

**Report of the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods**

**To: Outer North West Area Committee**

**Date: 28 September 2009**

**Subject: Area Managers Report**

**Electoral Wards Affected:**  
Adel & Wharfedale  
Guiseley & Rawdon  
Horsforth  
Otley & Yeadon

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**

The purpose of this report is to inform members of progress on a number of projects in Outer North West Leeds as determined by the Area Delivery Plan 2008-11, which is in turn governed by the Area Committees functions and roles as agreed by Executive Board in July 2008.

**1.0 Purpose of This Report**

1.1 This report informs Members of the progress against Area Committee functions and roles as agreed by Executive Board in July 2008.

**2.0 Background Information**

2.1 The Area Management Review agreed by Executive Board in November 2007 proposed to further develop the responsibilities of the Area Committees during 2008/9. To this end, Area Committee functions and enhanced roles were agreed in July 2008.

**3.0 Main Issues**

**Thriving Communities**

3.1 Town and District Centre Regeneration – In 2006, funding was allocated to two schemes in Outer North West – Otley Market Place and Yeadon High Street. A further three projects – the restoration of the Brook Crompton clock in Guiseley, the

refurbishment of the former Horsforth library and the refurbishment of Otley Civic Centre were then added. Work on all schemes has been progressed in consultation with local ward members.

- 3.2 The scheme to enhance the market place in Otley is now complete. There are however a number of issues that have arisen since the installation of the street furniture that need resolving with market traders and the Markets Service.
- 3.3 The scheme to improve and enhance the High Street in Yeadon commenced work on April 27<sup>th</sup>. The contractors for the work are North Midland. At the time of writing the programme of works is currently 9 days behind schedule but the contractors are trying to make this time up. Some additional works are having to be undertaken as part of the contract including the relaying of some of the Virgin Media cabling under the High Street and the purchase and installation of additional bollards for around the parking bays. Since work has been completed on one side of the street, it has become apparent that drivers who park in the parking bays, manoeuvre their cars on the new paving and subsequently mark it with their tyres. The installation of additional bollards will help to alleviate this problem.
- 3.4 Planning approval for the Guiseley clock was granted in August by Planning Services. Tender documents were prepared and sent out in early August. Four tenders were returned out of six enquiries and returned tenders are currently being appraised. Smith of Derby, the original manufacturers of the clock, are to be the appointed contractors for the work to the clock mechanism and face. Work is expected to start next month with a completion date before Christmas.
- 3.5 Work on the design for the new youth centre for Horsforth and the new Area Management offices is complete and a planning application was submitted to Planning Services for a change of use to the building. Approval for this has now been granted. As part of this consent, 10 car parking spaces had to be found for use by staff in the building. Officers have been able to secure these places on land at the Adult Training Centre on Church Lane. A scheme to develop this as a car park is currently being worked up. A tender is out with Property Maintenance to price the contract for the library with a return date of 7<sup>th</sup> October. Start on site will be in November with a completion date of 30 April 2010. This scheme will be part funded by the Town and District Centre Regeneration scheme.
- 3.6 Community Safety - an Operation Champion took place in Horsforth during August. The results of the operation are currently being collated and will be distributed shortly.
- 3.7 Recent partnership activity has included a test purchasing scheme undertaken by the Police focusing primarily on knives but also including underage alcohol sales.
- 3.8 A Neighbourhood Improvement Plan for Horsforth is to be developed in conjunction with West Yorkshire Police based on the reassurance mapping undertaken by the Police.
- 3.9 Tackling Drugs week in June saw a range of projects and initiatives aimed at members of the public. It included the showcasing of expensive vehicles seized by the Police from drug dealers.

- 3.10 Community Engagement - 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 Outer North West the area management team held 3 events which were attended by a total of 104 residents.
- 3.11 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.
- 3.12 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.
- 3.13 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 Outer 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 and community structures.

- 3.14 A full community engagement strategy report will be presented to the committee at one of its future meetings for approval.
- 3.15 Year of Volunteering- Councillor Richard Brett is driving forward a plan to designate 2010 as the Leeds Year of Volunteering. Area Teams have been asked to participate in a programme to increase the number of volunteers and improve access to a wide range of volunteering opportunities. The leaders of the main political parties have given their broad support to this. It will be steered and approved by a Political Steering Group that Councillor Brett will Chair.
- 3.16 It is being suggested that each Area Committee could fund and promote two Volunteer Promotion or Celebration events in their area during the year - specifically aiming to increase volunteering opportunities and volunteer activity by individuals. One of these events could be to run a Volunteer of the Year Awards scheme for their area - with area winners going forward to a City Wide Celebration Event and Award Ceremony at the end of 2010. Further details will be brought back to a future Area Committee with a possible request for funding to support this work in 2010/11.
- 3.17 The Area Management Team continues to support the work of the Weston Estate Neighbourhood meeting. The Holt Park Neighbourhood Improvement Plan was recently revisited with a meeting of residents and officers from a number of agencies. In both cases the action plans have been reviewed with further meetings planned in the autumn to make further progress. A more detailed report on both will be reported on at a future Area Committee meeting.

### **Enterprise and Economy**

- 3.18 There are few green shoots apparent in Outer North West during the current recession however unemployment remains low by City standards. 1254 people were claiming benefits in July 2009 compared with 1248 in April 2009 representing 2.49% of the local workforce. (source: Leeds Economy Bulletin July 2009)
- 3.19 The number of investment enquiries coming to the Council has continued to fall in Outer North West over the last six quarters from 94 industrial enquiries to 31, from 53 office enquiries to 28, from 60 retail enquiries to 28 and 41 land enquiries to 27.
- 3.20 In July, planning approval was given to Leeds Bradford Airport for a £24m extension to the airport terminal. Road and bus service improvements will be introduced as part of the conditions of approval.

### **Transport**

- 3.21 Following the presentation by Metro at the last Area Committee meeting, a recommendation was made to establish a steering group with representation from local ward members, Metro, transport planning and Area Management to oversee the work of the Local Accessibility Planning Pilot for Outer North West Leeds. The first meeting which took place on the 27<sup>th</sup> May, concentrated on the development of the

questionnaire that is to be circulated to known groups and individuals in the area in an attempt to determine local public transport needs.

3.22 Questionnaires have now been circulated to community organisations, sheltered housing schemes, the older people's networks and parish and town councils in the area. The Youth Service have also been contacted separately to help facilitate consultation with young people.

3.23 The outcome of the survey will be reported on at a future Area Committee meeting.

#### **4.0 Implications for Council Policy and Governance**

4.1 The Area Delivery Plan for Outer North West is administered through the West North West Leeds area management team.

4.2 Well being projects develop from Outer North West's Leeds Area Delivery Plan and through consultation with Area Committee members. The plan helps to fulfill the Council's Corporate Plan objectives by aiming to create better neighbourhoods and confident communities.

#### **5.0 Legal and Resource Implications**

5.1 In order to meet the Area Committee's functions, funding is supplied via Well Being budgets and the Community Centres Budget.

5.2 In order to meet the Area Committee's roles, funding is in the main supplied by other Leeds City Council Departments mainstream budgets, and external partner agencies e.g. the Police and Primary Care Trust, which is in turn reflected by the fact that the Area Committee's role here is to influence, develop and consult. However, wellbeing funding has resourced some projects here e.g. area based regeneration schemes and conservation area reviews.

#### **6.0 Conclusions**

6.1 The functions and roles of the Area Committee aim to:

- Improve the quality and value for money of Council service delivery
- Improve the quality of democracy and find new ways to facilitate citizen participation in local government through the development of links between Ward Members and their communities.
- To co-ordinate policy and service delivery between the local service providers.

#### **7.0 Recommendations**

7.1 Outer North West Area Committee members are invited to:

- note the contents of the report and comment on any aspect of the matters raised
- suggest items for inclusion on future agendas

**Background Papers:**

Executive Board Report July 2008.