

**Report of Director of Resources and Housing**

**Report to Executive Board**

**Date: 7 January 2020**

**Subject: Investing in our Neighbourhoods – a review of the investment in Holbeck**

Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s): Beeston and Holbeck	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Has consultation been carried out?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Will the decision be open for call-in?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

**Summary**

**1. Main issues**

- As part of the strategy to address the issues in Holbeck, the Executive Board in July and November 2016 approved considerable investment in the area. In July 2016 the Board approved revenue funding for the Leeds Neighbourhood Approach (LNA) to be retained in the area for a further 3 years at a cost of £1.5m. In November 2016 the Board approved a capital investment of £4.5m to renovate, improve and provide energy efficiency works to properties
- The LNA has resulted in over 885 properties being inspected, with over 1670 hazards removed, making 464 properties safer to live in. 111 long term empty homes have been returned to occupation, with only 39 flats and houses remaining empty in the area as of the end of September 2019, of which only 10 have been empty for over 12 months. At the start of the work by the LNA in the area there were 70 empty homes, all of which have now been brought back into use as part of the approach. To address environmental issues, there have been 17 multi-agency walkabouts, resulting in 1200 actions being completed to improve the look of the area. To better engage with the landlords, there have been 11 Holbeck landlord forums to look at how we can work together to improve the area and support the sector. A pop up hub has been developed in the area which has helped with finding people employment and money advice, as well as housing issues.
- Phase 1 of group repair improved 153 properties in the Recreations, improving their thermal efficiency from a SAP rating of F/G to a B/C, increasing internal wall temperatures from as low as 12c to over 18c and saving an estimated 1450 tonnes

of CO2 per annum. It has helped to reduce fuel costs by an estimated 25/30% or around £350/400 per annum. This equates to an annual saving to the community of around £50k overall. Improving internal temperature reduces the risk of respiratory and cardiovascular conditions associated from low temperatures in the home affecting health especially the elderly and vulnerable.

- As part of the scheme 14 bin yards were also improved helping to improve the street scene and collection of waste.
- There are a number of properties still to inspect and ensure that they fully comply. This will allow the Council and partners to continue to engage with all occupiers to address needs of individuals and families. The aim is to complete all property inspections by September 2020 and then continue to support the on-going work to make a difference to the community in Holbeck
- Looking at indicators of deprivation related to the work undertaken by the approach shows that there are signs of the area improving over the last 4 years. The level of unemployment, and anti-social behaviour in the Receptions low super output area (LOSA) shows a reduction, with house prices appearing to be on the increase, as a sign of improved confidence.

## **2. Best Council Plan Implications** (click [here](#) for the latest version of the Best Council Plan)

- The investment in the area has contributed to providing homes of the right quality, type and affordability in the right places and minimising homelessness
- The way of working in the area it contributes to keeping people safe from harm and promotes community respect and resilience.
- Contributes to tackling poverty helping everyone benefit from the economy to their full potential
- Helps to reduce health inequalities and supporting active lifestyles

## **3. Resource Implications**

- There are no additional resource implications associated with this report

## **Recommendations**

- a) Executive Board are requested to note the contents of the report

## **1. Purpose of this report**

- 1.1. The purpose of the report is to update the Executive Board on the investment approved in July and November 2016 for the LNA in Holbeck and the investment in group repair, specifically in the Receptions. The report will also provide details of other activities which have complemented the investment as part of the Council and partners' activity in the area to address issues of deprivation.

## **2. Background information**

- 2.1. Holbeck is strategically important to the Council. Despite being approximately a mile from the city centre, the area has continued to rank as one of the most deprived in the city.
- 2.2. Holbeck has benefited from significant investment in recent years. The Beeston Hill and Holbeck PFI scheme refurbished over 1500 homes and delivered 345 new Council properties. Unity have completed the development of 42 new homes on the Brown Lane East/Top Moor Side. Whilst significant, the investment was in the social housing sector leaving significant issues and poor quality homes predominately in the private rented sector and the pre 1919 stock. Out of the 1200 homes targeted in the defined area, over 60% are in the private rental sector.
- 2.3. The Receptions area of Holbeck, was ranked in the worst 1% in the country for the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015 (ranked 37<sup>th</sup> worst of over 32,000 similarly sized neighbourhoods in England), unemployment was over 21.1% and poverty at 41%, including high levels of child poverty, which at 56% is double the city average as well as strong indicators of poor health, issues of crime and social isolation.
- 2.4. Despite the problems, there is a strong local community which has developed its own Neighbourhood Plan, which has clear ambitions to continue to work to improve the local area, to support regeneration and to develop connections to the city's longer term ambitions for the South Bank. The South Bank provides a real opportunity for Holbeck to develop the physical, social and economic connectivity between the city centre and Holbeck.
- 2.5. In July 2016 the Executive Board approved an investment of £1.2m in the Leeds Neighbourhood Approach model to work within Holbeck to address poor quality homes and target long term empty homes. The model is a partnership approach led by the Private Sector Housing team. Its success is not just linked to improved homes, but through crossing the threshold of all properties and making a difference to people's lives. The partnership approach identifies and offers support to residents from a number of partners, including WYFRS, Police, Health, Job Shop, LCCU, Locality/Waste, Housing Options, ASB, third sector such as Touchstone and Holbeck Elderly Aid (HEA) and maintaining a three day hub support service based in the area.
- 2.6. The approach will continue in the area with all the remaining properties being inspected by officers to ensure they comply with the minimum requirements. Further landlord forums will be held to support and work with the sector. Joint Service walkabouts will also continue to improve the environment. The partnership will also support other activity should as the promotion of events, Job Fairs and employment opportunities.

- 2.7. By visiting all properties officers will also continue to identify the needs of individuals. This will allow help to be provided in different ways to make a difference to people's lives. The support could be on a one to one basis by visiting the home and supporting people with their needs or via the Hub where people can visit and get help to find a job, have support with financial advice as well as reporting issues in relation to the environment and criminal activity.
- 2.8. In November 2016 the Executive Board approved a capital investment of £4.5m to undertake group repair works to properties in the Receptions. The scheme was to provide new roofs, windows, doors, yards and walls, as well as external insulation to improve the thermal efficiency of the pre 1919 solid wall stock in the area.
- 2.9. The scheme also made improvements to 15 bin yards linked to the homes, which removed individual bins off the streets, increased recycling rates, reduced fly tipping and greatly improved the street scene.
- 2.10. In November 2017 Executive Board approved a report, Locality Working - Tackling Poverty and Reducing Inequalities. This identified the Receptions area of Holbeck as one of 6 priority neighbourhoods in the city. These areas in the worst 1% of lower super output areas in the country were identified for concerted activity to secure improvements for residents.
- 2.11. A core group of local partners have focussed on local priorities for Holbeck. These have included:
  - Opening 5 Recreation View as a mini-community hub, providing advice, benefit support, and job search
  - **Safer Communities** – working together to deal with the particular challenges caused by sex work and the impact of drugs on local communities. Responses have included the provision of comprehensive CCTV in the Top Moor Side/ Domestic Street area, dwelling closures by the LASBT team and a dedicated police team to deal with the issues associated with street sex work
  - **Regeneration** – identifying key priorities of sites for future development; seeking to asset transfer St. Matthews Community Centre to Holbeck Elderly Aid as a catalyst for improvement to the building and support for vulnerable people and improving the environment through the proposed 'Streets for People' scheme
  - **Employment and Skills** Support people into work and training; focus on young people not in education employment or training; additional support for people on low incomes and those having difficulties after benefit changes
  - **Health and wellbeing** - Intensive support to new tenants who have multiple and complicated needs; focus on isolation and access to services; Active Leeds and Public Health support to get more people active
  - **Engagement** work with Holbeck residents' forum, stakeholders in the Voice of Holbeck group and directly with local people.

### 3. Main issues

- 3.1. The objectives of the investment made by the Executive Board in 2016 were:
  - To improve the housing conditions and energy efficiency of the homes
  - To contribute to the uplift of the area

- To make a difference to people's lives by crossing the threshold and engaging with individuals and the community to address need

3.2. The responsibility for the delivery of the schemes was delegated to the Director of Resources and Housing and delivered by the Private Sector Housing Service in conjunction with partners.

3.3. The projects and their outcomes are detailed below:

Project	Objective(s)	Outcomes
LNA	<p>To target all properties to improve the housing conditions within the area</p> <p>To target all long term empty homes to bring them back into occupation</p> <p>To work with partners to make a difference to people's lives and to attract additional resources to help uplift the area</p>	<p>Since launching the LNA in 2015 we have now inspected 885 homes out of the 1200 being targeted in Holbeck.</p> <p>The inspection process has removed over 1670 hazards so far from homes where works have been completed relating to fire safety, falls, electrical safety, security and overcrowding.</p> <p>Over 111 long term empty homes have been brought back into use.</p> <p>We have undertaken 17 multi-agency area walkabouts leading to over 1200 issues being addressed by partners working together. Issues resolved have ranged from bin yards, road conditions, unsightly properties, ASB, criminal behaviour and fly tipped waste. All resolved issues have contributed to significant improvements to the street scene and visual appearance of the area.</p> <p>11 landlord forums have been held to engage with local landlords and housing providers to update them on activities/developments in the city and local area. There have been £0.05m of private sector contributions to improvement works.</p>

	To cross the threshold of all properties and address the needs of occupiers	<p>Through our direct interventions when crossing thresholds, we have dealt with over 1100 referrals for support and advice from Holbeck residents (includes; employment/training, debt/benefits advice, ASB/reporting criminal activity, social isolation/mental health support)</p> <p>We have served over 170 legal notices against landlords who have failed to work with us, prosecuted an owner for obstruction, and served 3 civil penalties on landlords for failing to comply with improvement</p> <p>All LCC properties have been inspected and works identified. There is a programme of improvements in place to improve our stock in the area</p>
Community Hub	To provide an outreach community based hub for use by the community	<p>Creation of a community based hub within the area to provide better service delivery to the community</p> <p>In response to demand identified during property inspections, a support hub in a previously empty house in Recreation View for local residents has been created with partners to access a range of support services. These include employment and training support, benefit and money advice, housing support, referrals for medical support, social isolation and reporting issues in the local area. There have been 404 requests for service since opening last June (includes; 138 for employment/training, 135 housing advice, 63 debt/benefit advice)</p>
Holbeck Phase 1 group repair	To target 180 within the Recreations to provide improved energy efficiency	153 houses were improved and are now warmer in one of the most deprived communities in the

<p>Budget £4.5m) Spend £4m (Budget - £1.5m LCC capital £1.5m Local Growth Fund £0.2 Energy Company Obligation, £0.5m private sector contributions, £0.85m HRA)</p>	<p>and external improvements such as new roofs windows, doors and rainwater goods</p>	<p>country</p> <p>Energy Efficiency works has improved the SAP rating of all properties from an average of F/G to B/C</p> <p>Have increased the internal room temperatures from as low as 12c in certain cases to over 18c following the works. Increasing the internal house temperatures has the effect of reducing the risk associated with respiratory cardiovascular conditions from living in such conditions</p> <p>An estimated 1450 tonnes of CO2 saved per annum</p> <p>A potential reduction in fuel bills of around 25/30%. This equates to a saving of around £350/400per annum or £50k for the community overall.</p> <p>Completed the redesign and refurbishment of 14 bin yards to improve the street scene and refuse collection including recycling</p> <p>Won the Yorkshire and Humberside Large Energy Project of the Year in the Energy Efficiency Awards 2019</p>
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3.4. The photographs below show the improvements as a result of the investment made in the group repair scheme

## Whole house improvement, before and after



## Bin Yard Improvement



- 3.5. The intervention in the area has made a difference to people's lives. By crossing the threshold of all properties officers can engage with occupiers and help to address needs beyond housing conditions alone.
- 3.6. When looking at the limited data available between 2015 and 2019 in relation to the issues of the housing market, antisocial behaviour and unemployment there has generally been an improvement in the area. This shows that by working in a targeted manner together we can make a difference to communities and people's lives. The specific information available shows the following changes to the area.

- House prices in the area have increased by over 75% from £47.5k in 2015 to £83.5k in 2019. This compares to a Leeds average increase of just under 20% for the same period
- Unemployment has reduced from 21.1% in 2015 to 12.15% in 2019. In Leeds overall the decrease was from 4.6% to 3.6%
- Antisocial Behaviour has actually shown a decrease over the same period in the area from 54 incidents per thousand population to 26, nearly halving the number of incidents. Leeds has also shown a decrease but by only 32 incidents per thousand to 20.

3.7 Beyond the statistics, the following provides examples of how by working together and in a different ways to a city wide approach to target resources the Council and partners have been able to make a difference to the lives of our communities in the city :

- A local business has noticed an improvement to the area: When an officer asked what the area was like and how it affected his business the local business owner replied in 2016 “area is getting worse, people don’t have much money”. Coming across the same business owner in 2019 and when asked the same question his response was that “the area looks a lot better, people have a bit more money and spending it and business is doing better”.
- A resident approached the Hub for support. She had found her son’s friend sleeping rough and came to the Support Hub @Holbeck for advice. Leeds Pathways were contacted to help and in the end the friend who was rough sleeping was not just found a home but has now started studying Electrical engineering.
- A private rented tenant who had previously been in an abusive relationship and was affected by the coercive control she had suffered over several years. All essential referrals were made and officers were able to have a good relationship with the tenant and help the tenant get in to regular employment due to using the Hub facility where help with language, interview techniques and applications was available. The tenant was successful in their interview and for the first time in years had a regular employer making life easier and more reliable, giving the opportunity to plan ahead and start the healing process that was needed after years of abuse.
- A local resident stated “I suffered a really bad back injury for just over a year ago. I had to reduce my hours and started getting into debt. My emotional health deteriorated. Meeting the team who work in Holbeck has helped turn my life around. They put me in touch with a debt management officer and helped me find my confidence again. I am now training for new career options and I’m also supporting the people of Holbeck by volunteering. Hearing other stories in volunteering training about people who've experienced physical and mental health challenges has helped me understand my own pains and stresses and to manage them better.”

3.8 Whilst there has been considerable work undertaken over the last few years this does not mean that there is not more work to do in the area. Some of the next steps for Holbeck include:

- Consideration of a more permanent community support within St Matthew’s Church as part of the proposals for the building. This is to be considered by the Executive Board in January 2020.

- Development of the Matthew Murray site in conjunction with Leeds United to include community facilities
- Development of the “Streets for People” project and investment in the environment.
- Working to create a Regeneration Vision for the Holbeck NPA to look at future options and opportunities in the area led by colleagues in City Development
- To deliver the successful Active Leeds bid to support the community to become more active and improve health outcomes
- The development of Holbeck Moor to improve the facilities and usage of the space
- To tackle crime, where reported incidents remain almost double the Leeds average

## **4. Corporate Considerations**

### **4.1. Consultation and engagement**

- 4.1.1. As part of the overall work to address issues in Holbeck there has been considerable engagement with the Community and Ward Members. There has also been a nationally recognised Neighbourhood Plan developed by the Community to support the overall aim of improving the area for everyone who live there.
- 4.1.2. As part of the LNA there has been and continues to be ongoing engagement with the community and landlords. There have now been 11 landlord forms which have helped to engage directly with the sector who have a significant contribution to play in helping to improve the area. There have been and continue to be quarterly walkabouts with the community partners Ward Members and landlords looking to address environmental issues. Officers attend the Holbeck resident’s forum to provide updates and answer and queries from local residents.
- 4.1.3. Those affected by the group repair scheme were the main consultees as it directly affected those who were having works undertaken on their properties.

### **4.2. Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration**

- 4.2.1. A full Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration Assessment for both the LNA and the Group repair schemes were completed at the time of their introduction.
- 4.2.2. The assessments concluded that that the investment would have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of the occupiers living in Holbeck, allowing owners to reduce hazards, improve their homes and reduce fuel poverty via thermal improvements to properties. By crossing the threshold working in a partnership way and not just addressing housing conditions the approach to the area would allow better use of resources to help those in need and address issues in a more targeted and holistic way.

### **4.3. Council policies and best council plan**

4.3.1. By targeting an area with some of the poorest housing and most deprived communities, the actions have helped contribute to many of the Council's key priorities. The initiatives contributed to the compassionate city agenda, improving housing and health, reducing crime and anti-social behaviour.

### **Climate Emergency**

4.3.2. The LNA and the group repair schemes have and will help with issues affecting the climate:

- Better quality homes and standards will help to reduce energy consumption
- Empty homes in the area have been and will be targeted to reduce the numbers in the area but also to contribute to an overall net reduction in the city preventing the need for new build and in many cases reducing the carbon footprint these create compared to renovating the existing stock.
- Education of both tenants and landlords to help reduce waste and improve recycling in the area
- Better engagement with landlords to improve education specifically around the changing energy legislation requirements which affect the sector
- By investing in improved and more energy efficient homes via the capital investment has helped to reduce energy consumption by an estimated 1450 tonnes of CO2 per annum.

## **4.4. Resources and value for money**

4.4.1. The Council's £1.5m investment in the group repair scheme attracted £3m in match funding, namely £1.5m from the Local Growth Fund, £0.85m from the HRA, £0.2m Energy Company Obligations and £0.45m from private owners who joined the scheme. The value of the investment is the subject of the report.

## **4.5. Legal implications, access to information, and call-in**

4.5.1. The report is eligible for call in

4.5.2. The investment in properties was possible due to the Council's Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy which allows the offer of financial assistance to private owners and was supported by the general power of competence provided for in Section 1 to 8 of the Localism Act 2011. The contractor was procured using the Better Homes Yorkshire Framework which has been adopted by the Council to support the delivery of such schemes.

## **4.6. Risk management**

4.6.1. Both schemes have been subject to their own risk management by officers responsible for delivery of the projects. All risks have and continue to be assessed and mitigation and management of the risks identified instigated as required.

## **5. Conclusion**

- 5.1. The outcomes of the work in Holbeck has shown that by working with the community, partners, all housing providers, social and private, it is possible to make a difference to people's lives, help build a communities and a better place to live.
- 5.2. The information available shows that there are improvements in the area with reductions in unemployment, incidents of antisocial behaviour and an increase in house prices.
- 5.3. By investing in the area people have seen their lives improve. For some it has seen their employment opportunities improve, others their health or their businesses. All of which has helped to give back a sense of pride in their neighbourhood.
- 5.4. There is still further work to be done to continue working with the community partners and stakeholders to improve the Holbeck. There are some outstanding properties to inspect and ensure compliance and is potential for further investment in projects such as streets for people. The key to longer term improvement comes the opportunities for regeneration of the South Bank area.

## **6. Recommendations**

- 6.1. Executive Board are requested to:
- 6.2. Note the content of this report

## **7. Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

None

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<sup>1</sup> 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.