations

8.1 Members are recommended to;

- Note the contents of this report
- Approve £31,622 funding from the Wellbeing Budget 2008/2009, subject to the budget being approved by Executive Board, for a twelve month extension to the Priority Neighbourhood Development Worker post.