



Report of the Director of Neighbourhoods & Housing

Outer South Leeds Area Committee

Date: 25th September 2006

Subject: Area Manager's Report

Electoral Wards Affected:

Ardsley & Robin Hood
Morley North
Morley South
Rothwell

Specific Implications For:

Ethnic minorities
Women
Disabled people
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 details a range of activities taking place within the Outer South Leeds Area, providing information to the committee and requesting members' views on several issues, including the co-option of new members to this Committee, the nomination of Members to the Town Centre Management Board, and the potential way forward for consultation as part of the prospective redevelopment of Morley Leisure Centre

1.0 Purpose of Report

To bring to Members' attention in a succinct fashion, brief details of the range of activities with which the Area Management Team are engaged, and that are not addressed in greater detail elsewhere on this agenda. It provides opportunities for further questioning or the opportunity to request a more detailed report on a particular issue.

2.0 Town Centre Manager for Morley and Rothwell

- 2.1 Peter Mudge has recently been appointed to this position. He will initially be working on a part time basis until he is able to take up the position full time on the 2nd October. Peter has extensive experience of Town Centre Management issues, having previously been the Town Centre Manager for Malton and Norton.
- 2.2 Previous discussions at this Committee have identified the need to establish a small board to oversee detailed aspects of the Town Centre Managers work programme. It has previously been proposed that whilst this board needs to be representative it

should also be relatively small. Consequently it was previously suggested that the group would comprise a traders representative from both Towns, a Morley Town Council representative and two members of this committee along with the Town Centre Manager and a member of the Area Team. It would be helpful if the committee could identify which two Members could become involved in this process. To ensure the necessary wider engagement The Town Centre Manager will work with the Town Centre Partnerships already established.

3.0 Morley Literature Festival

3.1 Plans are well advanced for the inaugural Morley Literature Festival which is due to take place over the weekend of 29th and 30th September. The festival has the potential to play an important role as one of a series of events designed to increase interest, awareness and footfall in Morley. Many people have contributed to establishing the festival and it is clear that there is a real willingness from individuals and organisations to commit time to help in the promotion of the Town. Once the festival is over it will be important to evaluate what has been achieved and consider if and how the festival could be taken forward in future years. Issues that need to be considered include the management of the Festival, structure and decision making. Other considerations centre on how to maximise benefit for the Town, financial viability, marketing and content of the festival, resourcing and support.

4.0 Town and District Centre Regeneration Initiative – Marsh St Car Park enhancement scheme, Rothwell.

4.1 Mouchel Parkman has been confirmed as the engineering consultant to work in partnership with the Area Management Team on the next steps of implementing the Marsh St Car Park enhancement scheme, Rothwell. Having previously carried out the feasibility study, Mouchel Parkman are now working up the detailed design based on the option which local councilors and key organisations preferred.

4.2 A display of the design proposals and plans for the scheme is aimed to be made available during week beginning 9th October to view and comment on at Rothwell Library. The display will be open to the public, Rothwell Inter-Agency Group and Rothwell Town Centre Partnership including local businesses, traders and organisations. Leaflets will be available to take away and members of Mouchel Parkman will present to answer questions.

4.3 Information on the scheme will also be put on the Area Management/Area Committee's webpage. Information being made available will include an approximate timescale, what will happen during construction and how the car park will be affected.

4.4 Following the information week the design and plans for the scheme will be finalised and documentation for tendering the work to contractors prepared.

5.0 Community Centre Update

5.1 At the last Area Committee members agreed to establish a small working group to assist in the smooth transfer of responsibilities for some community centres to this Committee. One of the issues that will need to be addressed will be an area wide

review of the demand for centres. This will need to take into account among other things the suitability of existing resources, and issues relating to the particular merits of supporting either established council owned community centers, or other venues owned directly within the faith, private or community sectors, or indeed /a mixture of both. To progress this, the Area Committee is asked to identify one Member from each Ward. The working party will then be convened.

5.2 West Ardsley Community Centre

Work to install the gas pipe at the community centre took place in the first week of September; this has been a long and protracted issue which City services will raise with the industry regulator.

5.3 Stanhope Community Centre, Thorpe

This former Community and Library building is under the management of Leeds South Homes (LSH). A meeting was recently held at the centre to consider the potential demand should this facility be retained for the benefit of the community and explore how the centre could be managed and run. The meeting was reasonably well attended and members of the community are now considering the issues raised with a view to proposing a productive way forward. The environment around the building has been cleaned up by LSH and officers are due to review the outcome of the public meeting before undertaking further discussions with Elected Members.

6.0 Area Committee Co-option

6.1 The Governance Services section of Leeds City Council has been approached by Drighlington Parish Council with the request that two Parish councilors are co-opted on to this committee. The Councils constitution allows for co-optees to be appointed to Area Committee at the discretion of the Committee.

6.2 Paragraph 4 of the Area Committee Procedure Rules, which form part of the Council's Constitution, sets out the legal position in respect of co-option on to area committees. It states:

- Each Area Committee **may** select up to five co-opted members to assist in the discharge of the Committee's role, in accordance with Article 10 of the Constitution;
- Co-opted members may participate in the debate in the same way as Elected Members, but co-optees have no voting rights;
- No co-opted member shall be appointed for a period beyond the next Annual Meeting of the Council i.e. they are annual appointments.

6.3 Currently, a minority of Area Committees include co-opted members. Where co-opted members have been appointed, they tend to be representatives of local community forums, sometimes Ward-based, and they act as a two-way channel of communication between that forum and the Area Committee.

6.4 However, there is no compulsion to appoint co-optees, nor is there any necessity for them to be representatives of local community forums – it would be equally acceptable, for instance, to appoint someone from the local business community, or to

appoint someone for a time-limited period due to their expertise in a particular field that the Area Committee was currently involved in.

- 6.5 This Area Committee last considered this issue on 11th July 2005 (minute 6 refers). The Committee took the view at that time that the potential difficulties of formally co-opting a number of people who the committee felt should be representative of the wider community onto the committees outweighed the potential benefits, given the difficulties in ensuring a fair and equitable representation of the communities of South Leeds within the number of 5 co-optees allowed. Whilst it may be possible to consider constitutional changes which allow for more than five co-optees, the Committee could then be faced with a size of membership which may not be conducive to effective decision making. Nevertheless, the 11th July committee recommended that co-option should be considered by the committee when specific assistance was required with certain aspects of the Area Committees work programme.
- 6.6 The request from Drighlington Parish Council is an indication of their wish to work closely with this Area Committee and such an approach should be welcomed; there are many issues of joint interest to both committees which would benefit from close cooperation and combined effort, and further effort is required to ensure that this Committee achieves this. However there is a difficulty in that the two Parish Councils and one Town Council, with which this committee could work closer, all exist within the two Morley Wards. No such arrangements exist within Rothwell or Ardsley and Robin Hood. To ensure a consistent and fair approach this Committee would need to invite all three councils to be represented, but this would leave an anomaly in respect of the other two outer south wards.
- 6.7 At present the committee has an open forum slot which is open to any member of the local community to attend and use to comment upon aspects of the Committees agenda or raise any other relevant point pertinent to the area. Both Parishes and the Town Council could be encouraged to make a better use of this opportunity. It can be argued that this forum is in itself undemocratic since it is open to any self selected individual to turn up. Nevertheless it may be the only practical way for an equitable and transparent means of resolving this issue, particularly if this is coupled with closer officer working with the Parish and Town Councils. Other areas where there are a larger number of parish councils have established a consultative forum, which again may be something the Committee would wish to instigate at some point in the future.

7.0 Staffing update

- 7.1 A new member of staff has been appointed to the Outer South Area Management Team; Kate Armitstead commenced work on 18th September in the Area Assistant Officer position. The Area Project Officer position has been included in the ringfence within the division wide restructuring but should be resolved within the next 2 months. A new appointment has also been made to the Inner South team and some of this person's time has been spent supporting Outer South Issues.

7.2 Rothwell Gardening Scheme

- 7.3 The gardening service is progressing very well during the first 3 months of operation. The response from clients has been extremely positive, and so far, 42 people have been assisted. New referrals are coming in at the rate of about 4 or 5 per week and some people are requesting regular visits whilst others only require one visit to bring the garden under control so that neighbours or relatives can do the regular maintenance. Volunteers are now being recruited so that the number of gardens that can be treated can be increased.

8.0 Recommendations

- 8.1 The Committee is requested to agree the proposals to establish a Town Centre Management Board and nominate two Members to sit on the Town Centre Management Board
- 8.2 The Committee is asked to consider the outline proposals for consultation on the redevelopment of Morley Leisure Centre and make recommendations for consideration by the Councils Learning and Leisure Department.
- 8.3 The Committee is asked to consider the request for co-option of Drighlington Parish Council members onto this committee and make recommendations as considered appropriate.