



Report of Area Manager

Report to Inner West Area Committee

Date: 26th June 2008

Subject: AREA MANAGER'S REPORT

Electoral Wards Affected: Armley Bramley and Stanningley <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ward Members consulted (referred to in report)	Specific Implications For: Equality and Diversity <input type="checkbox"/> Community Cohesion <input type="checkbox"/> Narrowing the Gap <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Council Function <input type="checkbox"/>	Delegated Executive Function available for Call In <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Delegated Executive Function not available for Call in Details set out in the report <input type="checkbox"/>

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to inform members of progress on a number of projects in Inner West Leeds as follows

West Leeds Gateway – an update of the work of the Regeneration Team
LEGI Catalyst Centre
Participatory Budgeting in Bramley
Bramley Pump
Leeds Bradford Corridor
A2E programme

1.00 Purpose of This Report

1.01 The purpose of this report is to provide members with a review of the West Leeds Gateway actions over the last two years and to update members on a number of key projects: Bramley Pump, Participatory Budgeting on the Broadleas in Bramley, Leeds Bradford corridor, the A2E programme and the LEGI catalyst centre bid.

2.00 Project Update: West Leeds Gateway

2.01 In 2006 a dedicated regeneration delivery team was to be put in place in West Leeds which would act as the driver for the planning and implementation of the West Leeds Gateway Regeneration programme.

- 2.02 Due to staff changes, and the freezing of recruitment restructure, we were unable to recruit a full team for the two year period. For the last six months of the project the staff team comprised Carole Clark, Regeneration Programme Manager (seconded from Area Management) and Jenny Fisher, Regeneration Project Officer (seconded from City Development).
- 2.03 This small team has working closely with colleagues within the council and with external partners to deliver the work programme for the West Leeds Gateway. The funding from the staff vacancies was used to commission other council services and external consultants to undertake a number of pieces of work required to fill the objectives of the West Leeds Gateway Programme. A breakdown of spending is included at Appendix 1 to this report.

Armley Town Centre

- 2.04 A key element of the regeneration of the West Leeds Gateway is to support and revitalise Armley Town Centre in order for this area to fulfill a role as a hub of commercial, social, leisure and community activity. In recent years Armley Town Centre has been in decline, suffering from the closure of retail outlets, and poor quality public realm. Funding of £700,000 has been secured for public realm improvements to Armley Town Street from the Council's Town and District Centre Improvement programme. Detailed designs for the Town and District Centre funding are being prepared by Jacobs consultants and work is due to start on site once the gas maintenance and upgrade works are complete. The start date is likely to be January 2009.
- 2.05 Consultation on the proposals for Armley Town Street has been carried out through Armley Forum, Armley Fun Day, and a series of exhibitions in Armley Library, together with a vox pop video commissioned from this project to illustrate the views of local people.
- 2.06 We have also secured a grant from Heritage Lottery of £1.1 million for a Townscape Heritage Initiative for Armley Town Street which will enhance and restore buildings of heritage and historic value. The NRF budget provided match funding for the Stage 1 development grant of £25000 from Heritage Lottery.
- 2.07 Preparation of the bid took place in 2007; Sample properties in the proposed area were surveyed, assessed for repair works, and valued by in preparation for the bid by suitably accredited surveyors and valuers. A training programme has been prepared in conjunction with Construction Leeds which will offer local people the opportunity to gain skills and experience in specialist building techniques through undertaking works on properties in the THI scheme. Consultation took place on the THI and proposed conservation area through newsletters, leaflets, public exhibitions, and a presentation to Armley Forum.
- 2.08 Designs for improving the greenspace at Armley Moor, Moor Top and Hill Top have been funded through the NRF budget. Public consultation on the plans has taken place and feedback on the proposals is positive. The plans will be implemented using a combination of S106 and grant funding.
- 2.09 Car parking is an ongoing issue for Armley as it does not have a shoppers' car park, and on street parking is limited. A number of potential sites have been identified which have been assessed for their potential for providing additional car parking. Unfortunately the available sites are limited, and there is little scope for improvement.
- 2.10 The feasibility study for Gelder Road has been commissioned, funded through the NRF budget. This provides a range of scenarios for two options: complete demolition of the site to make way for a new mixed use development, and partial demolition to enable a car park to be created. The findings of this report will be included in the regeneration plan. The third option to retain the units was considered as part of the Armley Town Centre feasibility work undertaken by Jacobs.
- 2.11 A traffic study to assess the feasibility of a one way system has also been commissioned

using the NRF budget. This is looking at a one way route which takes traffic up Crab Lane, West along Town Street, and exits Armley via Theaker Lane and Eyres Avenue. Internal consultation with planning and highways has highlighted a number of problems with this scheme, and further feasibility work is required.

- 2.12 The key gateway into Armley from the city centre is the junction of Armley Road, Stanningley Road and Branch Road. Currently this junction offers a poor impression with Mike's Carpets, and the Living World Pet store dominating the landscape. This impression extends to the rest of Armley in many people's minds which explains the great importance, symbolic and actual, in regenerating the sites at this junction.
- 2.13 Discussions are on-going with the owner of Mike's Carpets to find a solution for the building.
- 2.14 Living World pet store occupies a large site which also includes two pubs, one which is currently vacant. Initial proposals for the site included a housing proposal that was too high and too dense, and City Development has offered some guidance on 'massing' for this site.
- 2.15 A preferred developer has now been identified for the vacant Mistress Lane/Armley Road site where 3 blocks of unsightly council owned maisonettes were demolished leaving two tower blocks in situ. The new development will provide a new high quality residential development with apartments offering a strong frontage on Armley Road and housing at the rear of the site facing onto Mistress Lane.
- 2.16 The other key project for Armley Town Centre is the new leisure centre funded through PFI credits. The regeneration team has worked with the PFI team and learning and leisure to assist the public consultation, and consider how the design of the leisure centre compliments the surrounding neighbourhood.

New Wortley

- 2.17 The main area of social housing is New Wortley. The population of New Wortley is currently 2,300 with 6.8% being of non-white origin (census 2001). The area falls in the bottom 5% of most deprived super output areas. Key indicators of this are high levels of housing turnover, low demand, high levels of multiple benefit dependency and low educational attainment. New Wortley lies close to the city centre and has considerable potential as a gateway point in and out of the city, and it is recognised that the regeneration of New Wortley will have a strategic impact on and be an economic driver for the whole of West Leeds.
- 2.18 It is crucial that a safer, more attractive neighbourhood is developed to improve the urban landscape and meet the needs of those communities resident in the New Wortley area.
- 2.19 In the middle of New Wortley is a cleared site, Holdforth Place, which was in a poor condition. Funding from the NRF budget was used to clear and tidy this site, and grass it.
- 2.20 The NRF project commissioned a computer generated walk through of New Wortley to assist with the consultation on the options for the Area Action Plan. This enabled local people to see a 3d visual indication of how the three options for minor, moderate and major intervention may look.
- 2.21 The Area Regeneration Team has worked with West North West Leeds Homes during 2007/8 to prepare a delivery option for regeneration of the New Wortley area in conjunction with the Decent Homes Programme. An area for potential demolition was identified, based on the moderate option for the AAP which emerged as the preferred option. It is clear from initial valuations undertaken that this original scheme requires further financial appraisal and a number of other smaller scale options are being investigated.
- 2.22 A full financial appraisal is required to demonstrate how relocation and demolition costs can be recouped in order for West North West Homes to make a decision on the way forward. Further public consultation has recently taken place as part of the statutory 6 week

consultation on the Area Action Plan. Feedback from this consultation process indicates that strong objections were raised to the proposed demolition of houses, other than the T blocks. Therefore the proposals for New Wortley are now being revised in the light of this feedback.

- 2.23 Adjacent to New Wortley is a large site owned by National Grid, currently leased to Centrica. Discussions with Centrica and National Grid indicate that although National Grid may be willing to dispose of the site, no hard decisions have been made, and it could be some years before the site could be released for redevelopment. The plans for New Wortley will not therefore include the site at this stage, but will take cognisance of the possibility that development may be possible on the Centrica Site in the long term.
- 2.24 In parallel to the AAP process, consideration is being given to how a scheme at New Wortley would be delivered, and to inform these considerations, discussions have been held with a number of interested developers

Business and Enterprise/LEGI Catalyst bid

- 2.25 Currently there is both demand and support for LEGI activity in west Leeds. In February 2007 over 90 businesses attended an event to inform them of the LEGI programme and the majority supported the development of an Enterprise Centre in West Leeds. Bramley and Rodley Community Action (BARCA) Development Trust have expanded their existing services to support the growth of local enterprise work throughout West and North West Leeds.
- 2.26 During 2007, Community Engine was commissioned to undertake feasibility work on establishing a catalyst centre in West Leeds. The Camberwell Project was then commissioned to write the bid to the LEGI board to secure funding for a catalyst centre.
- 2.27 BARCA Leeds has commissioned Civic Regeneration to undertake a LEGI business plan funded through LEGI and this NRF project. In the short term BARCA has secured finance for a Catalyst Centre based on Stanningley Road at the CUBIC centre. This will offer managed workspace for start up businesses until the longer term goal to open a new build catalyst centre for West Leeds is achieved. Options for this longer term centre are currently being investigated – including sites at Branch Road, Stanningley Road, Wortley High School and the West Leeds Family Learning Centre
- 2.28 A business event was held at Armley One Stop Centre on January 22, 2008 which was organised in partnership with Leeds Ahead. The aim of the evening was to consult with businesses and share with them the progress made to date on the West Leeds Regeneration Plans.
- 2.29 The evening was promoted as a celebration of the progress made on the development plans in the area. Sponsorship for the evening came from Elite Forwarders, Premier Farnells, Boots, TESCO, HSBC, Gladedales and the Thinking agency. Total sponsorship amounted to £1,230.00 part of which contributed to the cost of the event, with the remainder being held for the next event which will take place in June 08.
- 2.30 The evening was a success, 68 business people attended (10 % response rate to invitation); the majority were the local businesses on Town Street, which was the priority group. The informal setting coupled with LCC officers, Leeds Ahead staff and the local police inspector enabled businesses to discuss their views on an individual basis. More importantly we were able to emphasise the vital role that small business can play in making the regeneration plans work.
- 2.31 An evaluation of the event was held with Leeds Ahead staff where the comments and views of the businesses were discussed. It is apparent that the vast majority of the businesses are concerned about their future and that their trading has declined in the last three years. Some felt that the high cost of business rates were now disproportionate to the area. Despite this, there is an air of optimism and a definite desire from them to remain in business and support

the area.

- 2.32 Following the event, a number of recommendations were made on the need for the creation of a .5 post for a Town Centre Manager who would act as the conduit between the business community, the council and the local police.
- 2.33 Leeds Ahead have also been working with organisations involved in the rehabilitation of offenders, to develop a 'pilot project' with Leeds businesses to offer a portfolio of options for businesses from which they can select and make a commitment to support ex-offenders and sign the Employers Pledge. To launch this project Leeds Ahead organised an 'Employment and Training Fair' on 12th March 2008, which was funded through this NRF budget. HMP Leeds, Manchester College and Job Centre Plus helped with the logistics of organising clearance for all the employers and training providers as well as making all the necessary internal arrangements required to allow all inmates to be able to attend.
- 2.34 31 Employers and Training Providers attended and had a stand in the prison, and all the inmates were given the opportunity to attend if they wished. On the day 112 inmates attended. They were able to meet and talk to Employers and Training providers about their individual circumstances and what their aspirations were on release and what support arrangements they needed.
- 2.35 Within two weeks of the Employment and Training Providers Fair, a person released from prison secured employment with 'Pegasus'. To date five inmates have now secured employment through the Employment and Training Fair, which according to The Area Resettlement Manager represents a saving of £500,000 to the taxpayer.

Armley Mills

- 2.36 Armley Mills – a number of preparatory pieces of work have been commissioned by this NRF project to prepare a case for the regeneration of Armley Mills. A feasibility study has been undertaken by Jacobs, and Lambert Smith Hampton has undertaken valuation work on these options. An assessment of the museum collections is complete; the key tasks for the assessment were to:
- establish a footprint for the reserve collections, including breakdown of shelved and larger items
 - Assist Curatorial and Site Management Teams in report preparation (to include potential collections for rationalisation, key objects and special collections, items grant funded, loans etc.)
 - Assist Curatorial and Site Management Teams in establishing the size and specification of space required for new storage
- 2.37 The findings of this work will feed into the establishment of a timetable, timescale and resource requirements for rationalisation programme, including man hours.
- 2.38 The next steps are to use the findings of the studies and the valuation work to prepare realistic options for the museum and brief lead members on the proposals.
- 2.39 Adjoining Armley Mills is Dunkirk Hill. This is a large greenspace, on a hillside, that is currently underused and has a reputation for attracting anti-social behaviour mainly due to lack of surveillance. The Strategic Design Unit have prepared proposals for a low density eco-housing project on a small area of the hill that will have minimal impact on the environment but will bring improved security through offering natural surveillance to the remainder of the site.
- 2.40 Discussions have also been held with the environment agency about carrying out improvements to the waterfront (river and canal) in the vicinity of Armley Mills. The Environment agency have agreed to take the lead in the preparation of an action plan for this area in conjunction with the council and other key stakeholders including the Rivers Agency and Yorkshire Water.

Connectivity

- 2.41 The West Leeds Gateway area lies close to the city centre. However, the Armley gyratory, plus the railway lines present major barriers for accessing the city centre. Cycling and walking routes do exist but are not pleasant. The regeneration team is working with officers from Transport Policy to consider how these routes can be improved to offer safe and attractive walks and cycle ways to make the city centre more accessible from the West Leeds Gateway Area. Proposals include improving the existing bridge links, extending the footbridge adjacent to the gasometer so that it lands at the New Wortley side of Wellington Road, and linking up with the green viaduct which will be improved as part of the Monkbridge Development.

Area Action Plan and Area Delivery Plan

- 2.42 A draft issues and options paper based on the recommendations of the Atkins study has been prepared by the development department. Public consultation which took place in autumn 2006 indicated that the preferred option for regeneration is a moderate approach. This preferred option together with the sustainability appraisal has now been worked up in detail and was subject to a further six week public consultation which concluded on April 8th 2008.
- 2.43 A key task for the regeneration team has been the production of a delivery appraisal for key projects in the West Leeds Gateway which supports the Area Action Plan. The preparation of this document has included the purchase of staff time from the City Development Department through the NRF budget. A final draft of this document is available.

Future work programme for the Gateway

- 2.44 A forward plan for the West Leeds Gateway is included in the delivery appraisal. Further discussion is required between the Area Manager and Regeneration Manager to confirm the programme and assign roles and responsibilities under the new Regeneration Restructure. There are however a number of key physical development projects (New Wortley, Living Word/Mistress Lane/Branch Road, and Armley Mills) which clearly require significant input from the City Office Regeneration Team. Michelle Anderson will be leading on this work within the new City Office team
- 2.45 The two year NRF project has been invaluable in enabling a number of commissioned pieces of work to be undertaken in accordance with the work programme for the West Leeds Gateway.

3.0 Other projects

- 3.01 Wyther Community Centre was finally demolished in May 2008. The former users the Twilight Twirlers are negotiating the use of access to Hollybush school. The issue of the closure and demolition of the centre was referred to Scrutiny Board in May
- 3.02 The Participatory Budgeting pilot is underway in the Broadleas Estate in Bramley. A video of the meeting where the choice of the programmes was made by local people is available for member viewing. A total of five proposals were supported, using all the £15,000 allocated by the Narrowing the Gap Board.
- 3.03 The Wyther LAMP has seen the successful approval of a 12 months funded warden's post through the ALMO, matching the funding provided from Area Committee. The PCT have agreed to provide £40,000 funding for a worker to support the development of health initiatives.
- 3.04 The Bramley Pump and railings has been fully renovated, funded through Area Committee Wellbeing Fund There will be an opening event organized by the Bramley History Society in the future. On a separate issue, the new Children's Centre at New Wortley is due to open on 7 July.

- 3.05 Leeds Bradford Corridor programme are to appoint a senior project manager in the immediate future to lead on the development of the programme linking the two cities. A full report will be brought back to Inner West Committee in September
- 3.06 The Inner West Area Committee agreed to fund £30,000 to support the A2E worklessness programme in west Leeds. This funding will be used by Jobs and Skills to employ a half-time worker to improve and increase the quality of work placements offered by employers. It is considered that the quality of these placements is crucial to unemployed people accessing meaningful work experience from which they can secure sustainable employment.. These placements are particularly valuable to clients with mental health issues who claim incapacity benefit of which it has been shown there is a considerable number in west Leeds. This is in contrast to lone parent and Neet (not in education, employment or training) clients of which there are less. The funding will be used to support the work being undertaken with the partners running the A2E programme in West and north West Leeds to help develop the work on incapacity benefit claimants

4.00 Implications for Council Policy and Governance

- 4.01 All the projects listed in this report will contribute substantially to the themes of the Leeds Strategic Plan, and the Vision for Leeds 2004-2020.
- 4.02 The West Leeds Gateway, the Wyther LAMP and the Broadleas Participatory Budgeting Scheme will focus on regenerating areas of greatest need, to attract private investment into neighbourhoods, celebrate and enhance the distinctiveness of district centres such as Armley, reduce the amount of unpopular housing and replace it with modern housing that is better suited to peoples future needs, and involve local people in planning the future of West Leeds.

5.00 Legal and Resource Implications

- 5.01 The NRF budget funded a temporary two year project which ended on March 08. The new regeneration teams formed under the restructure will take over responsibility for regeneration in the West Leeds Gateway area. The two staff seconded to the team are continuing in post until posts are recruited to under the restructure.
- 5.02 The financial and resource implications to implement the West Leeds Gateway Regeneration Plan will depend in part on the procurement options recommended, but it is currently envisaged that at least part of these costs would eventually be recoverable as part of the partner selection process.

6.00 Recommendations

That members note progress on and confirm their continued support for the projects outlined in the report.