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**Report of the Director of Neighbourhoods and Housing**

***Scrutiny Board (Neighbourhoods and Housing)***

**Date: 6<sup>TH</sup> September 2006**

**Subject: The RESPECT Action plan and its implementation in Leeds**

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**Electoral Wards Affected:**  
ALL

**Specific Implications For:**

- Ethnic minorities
- Women
- Disabled people
- Narrowing the Gap

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**Executive Summary**

Respect is a major government initiative that broadens the drive to address anti-social behaviour. This report outlines the Respect Action Plan and the activity underway in Leeds that contributes to this agenda. Leeds has been chosen by the government to be one of the pilot areas for implementing Respect. This report outlines the Respect Task Force's understanding of how they will work with us to implement the programme and proposals and how we can progress the plan in Leeds.

**1.0 Purpose Of This Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Scrutiny Board members with information on the Respect Action and to provide an update on the latest position regarding implementation of the plan in Leeds.

**2.0 Background Information**

The Respect Action Plan builds upon the government's previous work to address anti-social behaviour (asb) by broadening ("deepening, widening, furthering") the approach to tackling asb.

There are some basic principles in the plan:

- Implementation cannot be achieved by government alone
- Every citizen has a responsibility to behave in a respectful way

- The public are concerned that the values of the majority are not shared by the selfish minority
- To truly tackle disadvantage we must offer the support and challenge needed to tackle anti-social behaviour and its causes
- We must pass on decent values and standards of behaviour to our children

The plan covers a wide range of preventive and punitive measures and brings together existing measures and proposals with new initiatives. There is £80m of new investment.

## 2.2 Key proposals

The plan is split into six sections

1. Young people
2. Schools
3. Support for parents & families
4. Housing
5. Neighbourhoods
6. Enforcement against asb

## 2.3 Young People

- The introduction of a national youth volunteering service and a Sports Champion mentoring programme
- Proposals to devolve funding streams for youth services to a local level and provide additional funding
- The expansion of the Youth Opportunity Fund and a pilot of Youth Opportunities Cards in a number of areas

## 2.4 Schools

- Truancy – duty on local authorities to identify all children missing from school and ensuring their re-entry into mainstream education or alternative provision; all schools will be part of partnerships to manage behaviour and persistent truancy; targeted action against persistent truants including dedicated truancy officers
- Exclusions – requirements for parents, schools and councils to arrange supervision for excluded pupils; councils to provide full time education for excluded pupils from the 6<sup>th</sup> (rather than 16<sup>th</sup>) day of exclusion; a crackdown on the use of unofficial exclusions by teachers

## 2.5 Support for parents and families

- Establish a new National Occupational Standards for all members of children's workforce working with parents, and a new National Parenting Academy (virtual) for front-line staff
- Enable local authorities to have the power to extend the range of agencies that can enter into parenting contracts and orders. Schools will also be able to seek parenting orders and a new trigger of 'serious misbehaviour' will be added to the existing trigger of exclusion from school
- Establish a national network of intensive family support schemes (as a mandatory outcome in LAAs, with £28m extra funding start-up funding)

- Develop a cross-Government strategy on the most challenging families (aiming to mainstream intensive intervention in problem households causing asb)
- Involve local authorities in managing and commissioning the provision of parenting support, including ensuring each authority has a 'parents champion'

## 2.6 Housing

- Consider sanctions for households evicted for asb who refuse help (including possible financial or housing benefit sanctions)
- Consult on new powers to allow the closure of any residential or licensed premises for a set period, (regardless of tenure) which is causing persistent and serious nuisance to local communities
- Introduce a 'respect standard' for housing management, including proposals on demoted tenancies – committing landlords and their partners to tackle asb (covering prevention, interventions, complaints etc) – delivered by Audit Commission
- Ensure that all housing market renewal pathfinders funding is dependent on putting in place plans to deliver the Respect drive

## 2.7 Neighbourhoods

- Community engagement reforms – a 'community call for action' (giving people powers to formally request speedy action from a duty on ward councillor, or referring to the council scrutiny committee), a neighbourhood charter for every area; regular 'face the people sessions' for senior CDRP representatives; more neighbourhood management & warden schemes; and a single national non-emergency community safety number
- A neighborhood policing team in each area by 2008, with PCSO numbers to rise from 6,000 to 24,000 and given powers to take part in 'truancy sweeps' with police
- Funding reforms to make tackling asb a mandatory outcome in LAAs by 2007, and to provide government funding for regeneration

## 2.8 Enforcement against ASB

- Extend penalties and closures through increasing Penalty Notices for Disorder (PND) from £80 to £100, and looking at: a national roll out of PND pilots for under 16s; making it easier for trading standards officers to issue PNDs to people who sell age restricted products (e.g. alcohol and fireworks) to young people; and new powers to allow the closure of any residential or licensed premises that cause persistent and serious nuisance for a set period (regardless of tenure)
- Establish new models for conditional cautioning, legislate to make clear that ASB Injunctions (ASBIs) can be used to protect whole communities and also protect witnesses from being named in applications & bring people suspected of breaching their ASBI before the courts within 24 hours
- Incorporate community safety practitioners and asb co-ordinators into appropriate cases in the civil courts system

## 3. Comments on the Action Plan

- 3.1 The Respect Action Plan has both negatives and positives. The new emphasis on prevention is to be welcomed as it provides balance to the prior enforcement-focused approach. There is cross-departmental governmental support for the plan,

which builds on policies already in development. The plan addresses issues that are of high public concern.

- 3.2 On the negative side, there is an issue of funding – much of the funding is already accounted for and therefore there is a real capacity issue for the council and its partners. The community engagement proposals are superficial and the “community call for action” may lead to unrealistic public expectations of what can be delivered. There is little mention of issues such as community cohesion (the plan focuses on individuals rather than groups) and alcohol, and respect for young people does not appear. Finally, the support measures are woven together with coercion if individuals are not responsive – some of this is untried and therefore there is a question as to how well this approach will work.
- 3.3 It is clear from statements by Louise Casey, the Respect co-ordinator, that there is an expectation from the government that all services need to challenge and address bad behaviour, and that this responsibility should not be shirked on the expectation that others will deal with it.

#### **4. Implementation of the Respect programme in Leeds**

- 4.1 At an operational level, there are a number of tangible examples of delivery, and Leeds has reported back to the Respect Task Force on our approach. We have made significant investments in a large anti-social behaviour unit (ASBU), in joint-funding PCSOs and in neighbourhood wardens. We have used, and continue to use, the full panoply of powers available – housing powers, ASBOs, dispersal orders, crack house closures, Drinking in Public Places Order (DPPOs), and so forth. We actively pursue a high-profile environmental enforcement policy to reduce graffiti, litter, fly-tipping, abandoned vehicles, fly-posting and other signal crimes that detrimentally affect people’s quality of life. Our use of multi-agency targeted operations was shortlisted for the Tilley Award for best practice in crime reduction, and we were the first area to use multiple ASBOs to address crime and disorder. The Signpost project has engaged with problematic households to address anti social behaviour.
- 4.2 We are also taking the Respect agenda principles into areas that the plan does not yet cover (and arguably should do in the future) by tackling hate crime – we believe that Leeds has the first hate crime strategy in the country – and striving to identify and diffuse community tensions and develop initiatives to improve community cohesion
- 4.3 Louise Casey, Co-ordinator for Respect and Joe Tuke Respect Task Force Director have met with the Chief Executive on a number of occasions to discuss the implementation of the Respect programme in Leeds. In the most recent correspondence from Louise Casey on 1<sup>st</sup> August she requested that the Council respond by 11<sup>th</sup> September on how we will make the most locally of being a Respect Action Area and to identify the plans or work we have underway to achieve this. There are five aspects of the plan which the Respect Task Force consider are “non negotiable” these are:
- a. Establishing a Family Intervention Project that challenges and changes the behaviour of the most problematic households perpetrating anti social behaviour.

- b. Establishing parenting programmes for families at risk of/or behaving anti socially
- c. Demonstrating openness and accountability through Face the People sessions.
- d. Renewed commitment to using the full range of available tools and powers to tackle the causes and symptoms of ASB.
- e. Adoption of the Respect Housing Standard by key landlords in the area.

In addition Officers will be meeting with Alex Rhind Assistant Director from the Respect Task Force on 24<sup>th</sup> August 2006 to discuss implementing the action plan specifically in the areas of Family support, Youth provision and links with Schools.

## **5. Implications For Council Policy And Governance**

- 5.1 The Respect action plan states that, in order to deliver the plan, “strong local leadership will be required and a consistent approach taken to tackle anti-social behaviour in all areas”. It is clear that most council services have a role to play in delivering the plan, and therefore all our policies will have to be considered in this light. A report outlining the implications of the Respect Action Plan was presented to Council Management Team (CMT) on 8<sup>th</sup> August when commitment was given that all departments will do all they can to contribute to the implementing of the Respect agenda and lead officers would be identified for the different elements of the plan.
- 5.2 The Director of Neighbourhoods and Housing was identified as champion within CMT to lead on the implementation of Respect within the council. It has been recommended that the Leeds Initiative adopt a similar approach:

## **6. Legal And Resource Implications**

- 6.1 Although there are – to quote the plan – “significant resources in programmes supporting the Respect drive”, most of these funds are already committed. It is unclear what new money (for instance, for family support) will come to Leeds, but whatever does come from Respect will be short-term. Implementing Respect may have significant financial implications.

## **7. Conclusions**

- 7.1 Respect is a key government agenda and there is a substantial drive from the government for us to implement it in Leeds. Whilst the thrust of the policy is clear, the detail is not yet there throughout, and implementing some parts of it may be difficult given available resources. Nor should all its proposals be adopted uncritically. Nevertheless, the direction is one which coincides with the efforts of the Council to date – to take action to prevent anti social behaviour but act robustly where it occurs. The initiative represents an opportunity to take this further by improving, in particular, interventions with families and extending the whole Council approach to anti social behaviour.

## **8. Recommendations**

- 8.1 That Scrutiny Board members note the progress made to date to implement the Respect Action Plan in Leeds.

8.2 That Members discuss the implications of implementing the Respect Action Plan and how they can contribute to this.