

**Report of: Shaid Mahmood - Chief Officer Communities**

**Report to: Inner West Community Committee: Armley; Bramley & Stanningley; and Kirkstall.**

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**Date: 18<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

**To Note**

## **New Wortley Priority Neighbourhood Update**

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### **Purpose of report**

1. To update the Inner West Community Committee on the work being undertaken within the New Wortley Priority Neighbourhood and the 'Big Asks' that have been put forward to the Neighbourhood Improvement Board, in relation to improving this area.

### **Main issues**

#### **2. Background Information**

3. In the autumn of 2016, New Wortley saw a dramatic escalation of the levels of youth crime and ASB as well as minor assaults on new communities, in particular, the Eastern European community. There was a need for an immediate partnership response with a new approach that could teach us how we would tackle long standing and difficult issues in our priority neighbourhoods. This coincided with the council's review of locality working, which agreed a corporate focus on the most deprived neighbourhoods in the city.
4. There are 1,892 people living in New Wortley, equally split between male and female. However, the age profile is younger than both the city and the national average, with significantly lower numbers of older people. The proportion of the community from a minority ethnic background is higher than the city average, at 26.6% of the population. 14.6% of households also have no-one with English as their main language.
5. At 15.6%, the claimant count is more than double the average for Leeds (Sept 2020) and, at 49%, children living in low income families is two and a half times the city average.

Crime is more than double the Leeds average, with crime rates per type higher for all domains except shoplifting than those for Leeds, with ASB and Violence and sexual offences particularly high.

6. A Core Team was established in December 2016, to take a pathfinder project forward. The initial focus of the partnership was to respond to the issues raised, relating to crime and anti-social behaviour. Partners involved included Leeds City Council, Police, NHS, third sector and community representatives. Citizen engagement, involvement and the co-production of new ideas and ways of working with the wider community are central to the working arrangements so that we develop enterprising communities able to do more for themselves and for others.
7. Alongside this, the Communities Team worked with New Wortley residents and local connectors through the New Wortley Community Centre, Residents Association and the Our Place partnership to look at how we could better work together to co-produce local solutions around these issues and build relationships with the local community. Representatives from the community and the community centre agreed to be part of the Core Team to help drive local action.
8. The Core Team developed a local action plan, which incorporates five key themes to help focus programmes of work. These themes are:
  - Children and Young People
  - Community Voice
  - Employment, Skills & Welfare
  - Health & Wellbeing
  - Safer, Cleaner, Greener
9. New Wortley had a strong asset base to build from both in terms of physical and community aspect; New Wortley Community Association, Thornton Medical Centre, 'the New Models of Care' group (which has latterly become the Local Care Partnership), the Our Place partnership, New Wortley Tenants and Residents Association and over 50 community volunteers/community connectors. However, there was a challenge in pooling the assets as a collective resource to better meet local needs.
10. The New Wortley Core Team continues to meet every 6 weeks to bring together partners, monitor progress against agreed actions and ensure there is a collective, joined up approach to work taking place within the priority neighbourhood.
11. In January 2020, the Neighbourhood Improvement Board (NIB), chaired by the Executive Member for Communities, had a focus on the New Wortley. The NIB were provided with an update on the work of the Core Team since its establishment and were also asked to consider a number of 'Big Ask' which the Core Team felt could have a major positive impact upon the area. Details of the information provided to the NIB and the 'Big Asks' that they considered are outlined below.

## **12. Update on Activity**

13. There has been a range of activity undertaken against the action plan for New Wortley, a selection of which is highlighted below.
14. **Children and Young Peoples Engagement Mapping** – One of the first agreed activities of the New Wortley Core Team was to identify a 'Top 10' list of key children and young people at risk of being drawn into ASB and crime. Using a more intensive collaborative case management approach, we brought the data from wider providers of Children and Young Peoples provision together. Having shared their community data, this identified key individuals and families for collective focus. By doing this in New Wortley we found individuals with needs that were not previously on any services' radar, while others had multiple interventions from services unaware of each other's work.
15. This approach has now been used for two years and has recently been reviewed by the Children & Young People working group. They have found that all identified key individuals and families are now engaging with some form of provision. Even those that are reluctant to work with statutory services are engaging with Third Sector providers such as New Wortley Community Centre and BARCA.
16. **Closure and demolition of a Wellington Stores** - to regain community confidence through quick action, a decision was taken to close a shop on the estate which was a focus for ASB and crime. This shop was boarded up within weeks and later demolished. Injunctions were also taken out against known repeat youth offenders.
17. **Bonfire Action Plan** – A further early action delivered within a short space of time through this team was a multi-agency bonfire action plan for inner west, which included an enhanced offer of provision by services to cover the two weeks during that period. The offer included an increase in youth provision, visible mobile CCTV, promotion of organised bonfires, regular clean ups and removal of any loose rubble.
18. **Transition Programme** – A transition programme was developed between the local primary school, Youth Service and the Inner West cluster, supporting vulnerable Year 6 pupils move to high school. This proved very successful and continues to be supported.
19. **Public Health Employment Project** – The employability project provided a successful additional resource to the services already running at New Wortley Community Centre. It provided one to one support to service users and volunteers looking to gain employment and training to enhance their skills, lifestyle and overall wellbeing. The project supported service users working with a support worker on CV writing, job applications, employability skills and goal setting for improving career prospects. The programme saw users gain a mix of full and part time positions in various different roles with one opening their own take away business. Two are now volunteering at least 3 days a week and waiting to hear on recent job applications. Another is now completing a Diploma in Electric installation and two others are working towards getting work ready and setting small achievable goals to get back into a working routine after ill health.
20. **Community Voice** – The New Wortley Core Team recognised the need to find out more from residents on how they feel about where they live, what they felt were the priorities and also what were the strengths. We also wanted to look at how the work we were

undertaking in these areas was perceived and if local people felt the benefits of the changes being made. We felt it would be useful to have the soft data to inform decision making in conversation with other services around priorities.

21. **Priority Neighbourhood Surveys** – are now being done as part of the annual home visits by Housing Leeds with more being done directly online, and via partners at events etc. The same survey is being used in Boggart Hill in Seacroft, which will provide some comparison of 2 priority neighbourhoods. The analysis should provide some useful information on assets, issues, employment and how residents currently access information and their preferred options. These surveys will be repeated yearly and provide comparison data.

22. **Information Handbook** – We have also produced a Welcome Pack for New Wortley utilising the template and learning from Boggart Hill. This is available for all new residents at the sign up process to help familiarise them with information, support and guidance available to them locally. The document has also been delivered to all households in the area to ensure they are aware of the local services on offer.

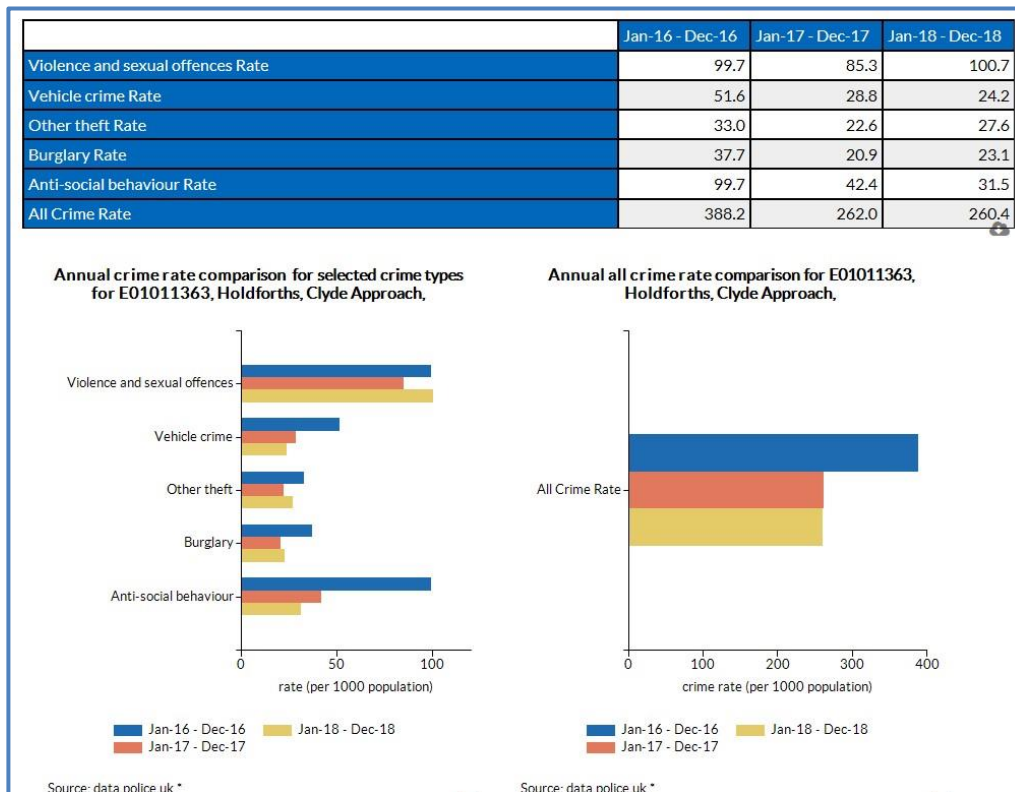
23. **Pop Up Hub Services** – There has been a move to more local face-to-face outreach service delivery, with Armley Hub staff delivering pop up provision from partner venues in new Wortley and Children's and youth service staff undertaking local NEET sweeps and connecting with young people on the street. Adult Social Care innovation site for developing ABCD approaches to strength base social care is also using New Wortley Community Centre.

#### **24. Successes and Challenges**

25. As can be seen from the information above, the work of the New Wortley Core Team has delivered a range of successes. In addition, the pathfinder:

- Developed governance and accountability that has been mirrored by the core teams in other priority neighbourhoods.
- Spread learning from New Wortley, which has been used in target wards including influencing other partnerships, such as Bramley Our Place.
- Partner agencies have developed better working relationships and are now working well together, to problem solve and develop solutions to a range of challenges.
- Developed better engagement with the community.
- The focus on local engagement has increased trust of residents in partners working locally.

26. A particular success has been around crime and ASB rates. With a focus on disruption and diversionary activity for young people, overall, since 2016, comparative crime rates over time have fallen. ASB has particularly fallen, with a 68% reduction. However, violence and sexual offences still remain high.



27. However, alongside the progress being made and the range of successes, there are a number of challenges that hold back progress in New Wortley:

- There is a lack of Third Sector partners operating in the New Wortley area. This has led to an over reliance on New Wortley Community Centre and pressure on them to deliver ever more activity.
- The area also continues to be home to a high concentration of vulnerable groups, with the complex challenges this brings.
- There is a lack of forward investment plans for the area, such as in the Capital Programme or S106 investment.
- Competing priorities for Services

28. The underlying issues of anti-social behaviour, drug dealing and intimidating behaviours from a few problematic families continues to be a significant challenge that is preventing communities from engaging and reporting concerns. Although, there have been some quick wins and some new approaches are being trialled, longer term solutions are not so easily identifiable and needs further consideration and leadership support to do things differently and promote a 'can-do' approach.

### 29. Covid-19 Response - Armley Ward Community Care Volunteering Hub

30. New Wortley Community Association has been the Community Care Volunteering Hub for Armley during the pandemic, providing support to over 900 vulnerable local people. When it reopens, the community centre plans to widen their offer to include the whole of the Armley, following the success of its role as Volunteer Hub for the ward.

31. Over 800 referrals have been handled by the centre so far and this figure does not include referrals that have come to the centre directly from Leeds Welfare Support Service, other community organisations etc.
32. NWCA has led on a partnership approach in Armley working with 8 primary schools, Armley Helping Hands and over 65 volunteers to ensure there is a shopping service for shielding or self-isolating residents, prescriptions pick up, free food parcels and play boxes for children in the ward.
33. The centre is supporting 60 vulnerable families and 25 vulnerable residents with weekly food parcels and a hot meal delivery service (2 courses) to up to 40 vulnerable residents each week.
34. They are also working with the LCC Community Connector to ensure they include support for the 1 in 4 residents who are from the Armley BAME community.
35. Mental health has been a key issue during this crisis and matching socially isolated residents to volunteers to make befriending/welfare calls, making referrals to agencies such as Adult Social Care, Crisis Team and Children's Services where required, as well as regular welfare calls and food distribution to existing regular service users of the centre has been of particular importance to ensure no one has been left without the support they need.

### **36. Current position and the 'Big Asks'**

37. The overall request to the Neighbourhood Improvement Board is to develop a masterplan for New Wortley which looks at both place shaping and community wellbeing – This includes 'Big Ask' around the following five themes:

- Connectivity
- Improved environment
- Play & greenspaces
- Community safety & drugs
- Employment & skills



#### **Connectivity**

Despite being less than a mile from the city centre, New Wortley feels remote and cut off from all the opportunities this affords. The Armley Gyratory, major arterial roads, the railway, river and canal, all combine to form a formidable barrier for residents

#### **The Ask**

- **Use the remodelling Armley Gyratory to improve connectivity of New Wortley to the city and its opportunities.**



### **Improved Environment**

Although issues such as fly tipping, graffiti and overgrown greenspace have reduced, the general appearance and quality of the public realm and greenspace in New Wortley remains tired. Investment in the public realm, such as in Little London, has shown the positive impact on wellbeing and local behaviours.

#### **The Ask**

- **Identify a programme of investment to improve the exterior boundaries of the housing stock and surrounding environment.**



### **Play & Greenspace**

The local community often cite in its engagement that there is a lack of play provision, particularly for younger children in New Wortley.

#### **The Ask**

- **Invest in play for young people (particularly under 8s) and increased use of Jailey Field greenspace.**



### **Community Safety & Drugs**

The underlying issues of anti-social behaviour, drug dealing and other intimidating behaviours from problematic families continues to be the main challenge, preventing engaging and reporting. Although, there have been some successes, longer term solutions are not easily identifiable and much of what has been delivered is not necessarily different or transformational and needs further consideration and leadership support to do things differently and promote a 'can-do' approach.

#### **The Ask**

- **Develop a drugs reduction strategy and intervention plan for the area which looks at the problem holistically.**



### **Employment**

Despite the proximity to the city centre and British Gas having a training base within New Wortley, large anchor organisations do not engage or connect locally.

### **The Ask**

- **Develop a strategy for citywide organisations as anchors to deliver targeted employment opportunities locally within New Wortley.**

## **38. Corporate considerations**

### **a. Consultation and engagement**

Consultation and engagement are central to the work of Core Team in New Wortley, with Community Voice identified as one of the five themes of its action plan. Both local Elected Members and residents are members of the Core Team and a consultation and engagement plan forms part of the work programme.

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

All work that the Communities Team are involved in is assessed in relation to Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration. In addition, the Communities Team ensures that projects and process for funding of projects complies with all relevant policies and legislation.

### **c. Council policies and city priorities**

Projects and programmes of work that the Communities Team are involved in are assessed to ensure that they are in line with Council and City priorities as set out in the following documents:

- Vision for Leeds 2011 – 30
- Best City Plan
- Health and Wellbeing City Priorities Plan
- Children and Young People's Plan
- Safer and Stronger Communities Plan
- Leeds Inclusive Growth Strategy

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

The council's review of locality working agreed a corporate focus on the most deprived neighbourhoods in the city and aimed to bring the benefits of a prosperous city to its areas of greatest need. This was done at a time of austerity and



recognized the need to realign existing services and 'do things differently' in these areas, not create additional demand on resources.

**e. Legal implications, access to information and call in**

There are no legal implications or access to information issues. This report is not subject to call in.

**f. Risk management**

Risk implications and mitigation are considered on all projects. Projects are assessed to ensure they are able to deliver the intended benefits.

## **Conclusion**

39. Much work has been undertaken in the New Wortley Priority Neighbourhood, helping to address a number of the original challenges that the area faced. The Core Team and the action plan it has developed has created a framework for delivering coordinated activity within the area. However, what has made a real difference is the building of stronger relationships and partnerships locally that has led to some sustainable 'wins' and in turn built community confidence and engagement. The challenge going forward is maintaining community engagement and confidence, whilst developing longer term improvement plans.

## **Recommendations**

40. The Inner West Community Committee are asked to:

- Note the work being undertaken within the New Wortley Priority Neighbourhood.
- Note the 'Big Asks' that have been put forward to the Neighbourhood Improvement Board, in relation to improving this area.