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Report of West Leeds Gateway Board

Report to Inner West Area Committee

Date: 23 October 2008

Subject: West Leeds Gateway Regeneration Programme

Electoral Wards Affected:

**Armley
Bramley and Stanningley**

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Council
Function

Delegated Executive
Function available
for Call In

Delegated Executive
Function not available for
Call in Details set out in the
report

Executive Summary

This report outlines progress on key project activity relating to the West Leeds Gateway (WLG) regeneration programme. The report also provides an update on the proposed new governance arrangements that will be presented to the West Leeds Gateway Board at a meeting to be held on Thursday 9 October 2008.

Purpose Of This Report

The purpose of this report is to update the Inner West Area Committee on the progress that has been made on key project activity relating to the regeneration of the West Leeds Gateway (WLG). The report also provides an opportunity for Members to note the proposed new governance arrangements for the West Leeds Gateway Board intent on creating a robust structure capable of taking forward this ambitious regeneration programme.

Background Information

The WLG is one of the city's key regeneration initiatives aimed at narrowing the gap between the most disadvantaged people and communities in West Leeds and the rest of the city. The Council's case for focusing on West Leeds lies not only in the area's high levels of deprivation but also in the realistic opportunities for sustainable intervention by the Council and other agencies which will ensure that West Leeds is well positioned to take advantage of anticipated future economic growth in Leeds and across West Yorkshire.

Key objectives of the WLG are:

- To improve the built environment through high quality, sustainable, design initiatives whilst preserving and where appropriate, enhancing the area's heritage and reinforcing its distinct identity i.e. Armley Mills
- To improve the vitality and viability of Armley Town Centre i.e. Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) and the Town & District Centre (TDC) scheme.
- To establish a comprehensive redevelopment plan for the key 'gateway' sites leading to West Leeds and the Town Centre to create an inviting and prominent local landmark that achieves 'a sense of arrival to the area' i.e. Branch Road, Mistress Lane.
- To improve the quality of the existing housing stock and maximise opportunities for the provision of new and affordable housing across a variety of tenure types e.g. New Wortley.
- To improve and maintain the safety, quality and usability of greenspace and enhance the green corridors of waterways for the enjoyment and improved well being of the local community and to enhance the richness of habitats for wildlife.
- To improve connectivity into and out of the area for residents and visitors taking full advantage of the area's proximity to the two major cities of both Leeds and Bradford.
- To provide and maintain an improved variety of employment and skills development opportunities.

Main Issues

The information below outlines progress made in relation to key project activities;

1. Area Action Plan/Delivery Plan

Following public consultation during Feb-April 2008, Officers continue to work on developing an Area Action Plan (AAP) to guide the development of the WLG over the next 15–20 years. A strategic delivery plan is also being worked up setting out how the objectives for the WLG will be achieved and the long term benefits for the local community.

2. Gateway Sites

2.1 2 Branch Road

The owner of 2 Branch Road (former Mike's Carpets) has been in recent discussions with the Council about the future of this site. The Council's position has been clearly set out and further meetings are planned in order to try and reach an amicable way forward. Agreement was also reached for an independent re-evaluation of the site and an asbestos survey to be undertaken.

2.2 Mistress Lane

Following Local Plans Panel consideration in June, revised designs are being drawn up by Advent, the preferred developer, for further consultation with Ward Members and the Area Forum in November. The intention is to resubmit revised proposals to Local Plans Panel in December.

2.3 Living World

The planning brief prepared for Branch Road also includes some potential future options for the Living World site. However, as parts of the site remains occupied, the focus of our work on the Gateways will be on Branch Road and Mistress Lane, which are deemed more deliverable in the short term.

3. New Wortley

3.1 T-Blocks

West North West Homes are continuing with their options appraisal of the T-blocks on the estate. A full report is expected by November which will determine the future of 5/6 of the T-blocks and up to 6 houses.

3.2 Holdforth Place

Holdforth Place (former Children's Home) is the cleared site in the middle of the New Wortley estate, currently owned by HM Treasury. An agreement was reached with Yorkshire Housing two years ago to buy and redevelop the site. However, the deal did not happen resulting in the Treasury notifying us in July of their intention to consider disposing of the land by auction.

In order to ensure future development of this site, in keeping with the WLGB's aspirations, approval was given by the Chief Housing Officer in September, to fund the acquisition of Holdforth Place for £65k including legal fees. It is anticipated that this deal will be completed by end of December.

3.3 Former Liberal Club

Due to the current economic climate, redevelopment of the site demolished in 2005, cannot be considered in the short term.

3.4 Centrica

Centrica, the National Grid (gas) site, are keen to discuss future plans with the Council about future options for this site. However, we were notified in October that National Grid's position remains unchanged in that any future development of the site is still very much a long term aspiration. As such we are unable to progress discussions further at this time.

4. Armley Mills

Various pieces of work have been undertaken to assess options for the delivery of a sustainable development scheme at Armley Mills which will provide an enhanced cultural facility incorporating an improved Museum which complies with the Council's vision for the Museum and at the same time, exploits the potential of the whole Mill complex including Dunkirk Hill and Cardigan Fields, Waterways and surrounding areas. The need to build stronger links to the community of Armley is integral to this work.

Armley Mills has not been in receipt of funding from the Designated Collections Fund and is not in a position to go for major Heritage Lottery Funding in the foreseeable future. This has resulted in a need for the Council to look at alternative sources of financial support especially from the private sector given the current economic climate. Informal meetings are currently being held with a number of companies that specialise in investing in Heritage buildings, to see if their experience might be applicable to Armley Mills. These meetings are without prejudice.

Museums & Galleries, Libraries, Arts and Heritage are currently undertaking an audit of the artifacts in the Museum which will identify space requirements to assist in updating its approach and broaden its appeal.

Officers in Regeneration Service, Renaissance Unit and Museums & Galleries, Libraries, Arts and Heritage will continue working together to provide a solution which will deliver a comprehensive scheme for the whole site.

Once all the various strands of work are complete, a report outlining the vision for the area will be presented to the WLGB. Further work to develop a framework for the area will also be subject to consultation with Members, the public and the Inner West Area Committee.

5. Armley Town Centre

The Armley Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) Officer post has been advertised and it is expected that an appointment will be made by early November. A THI website has been designed along with application forms and guidance notes ready for launch.

The Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for Armley has been published and a local consultative group set up to oversee its implementation and management. It is anticipated that the agreed CMP will be considered at the 23 October Planning Board. Once approved, this should trigger the Heritage Lottery Fund's permission to begin expenditure.

A request for funding and design freeze is to be presented to Executive Board on 8 October 2008 for the joint T&DC/THI works to the forecourts. The scheme is expected to be on site in January 2009.

6. Governance

The Inner West Area Committee is the client for the work on the West Leeds Gateway, together with the Outer Area Committee in relation to those parts of the Regeneration Area within Farnley and Wortley ward. As part of the on-going restructure of the Regeneration Service, responsibility for the delivery of the (physical aspects of the) WLG regeneration programme moved from the Area Management team to the new Regeneration City Office team in July this year. Throughout the summer, senior officers within the Council, the Chair and other members of the WLGB including Cllr Andrew Carter, Executive Member have reviewed the current governance arrangements to create a structure capable of moving this ambitious programme on to the next phase.

Each Ward within the WLG will be represented by a Member as part of the proposed new Programme Board. The Inner West Area Committee continues to be represented on the Board by its Chair, Cllr Janet Harper.

The services aspect of the West Leeds Gateway, including worklessness, culture, community safety, economic development, health, leisure, recreation and voluntary/community and faith sector involvement will be led by Area Management and co-ordinated through a new Stakeholder Advisory Board chaired by Cllr Harper.

A copy of the revised structure of the WLGB is attached at appendix 1.

Implications for Council Policy and Governance

The regeneration of the West Leeds Gateway will contribute to several of the strategic outcomes set out in the Council's Leeds Strategic Plan 2008 – 2011 in particular; Culture – enhanced cultural opportunities through encouraging investment and development of high quality facilities e.g. Armley Mills; Enterprise and the Economy – increased international competitiveness through marketing and investment in high quality infrastructure and physical assets e.g. Gateway sites and Thriving Places – improved quality of life through mixed neighbourhoods offering good housing options and better access to services and activities e.g. New Wortley.

Member Consultation

As part of the review of the governance arrangements, individual meetings were held with Cllr Andrew Carter, Executive Member and member of the WLGB, Cllr Janet Harper, Chair of Inner West Area Committee and current Vice Chair of the WLGB and Cllr David Blackburn, member of the WLGB.

Legal and Resource Implications

The WLG strategic delivery plan which is currently being developed, in line with the AAP, will also set out the level of investment needed to deliver the WLG programme and the anticipated sources including strategies for leveraging in of private sector funding.

Conclusions

During this year, significant work has taken place among Officers and partners to progress the West Leeds Gateway regeneration programme. The Officers, guided by the WLGB, continue to move on key priorities identified by the WLGB including Armley Mills, 2 Branch Road and Mistress Lane which form part of the Gateways Scheme and the Armley Town Centre.

In addition, the Council will continue to keep a 'watching brief' on other sites/proposals identified for intervention in the medium to long term such as Living World and sites in New Wortley.

A review of the current governance arrangements has taken place to create a structure capable of moving forward this ambitious programme. The new arrangements will be presented to the WLGB at its meeting on Thursday 9 October 2008.

Recommendations

The Inner Area Committee is asked to note the contents of this report.

Background Papers

Appendix 1 WLGB revised structure diagram.

Appendix 1 – Proposed New WLGB Structure

