



Leeds
CITY COUNCIL

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Report of the Director of Environment & Neighbourhoods Directorate

South Leeds (Outer) Area Committee

Date: Monday 22nd June 2009

Subject: Community Engagement

Electoral Wards Affected:
Ardsley and Robin Hood
Morley North
Morley South
Rothwell

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 reviews the Outer South Community Engagement Strategy that was presented to Members at the December 2008 Area Committee. It also demonstrates how a range of community engagement activities from the strategy have informed actions and priorities in the Area Delivery Plan 2008/11.

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report presents a review of the Outer South Community Engagement Strategy.
- 1.2 The report outlines how consultation from community engagement events has informed the priorities and actions of the Area Delivery Plan 2008/11.

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 In November 2007 the Executive Board agreed an increase in the delegated responsibilities of Area Committees. This included an enhanced role for the Area Committee in community engagement.
- 2.2 At the same time, the Executive Board agreed to end the District Partnership structure, which had previously provided a framework for multi-agency working in the

city under Leeds Initiative. The Leeds Strategic Plan (LSP) now details the outcomes and priorities the Council has agreed with its partners and includes the Local Area Agreement for the City. The achievement of these LSP outcomes and priorities will contribute to the delivery of the longer term aspirations for the city as set out in the Vision for Leeds 2004 to 2020.

- 2.2 The Area Committees now have a greater role in overseeing partnership working in their areas. The Area Delivery Plans (ADP) have been changed to reflect this, as ADP's are now linked to the Leeds Strategic Plan and its priorities.
- 2.3 Two of the key improvement priorities in the ADP under the Stronger Communities theme are:
- 'an increase in the number of local people that are empowered to have a greater voice and influence over local decision making and a greater role in public service delivery'
 - 'an increase in the number of local people engaged in activities to meet community needs and improve the quality of life for local residents'.

3.0 Community Engagement Structure

3.1 For residents to feel they are involved in local decision making and promote Members as community champions, the Area Committee needed to strengthen their role in the community engagement process. The Community Engagement Report to the Area Committee in September 2008 presented the range of community engagement work already undertaken by the Area Committee. Members agreed to support this work with additional targeted community engagement events. It was agreed that Members would agree to the format and location of the additional work in their Ward at future Ward Member Briefing meetings. Outlined below is an update on each piece of community engagement work and the ADP priorities it has influenced.

3.2 All Wards

3.2.1 Neighbourhood Improvement Plans

A significant form of community engagement currently undertaken in the Outer South is delivered through the Neighbourhood Improvement Plans. As part of the NIP programme for 2008-11 Members agreed to six new NIP areas including Oakwell and Fairfax in Drighlington and Wood Lane in Rothwell for the first phase.

3.2.2 As part of the NIP process, all households in the NIP area receive a consultation postcard to be returned with comments using a freepost address to the Area Management Team. The responses are used to develop the NIP action plan – which in turn is an action in the Area Delivery Plan and so can be seen as another effective method of involving local people in how services are delivered in their area.

3.2.3 Supported Areas

The Priority Neighbourhood Worker (PNW) supports a number of priorities for the Area Committee in addition to regenerating deprived communities. This includes developing the capacity and supporting the skills of the voluntary sector. An integral part of the PNW work is the development and support of Tenants and Residents

Associations (TARA's) following the completion of a NIP. In conjunction with the Customer Involvement Officers from Aire Valley Homes (AVH), the PNW engages with residents in 'Supported Areas' to continue to build their capacity to administer their affairs effectively as residents and so assisting them to resolve issues and engage with services.

3.2.4 The PNW has attended Tenants and Resident Association meetings in all Supported Areas and also supported management committees with planning meetings for future TARA meetings and specific projects. Consultation with residents has highlighted that the Area Committee priorities of improving the environment, more activities for children and young people, and community safety are important issues for neighbourhoods across the Outer South. ADP actions such as community skip provision, Small Grant Scheme, Operation Champions and Environmental Prides will assist in addressing these issues.

3.2.5 **Small Grants**
Outer South Area Committee awarded 23 small grants to community groups during 2008/09. The grant provides up to £500 for community groups to undertake projects that address ADP priorities and benefit their members and the wider community. As part of the community engagement process, Small Grants offer another method of engaging and supporting local groups to build their capacity and skills base. The Area Committee recognises this community empowerment as a priority for 2009/10 and has ringfenced £10,000 Well being Funding for Small Grants.

3.2.6 **Area Committee Meetings**
Six Area Committee meetings are held in each municipal year, they are public meetings where residents are encouraged to attend and engage in the formal process of decision making in their locality. The Open Forum session offers the opportunity for residents to participate and comment on issues that concern them. The dates for 2009/10 have been agreed by Members and have been promoted in the Summer edition of 'About Leeds' the May 2009 Outer South Newsletter and through a flyer to Tenants and Residents groups.

3.2.7 **Outer South Newsletter**
Further engagement in the form of a quarterly newsletter is currently undertaken by the Area Management Team on behalf of the Area Committee which provides an update to residents and groups in Outer South. It also provides an opportunity for community groups to promote their work to the wider community. Quarterly newsletters have been produced for February and May and the next one is planned for August.

3.2.8 **Talking Point**
The Council launched 'Talking Point' in 2008 which is an online consultation portal. It contains details of all consultation council departments are undertaking. It will in the future have the facility to be used as a consultation website, so that residents can leave comments online. At the moment it provides details of consultations and how residents can take part. It also has a section where residents can find out the results of consultation and hopefully see how we have improved services as a result. Area Management has uploaded consultation data onto Talking Point system on all community engagement events in Outer South.

3.2.7 Parish and Town Councils

The Parish and Town Councils within the Outer South area are recognised as key partners for the Area Committee for engaging with residents and in the delivery of projects requiring the input of local communities. There are examples of all three local councils supporting the priority work of the Area Committee. Drighlington Parish Council is an active member of the Oakwell and Fairfax steering group and their participation shows their support for the NIP programme. Gildersome Parish Council has demonstrated enthusiasm and interest in participating and delivering an event as part of the Morley Literature Festival programme. Morley Town Council continues to work with the Area Committee on the Town Centre Management project and specific priorities as raised by residents' e.g. street cleansing issues and the purchase of the Glutton machine.

3.2.8 Conservation Audits

Reviews of three Conservation Areas are being undertaken as a result of Area Committee support from revenue Well being Fund. Audits to be completed by the Conservation Teams in Morley, Rothwell and Oulton will include consultation with residents, Members and key community groups.

3.2.9 Policing Pledge

Area Management recognises that the Area Committee needs to be able to access and support partner consultation as a further tool for engaging with the community and influencing the ADP priorities. The Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPT) in Morley and Rothwell have started to regularly visit established community groups as part of the 'Policing Pledge'. Views and comments from residents are fed directly to the NPT to address and report back to follow up meetings. These comments by residents to the NPT are then used to inform NPT community safety proposals to the Area Committee.

3.2.10 Community Network

As a result of the PNW talking to groups and working with residents to develop their capacity and skills. The PNW has identified the benefits of developing a Community Network which would aim to link the various Outer South Residents Associations together, to share ideas, skills, good practice, and funding opportunities and to generally learn from one another. Among the benefits would be that less established groups can become better motivated by seeing how more established groups run their Residents Associations and provide a network from the voluntary sector which the Area Committee can engage with when developing ADP priorities and actions. At present a project plan for a celebration type event is being produced and will be presented to Members at the next series of Ward Member Briefings.

3.3 **All Morley**

3.3.1 A major event funded by the Area Committee and supported by the Area Management Team is the Morley Literature Festival. This annual event held in mid October has given Ward Councillors and the Area Management Team an opportunity to support and develop the capacity of residents through the establishment of the 'Festival Organising Committee' and the 'Friends of Morley Literature Festival'. The third Morley Literature Festival in 2008 attracted over 1500 people to events over the seven days of the festival. This level of participation, predominantly by the local

community, through events and a strong schools programme has developed community pride and raised the profile of the Area Committee through its support to the festival.

3.3.2 Town Centre Management

The Area Committee having funded a three year Town Centre Management (TCM) project and recently agreed to continue the project. As part of the project annual community engagement 'Summits' are held. These events held in Morley and Rothwell provide an opportunity for business representatives and local residents to find out about work completed through the project and have a say in shaping the towns action plan for the future year. The TCM project also has regular engagement with residents through seasonal events leaflets and household information leaflets. Each town has an active Town Centre Partnership (TCP) of traders; quarterly meetings of the TCPs provide further engagement and consultation with businesses and interested groups on the development of the town and the TCM project. The Town Centre Manager also attends weekly surgeries in Morley and Rothwell.

3.4 **Morley North**

- 3.4.1 A significant piece of work undertaken by the PNW as part of the community engagement strategy and the Area Committee priority of regenerating neighbourhoods has been the development of an informal tenants and residents group as part of the NIP in Oakwell and Fairfax, Drighlington. A fundamental element of a NIP is the inclusion and empowerment of residents with the aim to establish and maintain a residents association. The Oakwell and Fairfax Steering Group decided that holding an event for the residents of the estate would be the most appropriate way for initial engagement with them and allow the Priority Neighbourhood Worker and Aire Valley Homes Customer Involvement Officer to develop links with residents.
- 3.4.2 In addition to a leaflet drop on the estate to promote the event, partners also supported the PNW to circulate a consultation postcard to all households and complete a door knocking exercise, asking for residents views and concerns about their neighbourhood.
- 3.4.3 On the 21st March, a family fun event was held at Drighlington Meeting Hall. Over twenty people attended and participated in activities and consultation events. Using a miniature model ideas tree, residents attending were encouraged to bring forward suggestions on how to improve their neighbourhood. These were written up on paper leaves and then pinned onto the ideas tree.
- 3.4.4 Residents feedback from the consultation included; more activities for young people, better street lighting, cookery classes, improvements to the green spaces, an allotment, a community newsletter promoting activities and news and the creation of a tenants and residents association.
- 3.4.5 The NIP Action Plan has been updated to reflect these community views and the Steering Group continue to meet to deliver and monitor the action plan. To date, NIP achievements include;
- Extra Youth Service Provision
 - Extra Children's and Young People Activities

- First newsletter produced and circulated to all households on the estate
- 3 community meetings held at Drighlington Rugby Club
- An Environmental Pride was held on Fairfax Avenue

3.5 **Morley South**

3.5.1 Morley Network Meal Pilot

'Network Meals' are informal and creative opportunities that help make stronger communities by creating an environment where people from different backgrounds choose to sit down together and 'connect' with each other.

3.5.2 The Area Management Team set out to understand if this concept could be used to support community engagement activities and contribute to future engagement around the Area Committee's strategic work such as with the Outer South Area Delivery Plan (ADP).

3.5.3 Providing a framework for a test event and using a methodology called 'The World Café', a pilot Morley Network Meal was delivered on Tuesday 28th April 2009 at Morley Town Hall 6-8pm, in partnership with the Outer South Area Committee, Morley Town Council and was hosted by community development charity Together for Peace (T4P).

3.5.4 The programme for the event was as follows:

- Formal Welcome by Councillor Grayshon
- 4 x 4 minute sessions of Speed Networking
- Food served in a 'Soup Kitchen' theme with freshly made breads
- 2 x 20 minute 'World Café' sessions with people talking in six groups of four, discussing four key questions around the ADP
- 'Harvesting' the themes discussed and feedback via the facilitators to the audience
- Desserts, Fairtrade Teas and Coffees. Non-programmed space and simple evaluation

3.5.5 As a pilot event the collective view from delegates was largely positive. The 24 delegates who participated in the event produced informative and constructive debate.

3.5.6 It proved to be an exercise that highlighted the hard work of people in Morley and their passion and pride for their community. A range of recommendations were captured and interpreted in table form, linked to the themes of the ADP for further reference. These recommendations confirmed the Area Committee priorities of Town Centre Management, supporting the voluntary and community sector, Morley Literature Festival and the improving the local environment.

3.5.7 The Area Management Team recommends this concept be considered as part of a suite of processes to support community engagement activities, which allow residents to influence the shaping of the Area Committee's ADP.

3.5.8 In addition to this major community engagement event the PNW has attended the Newlands and Denshaws community day planning meetings and an event held on 16th May. A huge commitment was demonstrated by local residents to the event and community pride and cohesion were increased as a result. This demonstrates that the Area Committee's support for TARA's and community groups through the actions under the 'Stronger' theme of the ADP are vital.

3.6 **Ardley and Robin Hood**

3.6.1 Improvements at Thorpe and Smithy Recreational Grounds

The Area Committee has also supported consultations on Smithy and Thorpe Recreational Grounds. Parks and Countryside were commissioned by the Area Committee to engage with partners and residents to record their views on the planned proposals. Youth Service, Tingley TARA and Parks and Countryside Officers consulted Members, residents and young people through questionnaires, public meetings and information boards, capturing their views on the planned development proposals. The strong involvement of the local community in both projects demonstrates that the Area Committee priority to support green space for leisure activities and improving the environment in local neighbourhoods continues to be relevant.

3.6.2 Lofthouse PB

The Lofthouse 'Bright Ideas' project is a significant piece of engagement work for the Area Committee. Over the last four months a Steering Group has been established with representatives from the community, Ward Councillors, Aire Valley Homes and Area Management.

The Steering Group have overseen several consultation activities including a freepost postcard, public meetings and a presentation at Lofthouse Tenants and Residents Association. Consultation highlighted more activities for children and young people, improving community facilities and the environment as key priorities. All actions reflected in the Area Delivery Plan.

'Decision Day' for residents is being organised for Saturday 27th June at Lofthouse Christ Church, Meeting Hall. A range of Community Groups, Voluntary, Faith and Public Sector organisations have been invited to apply for funding totaling £15,000. Those who meet the eligibility criteria will make a presentation to the wider community on Decision Day. Residents will vote for projects that they would like to be delivered in their community.

3.6.3 Tingley Tenants and Residents Association (TARA)

The PNW has attended the Residents Association meeting to identify need; the PNW is supporting the group in contacting speakers for their meetings and assisting the Chair with a Small Grants Application, and with the organising of a fun day. Currently there is not a full membership take up on the Residents Association Committee and the PNW is working in partnership with AVH Staff to recruit a full committee and encourage more residents to attend the Residents Association Meetings.

3.7 Rothwell

3.7.1 Oulton and Woodlesford Design Statement

Through Well being Funding, the Area Committee is supporting the production of a Design Statement for Oulton and Woodlesford. Consultation will be carried out by the community and the Design Statement produced based on this consultation will record residents' views and ideas for the development of their area.

3.7.2 Wood Lane NIP

Wood Lane is the second of the phase one NIPs. The PNW has written an Area Profile of the estate to gain an understanding on the location and services already present. Partners have assisted in providing information for this profile for consideration by the Steering Group when it is established. Based on this work Members recently agreed a NIP and a Participatory Budgeting initiative.

3.7.3 Manor Road Shops

The Rothwell Tenants and Residents Association have been a significant partner in developing the work to bring improvements to the area outside the shops on Manor Road. Consultation has been carried out by groundwork and Aire Valley Homes with residents' representatives and Members on the estate. Construction of the scheme is now under development and regular meetings and consultation with residents association and Members has been an important part of the project.

3.7.3 John O'Gaunts

The John O'Gaunts TARA continues to develop. The PNW has also offered advice on Committee issues and is supporting the John O' Gaunts Community Fun day with the organisation of the event, as well as providing a stall on the day. The group has also expressed an interest in sharing ideas with other Residents Associations. In addition and with support from Groundwork and AVH residents continue to deliver aspects of the 'Master Plan' which was developed through wide consultation in the area. All above address key issues identified in the ADP.

4.0 Implications For Council Policy and Governance

4.1 There are no direct implications associated with Council Policy and Governance as a result of this report.

5.0 Legal and Resource Implications

5.1 There are no legal implications as a result of this report.

5.2 The Area Committee has already ring fenced a budget of £5,000 Well being revenue funding to support the community engagement process and £30,000 towards Participatory Budgeting initiatives. This has secured match funding from Aire Valley Homes of £15,000 for PB initiatives within Priority Areas, a further £15,000 is being sourced.

6.0 Conclusions

6.1 A variety of complimentary community engagement work is being delivered by the Area Management Team to support Ward Members as Community Champions and to influence the ADP priorities and actions.

7.0 Recommendations

7.1 Members are asked to:
a) note the contents of the report

Background Papers

- Community Engagement Report December 8th 2008