



Report of the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods

To: Inner North West Area Committee

Date: 17 September 2009

Subject: Area Managers Report

Electoral Wards Affected:

Hyde Park & Woodhouse
Headingley
Kirkstall
Weetwood

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

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1.0 Purpose of This Report

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2.0 Main Issues

2.1 CULTURE

2.1.1 HEART Centre Development

A process of consultation with Headingley Community Centre (HCC) users has begun in preparation of moving community centre provision to the HEART Centre in 2010. Staff from the Area Management team met with each group that holds frequent bookings at HCC to record any specific requirements for room sizes and storage space and to inform them of how the transition would work. Further engagement with Headingley Community Centre is planned for the Autumn.

The closure of HCC will take place in the next 9 to 12 months. The HCC will not be shut until the HEART scheme is complete. All HCC users will be able to make the transition to the HEART Centre. All of the users of the Headingley Community Centre

will be offered meeting space in the HEART Centre. HCC users will be charged using Leeds City Council's lettings policy but will liaise directly with Headingley Development Trust for their bookings.

Leeds City Council and Headingley Development Trust will enter into a service level agreement that will protect community centre users in the HEART Centre for 25 years. This will protect the number of hours of community use not specific groups. It will allow some additional capacity above the current level of bookings.

HDT will need to begin to draw down some of the £100K Well-being capital this Autumn if the project is to proceed on time. Agreement has yet to be reached between Leeds City Council and Headingley Development Trust on the details of the Heads of Terms for the HEART Centre. A key element for agreement will be the order of charge called on the building from the various parties contributing to its development. Leeds City Council will want to ensure that community centre provision could still be offered to the community without the sale of the building being necessary should the HEART Centre initiative be unsuccessful. The committee is requested to note that any expenditure prior to the signing of the Heads of Terms will be conducted at risk.

2.2 ENTERPRISE AND THE ECONOMY

2.2.1 Recession Watch

In Inner North West Leeds there are precious few signs of "green shoots" marking the end of the recession. The number of unemployed job seekers allowance claimants has risen over the month to July, a figure of 3015, representing 6.01% of the working population (source Leeds Economy Bulletin Spring 2009).

The number of investment enquiries coming to the Council has also continued to fall in Inner North West over the last six quarters, from 98 industrial enquires to 36, from 56 office enquiries to 29, from 69 retail enquiries to 36 and 42 land enquiries to 28. One major job loss has been announced in the last quarter- the University of Leeds (Biological Sciences, Healthcare) with 80 job losses.

2.3 LEARNING AND CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

2.3.1 City of Leeds School

Education Leeds will present a report to the October meeting of Executive Board. This will update the Board on the implications for City of Leeds High School, Primrose High School and Parklands Girls High School of their progress towards delivering the national challenge floor targets (at least 30% of young people in each school securing 5 good GCSEs including English and Maths). The report will reconsider the structural options that were agreed at the March meeting of Executive Board and make further recommendations on these.

2.4 ENVIRONMENT

2.4.1 Student Changeover

Initial feedback from services, Elected Members and residents is that the changeover period in 2009 was better managed and had less impact on local communities this year than previous years. The Green Streets project increased recycling and improved communications, and Environmental Services delivered a consistent service across the area.

A number of recommendations have been suggested for next year including; a joint operation to target bin tatting (bag slashing and rummaging through bins) and ensuring finances are agreed well in advance of service planning.

2.4.2 Dobby Row BMX Development

A meeting was held on the 30th of July 2009 to discuss the feasibility for the development of a BMX dirt jump track at the Dobby Row Site in Kirkstall. The meeting was attended by Jeremy Hayes, British Cycling/ Leeds BMX club; Paul Senior, LCC Sport Development ; John Ramsden, LCC Asset Management; Jade Corcoran, LCC Planning; Cllr John Illingworth, Kirkstall ward/ Dig2Ride; Alex Wheat, Youth Services; Carly Grimshaw, Area Management; and Chris Dickinson, Area Management.

The group agreed that the Dobby Row site appeared to meet a number of the criteria for the activity, but there were still numerous planning, funding and liability issues to resolve before the Dobby Row site could be confirmed as the site of a future BMX trail. Its critical that these are addressed before expectations are raised with potential users or the community.

A key action for the next stage of the project is to agree the specification and layout of the site so that agreement can be reached on how design, planning and maintenance issues will be resolved. Area Management Team will call a further meeting in the Autumn to feedback on this progress and look to move forward with the next stage of development when considerations of funding and maintenance will begin.

2.4.3 Play Area Maintenance Funding

A number of proposals to deliver improvements to play areas in the Inner North West are currently underway. Sites including Sandford Road, Craggside Recreation Ground, Butcher Hill and Tinshill Garth are all currently being considered for improvement in play provision. An opportunity to secure Capital funding from a range of sources including the Lottery and Playbuilders has become available for the development of these sites. However, the source of revenue required to maintain the play facilities is far less certain as grant funders tend not to fund revenue for play area development.

Further discussions with Parks and Countryside are needed to identify what their resource requirements would be for undertaking maintenance for additional play areas, however it is understood that an allocation of revenue for several years would be required. Sources including Area Committee Well-being and Section 106 funding are being considered. Ward Member are invited to comment on whether this sort of approach would be acceptable.

2.5 THRIVING PLACES

2.5.1 Review of Area Committee Community Engagement Strategy

Members will be aware of the Your Communities, Your Priorities events that took place in February, March and April of this year across the West and North West Area. In the Inner North West the area management team held 4 events which were attended by a total of 136 residents.

The aim of the events was to engage the public in the process of setting local priorities to inform the development of the 2009-2010 area delivery plans for the four Area Committee Areas. Evaluations of the events have highlighted some areas for improvement in relation to future community engagement work.

Across WNW only 412 residents attended the 12 events. As a proportion of total population for the WNW area this is very low and unrepresentative in terms of community profile. Given this experience, the WNW area management team is seeking to review the existing community engagement strategy which was agreed in December 2008 with a view to enhancing the way in which we support strong and inclusive communities. The committee is clear that it wants to strengthen, develop and sustain opportunities for local people and groups to influence what happens in their communities. The committee has also stated that it wants to provide opportunities for communities to shape and influence the development and delivery of services that reflect local needs and priorities. Critically the area management team needs to manage and co-ordinate engagement activities to ensure partner participation and consistency so that we provide opportunities for participation for all sections of the community.

In order to make both the committees and its partners community engagement work more meaningful - over the next few months the AMT will be developing:

a) a dedicated area committee website to promote and communicate the work of the area committee more effectively along with a web based community engagement survey platform with a menu linking all partner initiatives, latest news, and a means to undertake and evaluate web-based surveys on local matters. This will either be linked to the Councils 'talking-point' portal or operate as a stand-alone survey tool.

b) an area committee citizens panel - currently the city-wide panel has 2000 residents across the whole city. Alongside existing community engagement structures the area committee citizens panel will provide a representative view of public opinion and will be useful when considering the impact and effect of changes to public services. It will also be an on-going sounding board and will be more likely to provide useful results than the recent engagement events and traditional ward forum structures.

c) a leaflet promoting the area committee's main achievements over the last couple of years and its priority themes and projects for the next couple of years. The leaflet will also include information on how local people can get more involved in the work of the area committee and its partners in the Inner North West and,

d) more thematic and issue-based consultation using outreach as a model for gauging the views of communities of interest - our experience has been that where residents and stakeholders really care about an issue and can relate to outcomes eg, a DPPO or a high street improvement scheme, or a neighbourhood planning exercise we tend to get more people getting involved and participating. The AMT will be looking to develop a programme of such consultation with partners through existing ward forum structures.

A full community engagement strategy report will be presented to the committee at one of its future meetings for approval.

2.5.2 Area Delivery Plan Update

Progress on the delivery of the ADP has been monitored through the Sub-Groups of the Inner North West Area Committee and through the various other stakeholder partnerships. There are 91 Actions listed within the ADP for delivery 2009-10 of which 36 have been delivered by the end of Q2 of the financial year. Many of the remaining actions are not due for completion for the 2009-10.

More work is required at the city-wide level to raise the profile among stakeholders of the ADPs function as the primary tool for managing the delivery of service improvement priorities. This will process enable us to ensure that the ADP has a better fit with service planning in future years.

2.5.3 Priority Neighbourhoods

Little London

In July, Leeds City Council hosted a priority setting workshop for resident groups, community organisations and front line services to agree a set of priorities for Little London for the year ahead.

Two action plans have been agreed, one for the Crime and Grime partnership covering things like tackling illegal dumping and tidying up neglected areas, and one for the Health and Wellbeing partnership that will increase adult training opportunities and promote Little London as a great place to live.

Work on the delivery of the actions plans will be rolled out over the next year. Progress will be monitored against agreed targets and be available for the Area Committee to consider in a report planned for Spring 2010. This work represents an important step forward in how the delivery of improvements is undertaken in the Little London area and serves to demonstrate the depth of commitment from partners in tackling challenging local issues.

Hawthorn Estate

A range of services are on offer in the Hawthorn Estate aimed at tackling the broad range of specific issues that effect the neighbourhood. A degree of co-ordination is achieved through initiatives like Multi-Agency Tasking and Extended Services activities. A great level of co-ordination of neighbourhood services is now required to ensure that the maximum benefit to the community can be achieved.

An event planned for the Hawksworth Estate in September will bring the various stakeholders working on the estate together in a new partnership. A report to Area Committee will feed back the progress of this new initiative.

3.0 Recommendations

Inner North West Area Committee members are asked to:

- 3.1 Note the contents of the report and comment on any aspect of the matters raised, and,
- 3.2 Suggest items for inclusion on future agendas.

Background papers: None