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Report to: Licensing Committee

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To Note

Harehills Work Programme

Purpose of report

This report provides an update on the work programme of Leeds City Council and partners in relation to the Harehills neighborhood of Leeds.

The context to this report is the recent inclusion of Harehills in Leeds City Council's Cumulative Impact Policy (CIP) and the desire of the Licensing Committee to better understand the wider neighborhood improvement agenda in the neighbourhood.

Background

1. Harehills is community that straddles two electoral Wards (Gipton & Harehills Ward and a small part of Burmantofts & Richmond Hill Ward either side of Harehills Lane) and is a neighbourhood that suffers from significant levels of deprivation.
2. According to the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD 2015), Harehills has a number of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in the worst 1% for deprivation in England (all LSOAs in this Ward are in the worst 5%). Taken collectively, the IMD statistics show Harehills as one of the poorest performing wards in Leeds; poverty (and the wider determinants of poverty) affect a significant number of residents in this neighbourhood.
3. The challenges – above average levels of crime, environmental blight, unemployment/low paid employment, low educational attainment, language & skills deficits and poor health outcomes - have been the subject of intensive neighbourhood improvement activity for a number of years. This improvement programme has been co-designed and led by Gipton & Harehills Ward Members and Leeds City Council,

who along with partners and residents have delivered this work programme for the last three years.

4. Despite the challenges that Harehills presents, there are also positives and opportunities. The strides made by local Elected Members, the wider council, partners and residents has resulted in some significant gains. These are highlighted in the following paragraphs.

Main issues

5. It should be noted that the activity highlighted has been delivered via a number of mechanisms but at its heart has been a collaborative approach nurtured and sustained via the Harehills Neighbourhood Improvement Partnership (NIP).
6. Given the volume of activity taking of place, this paper attempts to highlight progress by theme. And, for the sake of parity, this paper also sets out some of the challenges that remain as barriers to progress.

Engagement:

7. Harehills is a dynamic and diverse community (approximately 65% of the resident population is BAME) that has displayed continued resilience despite some acute challenges. Building relationships with residents in Harehills to better understand their experiences has been an obsession of the Harehills NIP and has helped target resources from a range of council and partner services in a climate of diminishing budgets.

Events, campaigns and resident involvement

- Harehills Festival – Now in its fourth year, the festival is Harehills' showcase event that sees hundreds of local residents visit Banstead Park for an afternoon of fun and interaction with local services.
- Gipton and Harehills Fun Day – In its 2nd year, this event is funded by Gipton & Harehills Ward Members and takes place in Harehills Park with a remit of engaging families.
- Canopy Housing Open Day – Despite being in Burmantofts and Richmond Hill Ward, the Bellbrookes community consider themselves Harehills residents and work is underway to forge a relationship with Canopy Housing (who rent a number of properties in the area).
- Neighbourhood Vision meetings – To date, there have been four public meetings that have provided local residents with the opportunity to interact with local councillors and a range of council and statutory services to discuss their aspirations and concerns for the area. The most recent event took place in October 2018.
- Resident support – A relationship has been nurtured with a dedicated group of residents over the last three years which has seen Harehills in Bloom come to fruition. Harehills in Bloom undertake community planting and look to take ownership of the area's limited greenspaces (including working with the Compton Centre and the council's Parks & Countryside service). Ashton Park is their latest focus.
- Keep Harehills Tidy – This flagship project in Harehills saw the Senior Localities Officer for Harehills build up a brand and resident movement around making Harehills

a cleaner place to live and work. Work strands included community clean-ups, resident education, marketing and engagement as well as a far reaching social media presence. The KHT campaign is now under the stewardship of the council's Cleaner Neighbourhoods Team and is monitored via the Inner East Community Committee Environmental Sub Group.

- Harehills Community Watch – There are established links with key members of the influential Harehills Community Watch Facebook page. Those residents who are part of Keep Harehills Tidy, Harehills in Bloom or the vision meetings help moderate the page and convey some of the challenges the council and partners face in delivering a change programme in Harehills. Reporting of environmental offences has increased as a result and the group moderators are now actively engaging with council meetings such as the Inner East Community Committee.
- 16 Days of Action/White Ribbon Campaign – The Communities Team and partners co-ordinate local activity relating to both of these campaigns against domestic violence and abuse, which has seen sponsored walks as well as slots on Radio Asian Fever and a host of other more localised activity across the ward.

Partnership Working

- Harehills Neighbourhood Improvement Partnership – This partnership network has been running in Harehills for three years and has been pivotal in building relationships in Harehills across all sectors as well as surfacing some of the major strategic issues facing the community (see policy). Despite running for a number of years the partnership still attracts 20-25 regular partners, with an e-network of over 50 partners.
- Eastern European Sub Group – The Eastern European Sub Group has sought to look at issues and opportunities relating to recent migration trends in East Leeds. Harehills has been the beneficiary of this work including some innovative sign posting videos (translated in a range of languages) relating to local services. The sub group is now facilitated by the Migration Partnership Team.

Bespoke Engagement

- Bespoke Engagement – This can take a number of forms be that leaflet drops, door knocking in the Nowells, discussions with a cohort of Migrant Community Networkers about communication approaches or services wanting to do bespoke engagement on issues such as the council's transport plan or an apprenticeship recruitment drive.
- Afghan Community – Two years of dedicated support has seen this Harehills-based charity get back on an even keel after a change in local leadership.
- Bangladeshi Centre – A high profile, public confrontation caused the centre to be subject to special measures by Leeds City Council. Extended conflict resolution has seen the centre emerge with a renewed focus and the Senior Localities Officer is supporting the centre rejuvenate its physical infrastructure via some best practice business models and initiatives such as community action days.
- A project is coming to fruition, led jointly by both the Communities Team and the Communications & Marketing Team to promote a community standards campaign, aimed at fostering better cohesion in the Harehills area. The campaign will be pitched to service leads for funding contributions in early 2019.

Policy

8. The work of the neighbourhood improvement partnership has helped the Council and partners better understand the complex issues presented by the Harehills neighbourhood. Despite the high volume of local neighbourhood improvement activity, some challenges have required new policies being implemented by Leeds City Council. Highlighted below are four such policy initiatives that have come on-stream in the last 12-18 months:
- Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) – Now in force in Harehills after going through a lengthy legal process, the PSPO grants powers to create an ‘exclusion zone’ along the Harehills corridor that stipulates bins be removed from public highways at key times and public drinking is restricted. Fines can be issued if the conditions are not complied with.
 - Priority Neighbourhoods – Pilot work is underway in the Nowells area, which is part of Burmantofts and Richmond Hill ward, but residents consider themselves living in Harehills. This work is in its infancy but already innovations are emerging around community engagement, ASB and how services deliver to residents with complex needs.
 - Selective Licensing – A consultation concluded in October 2018 that will provide evidence to executive board for a case for Selective Licensing in Harehills. Selective Licensing could effectively semi-regulate the housing market in Harehills by making landlords comply with some standard of living conditions for their tenants. Failure to pay for a licence or comply with its conditions would lead to financial penalties. A business case for Selective Licensing will be presented to the council’s executive board in spring 2019.
 - Cumulative Impact Policy (CIP) – Approved by Full Council in November, the CIP enhances the powers granted to the authority to refuse applications for off-licences and late night take-aways in an area already saturated with both. The emphasis is now on the applicant to make a case for an approval rather than the panel to make case to decline a licence application. Despite being in its infancy, the CIP has already started to yield results with a recent alcohol licence extension application being rejected by the council’s Licensing Sub Committee on 15th January 2019. The hearing heard compelling evidence from Ward Members, council officers, West Yorkshire Police officers and residents as to why the application for a 24 hour alcohol license wasn’t appropriate on Harehills Road.

Children & Young People

9. Harehills is a neighbourhood that has one of the highest (nearly 27% of the population is 14 and under) and most visible populations of children and young people in Leeds. Engaging children and young people in positive activity is a key focus for the Neighbourhood Improvement Partnership.
- Over £44,000 was committed to provision for children and young people in Gipton and Harehills Ward for 2018/19. A recent commissioning round funded approximately 18 projects; a record for this Ward.
 - Youth Cohesion Group – This grouping, an offshoot of the Harehills NIP, continues to meet and drive forward local priorities. The group also plays a vital role in building relationships between Harehills’ thriving youth sector, a recent example being local youth organisations supporting the Inner East Community Committee Youth Summit event.

- Compton Centre – Thanks in part to the NIP, there is now youth provision and activities are taking place at the Compton Centre Hub including sports activities and youth work sessions. A new children’s playground was also installed in September 2018, funded by Gipton and Harehills Ward Members.
- Youth Offending Service ‘Think First’ Group - 15 Romanian young people involved in crime or anti-social behaviour are being targeted for youth work. YOS in conjunction with Community Action to Change Harehills (CATCH) will be running the course over an eight week period. Funded by Gipton & Harehills Ward Members, all young people taking part in the project are from the Harehills area.
- Bonfire Night “deep dive” – An innovative piece of work was undertaken by the Senior Localities Officer and colleagues to look at a cohort of perpetrators from the bonfire night period ASB incidents and investigate why they were engaging in this behaviour. This has led to an annual programme of diversionary activities for young people taking place over the bonfire night/Halloween period.

Place

10. Harehills is a densely-packed urban area that consists of a significant volume of private-rented housing stock in the form of terrace houses. The limited number of quality greenspaces and the need to improve the public realm has been identified as an area of focus for the Harehills NIP and Ward Members.
 - Town and District Centre (TDC) 2 improvements – This scheme saw highways improvements made to Harehills Lane and local public realm improvements such as hanging baskets, improved street signage and innovative art works installed from East Street Arts including the Hare of Harehills (now located in the Compton Centre) and the ‘H’ sculpture situation on Harehills Lane (opposite Morrisons supermarket).
 - Banstead Park - £25,000 has been approved to spend on Banstead Park. A consultation exercise carried out by the Communities Team and the Parks & Countryside Service ascertained resident’s views on what they would like to see in the greenspace.
 - Ashton Park – The Parks & Countryside Service alongside Harehills in Bloom are to formulating some proposals to improve to the park, which is in need of an uplift. There is also an action plan in play to address some of the ASB challenges that exist around the park site.
 - LCP Harehills Road Improvement Scheme – This scheme is currently in development and follows the same model as the Harehills Lane TDC2 scheme.

Crime & Anti-Social Behaviour

11. Harehills is an area that continues to face challenges in the form of crime and anti-social behaviour. Despite the pressure on resources, the council and partners continue to work together on a range of innovations to help residents feel safer in their neighbourhood.
 - Halloween/Bonfire period – In response to a significant spike in ASB around this period a multi-agency response has been in place in Harehills for the last few years that sees an a bespoke action plan enacted to provide precautionary and diversionary activities for the week between Halloween and Bonfire Night. Funded by Ward

Councillors and facilitated by a working group led by the Senior Localities Officer, this approach is to be trialled in other parts of the city.

- Tasking – A local partnership arrangement, now led by the police, that sees partners come together to problem solve local crime and grime issues
- ASB strategic response – In July a multi-agency OBA sessions was held to problem solve the issues of widespread ASB in Harehills (and beyond). An action plan is emerging that will help combat some of the root causes of this activity
- Neighbourhood Response Team – This has been trialled in the Nowells area and is being explored as an option in key streets in Harehills. The NRT model sees a dedicated Police and LASBAT resource deployed to disrupt patterns of behaviour relating to low level crime and ASB, for a time limited period.
- Support for Safer Leeds initiatives – Leeds Lives Not Knives campaign and others are being supported by the Neighbourhood Improvement Partnership in a number of guises be that communications, facilitating partnership buy-in and helping craft the approach in the Harehills area taking into account local sensitivities.
- The evidence gathered by the neighbourhood improvement partnership has led to a successful Home Office funding bid by the West Yorkshire PCC. This project aims to tackle violent crime and reduce youth offending in the Harehills and Chapeltown area.

Environment

12. Environmental blight has been a key focus for the neighbourhood improvement partnership over the last three years. Complementing the sustained efforts of both the council's Cleaner Neighbourhoods Team and Refuse Service, the NIP has helped galvanise around bespoke projects such as the successful Keep Harehills Tidy Campaign.

- Keep Harehills Tidy – see earlier in the report.
- Bin Yard Pilot – Executive Board have committed approx. £250k to support a bin yard clean-up programme. Harehills, which has the most bin yards in the city, will benefit from the pilot and the Communities Team is helping the Cleaner Neighbourhood Team select those bin yards to target in the first tranche.
- Cleaner Neighbourhoods Team – A service that has dedicated officers for the Harehills area and who work closely with local Elected Members.
- Scrap Metal – A frequent issue aired by local elected Members is the volume of scrap metal collectors operating illegally in Harehills and at all hours of the day. A number of local operations have been undertaken to combat this following the Harehills Tasking meetings; these include 'sting' operations at local collection points; three multi-agency stop and searches (Operation Mainland); proactive evening patrols involving the Cleaner Neighbourhoods Team and the Police and vehicle seizures. As a result of this partnership activity there have been 30 translated warning letters issued to known scrap metal dealers, 18 vehicle seizures due to a range of offences (no tax, no MOT, defective motor vehicles) and five scrap metal collectors have been disqualified from driving altogether. Discussions are now underway with Wakefield Council – a source of a lot of licences – to see if there is a process for stopping these licence holders collecting in Harehills.
- Spontaneous community clean ups – As a result of the Keep Harehills Tidy campaign and other resident engagement, community activists (including from the Back to Front project and Harehills In Bloom) are now self-organising clean-ups via the Harehills

Community Watch website. The council's Cleaner Neighbourhood Team and Communities Team are supporting with communications and equipment when requested.

Challenges and emerging issues

13. Intensive neighbourhood improvement work and increased community engagement over the last three years has helped enhance the council and partners' collective understanding of Harehills as a neighbourhood. This work programme has had to be fluid to keep pace with what is a rapidly evolving agenda. However, despite progress and the concerted efforts of the Elected Members, wider council, partners and residents some challenges remain.
- Given the scale and volume of challenges in Harehills, it has been inevitable that resources have been stretched at times and the pace of improvement has not been as fast as residents would like. The consequence has been frontline staff feeling under increased pressure to meet competing demands, despite a high commitment to the neighbourhood improvement agenda.
 - Harehills is a dynamic and thriving place but, as with anywhere, new arrivals can take a while to adjust to their physical surroundings and the nuances of a culturally diverse community setting.
 - Community safety is frequently referenced by residents as one of their top priorities. The need for agencies to respond quickly to new and emerging challenges has brought increased workloads.
 - Face to face contact – Establishing a true picture of the lives of residents is a major issue in Harehills. The opportunities for agencies – council, third sector and statutory - to meaningfully engage are limited and often only occur in silo at the point of crisis. Data and statistics have limitations. Selective licensing, should it be endorsed by the council's executive board in spring 2019, could present an opportunity to get over the threshold and actively engage with citizens in Harehills in their own homes.

Conclusion

14. This work programme is a result of the council and partners working towards the priorities of the Inner East Community Committee and the aspirations of the Leeds City Council's Locality Working model to accelerate neighbourhood improvement activity in its 16 Priority Neighbourhoods and 12 Targeted Wards (including Gipton & Harehills Ward).
15. This programme of work should be seen as a work in progress. Harehills will continue to be a focus for neighbourhood improvement activity for Leeds City Council and partners and, whilst significant strides have been made, there remains work to be done.

Recommendations

The Licensing Committee is requested to:

16. Note the contents of the report and make comment where appropriate.