

Report of the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods

To: Inner North West Area Committee

Date: 22 October 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

The purpose of this report is to inform members of progress against Leeds Strategic Plan and the Inner West Area Delivery Plan.

1.0 Purpose of This Report

1.1 This report informs Members of the progress against Leeds Strategic Plan and the Inner West Area Delivery Plan.

2.0 Background Information

2.1 The Area Delivery Plan is the delivery of the Leeds Strategic Plan in the Inner West area. This report identifies progress against the themes of the Leeds Strategic Plan.

3.0 ENTERPRISE AND ECONOMY

3.1 Jobcentre Plus Latest Response to the Economic Downturn

3.2 Backing Young Britain

3.3 Backing Young Britain is a national cross-government campaign to encourage employers to do everything possible to give every young person the help they need to find a job, training or work skills and experience. They are being asked to commit to at least one of the following initiatives:

- Become a volunteer mentor for school or university leavers to help them find their feet in the job market
- Provide work experience places, volunteering places or a work trial to help young people learn about work, make contacts and fill in their CV
- Offer an internship for a graduate
- Create a new internship for 18 year olds and non-graduates to give them a chance to prove themselves
- Provide an apprenticeship for 16-24 year olds
- Join a Local Employment Partnership to make sure job vacancies are advertised to local unemployed people
- Bid for one of the 100,000 jobs for young people in the Governments Future Jobs Fund

3.4 Latest register information

3.5 Last month 5,862 people left the JSA register. The number of people making new claims to benefit was 5,917. This is a positive trend and shows that the gap between the two figures is narrowing.

3.6 Young Persons Guarantee

3.7 The budget announced a guaranteed offer of a job, work-focused training, or meaningful activity to all 18 to 24 year olds before they have reached the 12 month stage of a claim to Jobseekers Allowance (JSA).

3.8 The guaranteed offer will consist of:

- New jobs created through the Future Jobs Fund
- Support to move into an existing job in a key employment sector
- Work-focused training
- A place on a Community Task Force, delivering real help within their local community

3.9 The guarantee will be in place from early 2010 with some jobs on the Future Jobs Fund starting as early as October this year.

3.10 Future Jobs Fund

3.11 The Future Jobs Fund, worth £1.2 billion to the end of March 2011, aims to create 150,000 new jobs for young people and/or those living in an unemployment hotspot. The Future Jobs Fund will be administered by the Government, with Local Authorities and others bidding into it against key criteria:

- The jobs will be real jobs, lasting at least 6 months for 25 hours a week and paying at least national minimum wage
- Additional jobs that would not have happened without the Future Jobs Fund
- The work undertaken must be of benefit to the local community

3.12 It is very pleasing to note that Kirklees, Calderdale, Leeds and Wakefield Local Authorities have all been successful in their bids to the Future Jobs Fund.

- 3.13 New Help for Jobseekers from 6 April 2009
- 3.14 Newly Unemployed Offer
- 3.15 Personal Advisers will provide flexible, responsive and targeted support to meet the needs of individuals, helping their personal journey back into work. Personal Advisers will offer help from a range of options following first interview which includes:
- One hour group information session
 - One to one coaching session
 - One day Provider led seminar
 - One day specialist Provider led seminar for Professional/Executive customers
 - Access to the Adviser Discretion Fund providing one-off cash help to improve an individual's immediate job prospects
 - Day one eligibility to Work Trials
- 3.16 Six month offer
- 3.17 Customer's age 25+ who remain unemployed for 6 months will be offered additional help, including an increase in the number of Personal Adviser interviews at this stage and making available some new options including:
- £1,000 recruitment subsidy to employers and access to in-work training support up to £1500 through Train to Gain
 - Work focused training
 - Work-focused volunteering options
 - Help for customers starting their own business or starting a self-employed job
- 3.18 Rapid Response Service
- 3.19 The Rapid Response Service (RRS) provides a range of services to support employers and individuals affected by redundancy. Job centre Plus work with the employer and our partner organisations to tailor the support. Job Centre Plus have strengthened and expanded this service:
- To every individual losing their job through redundancy or the economic downturn
 - To provide information about other jobs within the labour market, match redundant workers to known vacancies, help them draw up CVs, improve their job search skills and provide general information about benefits and making a claim
 - Nationally, the funding for this service has doubled from April 2009 to £12m.
- 3.20 In addition the Response to Redundancy provision, administered by the Learning & Skills Council, offers a package of support including jobsearch, employability training and the opportunity to refresh or learn new skills. This provision also acts as the access point to the Rapid Response Fund for training which aims to offer funding for training where it cannot be funded through existing provision.

- 3.21 Local Employment Partnerships (LEP)
- 3.22 Job Centre Plus have had a magnificent response to LEP from employers in Leeds, with over 1040 employers now signed up to offering work opportunities for our most disadvantaged customers. From 6 April 2009 LEP's opened up their recruitment programmes to the newly unemployed.
- 3.23 Mortgage Relief
- 3.24 The benefit system has changed to help people with mortgages to stay in their homes; under the previous rules people losing their jobs only got help with mortgage costs up to £100,000 after 39 weeks of being unemployed. From January 2009 this was brought forward to 13 weeks, and the capital amount increased to £200,000.
- 3.25 Labour Market Information
- 3.26 The Leeds JSA register has increased to 24,461 in August 2009, up by 10,296 (72.7%) on August 2008. The average weekly intake of new JSA claims is running at 1,115, 25.3% higher than 12 months ago. Current analysis of the top occupations being sought by customers new to the JSA register are:
- Other goods handling and storage occupations
 - Sales and retail assistants
 - General office assistants/clerks
 - Van Drivers
 - Labourers in process and plant operations
 - Cleaners, domestics
 - Labourers in building and woodworking trades
 - Packers, bottlers, canners, fillers
 - Customer care occupations
 - Bar staff
- 3.27 As of February 2009, there were 30,540 Employment Support Allowance and Incapacity Benefit Customers and 9,670 Lone Parents receiving Income Support in Leeds.
- 3.28 People claiming Jobseeker's Allowance are usually required to attend their nearest Jobcentre every two weeks to talk about what they have been doing to find work and discuss any further help they may need/require.
- 3.29 Most people who lose their jobs only spend a short time looking for work before they find a new one, and this has continued to be the case despite the economic downturn. Of the people who left the register in August 2009 53.4% had been unemployed for less than 3 months. For those who do not, further help is provided through our Personal Advisers and a range of employment and training opportunities available through our Employability provision (see Annex 1).
- 3.30 In August 2009 6,299 vacancies were notified in Leeds, an increase of 2,487 (65.2%) on July 2009. However this was a decrease of 1,065 (14.5%) on August 2008.

3.31 Current analysis of the top 10 notified vacancies within Leeds are:

- Customer care occupations
- Sales representatives
- Care assistants and home carers
- Heavy goods vehicle drivers
- Cleaners, domestics
- Sales related occupations
- Market research interviewers
- Kitchen and catering assistants
- General office assistants/clerks
- Security guards and related occupations

3.32 In August 2009 there were 5 employers who notified redundancies in Leeds. The figures below represent the YTD notified figures for the number of customers who have been or are expected to be made redundant by sector in Leeds. These are officially notified redundancies or redundancies notified through employer contacts in Leeds and may not represent the complete picture of redundancies in the area.

3.33

Leeds	
Sector	Total
Call Centre	197
Construction	140
Distribution	70
Education	152
Engineering	60
Finance	14
Legal Services	24
Leisure/travel	19
Manufacturing	238
Other	71
Retail	21
Telecomms/post	176
Grand Total	1182

3.34 Integrated Money Advice Pilot

3.35 Work has been underway to roll out an integrated money advice pilot in two areas in Leeds involving a coordination of services from multiple partners. The areas chosen for the first pilots are South Seacroft (which commenced in February and is ongoing), followed by Armley.

3.36 Partners include: LCC Welfare Benefits and Rights, Debt Advice Agencies, Housing ALMO's, Social Care, NHS Leeds, LCC Corporate Debt Team, Leeds City Credit Union, Customer Services One Stop Centres and Contact Centre, Energy Advice.

- 3.37 Leeds Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) has been funded to provide 'Debt First Aid' training to front line staff across the different partner groups. Debt First Aid is a new training programme developed by Leeds CAB to provide very basic understanding and advice to staff on how to approach an individual who contacts them with money and debt problems. To date 87 front line intermediary staff from the following organisations have received this training; Leeds City Credit Union, Seacroft and Armley Leeds City Council One Stop Centres, Children Centre Staff, Wardens, Money Advice Volunteers, Housing Benefit Welfare and Benefit Home Visit Officers, Family Outreach Workers, Fuelsavers, Wildfire at Barnados, WY Police, National Loan Shark Team.

4.0 Environment

4.1 Leeds Organic Growers

In July 2009 Area Management received notification that the directors of Leeds Organic Growers are putting the community enterprise into voluntary liquidation. Members will be aware of much of the background to this case but it is worth restating the facts of the case here and seeing what lessons can be learnt.

- 4.2 Leeds Organic Growers worked with members of the local community since 2000 to regenerate the Station Allotments in Headingley. In 2005 they established the Community Compost Project with the aim of providing a garden waste collection service and bring tip facility, with the plan that the waste would be composted and resold to the wider community. The LOGS Management Committee included three local authority members from the Area Committee, Cllr Golton (formerly of Weetwood), Cllr Illingworth and Cllr Atha (Kirkstall).
- 4.3 LOGS received considerable funding from public and lottery sources for this venture. The Home Office Volunteer Recruitment Fund supported the employment of one fulltime and one part time staff at LOGS. Community Recycling and Development (CRED), a Big Lottery programme aimed at supporting community waste projects gave grants of £206,998 to LOGS to provide 4 full time job opportunities plus extensive volunteering opportunities. Green Fingers Leeds, a project funded by Leeds City Council Social Services to help to establish gardening services for older and disabled people, offered support of £70,000 over three years 2005-7. Other smaller sums were provided by Recycling Action Yorkshire (£7000) and Waste and Resources Action Programme (£11,800)
- 4.4 The Inner North West Area Committee provided £46,666 funding over three years. In 2006/7 £11,666 capital funding was agreed "to purchase a transit tipper vehicle". In 2006/7 £20,000 revenue funding was agreed "as a contribution towards 2006-7 salary costs". In 2007/8 £15,000 revenue funding was agreed "to provide a sustainable household green waste kerbside collection, recycling composting, reuse and redistribution service to the local community targeting 20,000 households within the two Leeds inner North West wards of Kirkstall and Weetwood".
- 4.5 There is evidence that the LOGS has been poorly managed. By December 2007 CRED informed Council officers and members of serious issues concerning the way the project was being run and the money being managed and that funding had not been spent as originally agreed. An example was that builders were paid in advance for work that had not been completed. A financial contractor had also been paid in

error by LOGS. This occurred when a quotation was mistaken for an invoice by LOGS and payment of approximately £15,000 was made to the contractor in error. LOGS advised the Area Committee that the Committee well-being fund was not used to make up for this error payment although this is difficult to verify.

- 4.6 By January 2007 the funding sources had either finished or been withdrawn because of the concerns about how the project was run. The project staff were all made redundant. The Project Manager continued on a volunteer basis. The officer advice at this time was that, considering the issues facing the organisation regarding staff redundancies, the delays to the project and the mismanagement of finances, the Area Committee should not commit any further funding to the project unless it could clearly demonstrate its ability to get back on track with support of funders. However the Committee agreed to approve the funding of the payment of £15,000 to LOGS in 2007/8 to allow the project to manage the building of the composting facility.
- 4.7 A difficulty LOGS they faced was that in 2006 Leeds City Council commenced its own free garden waste recycling scheme to collect garden waste. This made the original business plan, (where LOGS collected and composted garden waste at a fee) less viable. LOGS did seek to work with the City Council using a new business model where the City Council collected the garden waste and it was composted and sold by LOGS. Despite agreement being reached, this new scheme too never got off the ground.
- 4.8 On hearing that the business was to be put into voluntary liquidation in July 2009, the WNW Area Manager requested a final statement of accounts for the organisation and information with regard to the assets of the company. A statement of income and expenditure has been received which shows a total income of £33,680 against expenditure of £33,650 in the Tax Year 2007/8. However no final accounts have received. The Project Manager has claimed that company records have been stolen. There is a concern that the remaining physical assets which should have been available to meet any outstanding liabilities may now have been disposed of. This matter has been reported to Companies House by the remaining Director.
- 4.9 The Area Committee wellbeing monitoring reports do show however that the funding was used for the purposes for which it was intended. In 2006/7 capital funding was used to purchase a transit tipper – this was bought and used by LOGS for the next three years. The payment of £20,000 in 2006/7 was used for a contribution to salaries for the scheme. The payment agreed in 2007/8, was used as a contribution to “set up a sustainable household green waste kerbside collection, recycling composting, reuse and redistribution service”.
- 4.10 The main lesson from the LOGS case is the necessity that any social enterprise given start up funding must have a robust business plan that is sustainable beyond the period of the grant. In LOGS case they used upwards of £350,000 of grants over three years from a variety of sources but did not end up with a sustainable business.

5.0 Implications for Council Policy and Governance

- 5.1 The Area Delivery Plan for Inner North West is administered through the West North West Leeds Area Management Team.
- 5.2 Well-Being projects develop from Inner 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.

6.0 Legal and Resource Implications

- 6.1 In order to meet the Area Committee's functions, funding is supplied via Well Being budgets and the Community Centres Budget.
- 6.2 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.

7.0 Conclusions

- 7.1 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.

8.0 Recommendations

- 8.1 Inner 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.