



Report of the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods

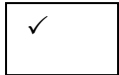
To: Inner West Area Committee

Date: 17th February 2010

Subject: Area Managers Report

Electoral Wards Affected:

Armley
Bramley & Stanningley



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. Main Issues

Area Delivery Plan

2.1 The Area Management Team is currently updating the Area Delivery Plans for 2010/2011. A workshop will be organised for Members in early March to discuss the draft Area Delivery Plan for 2010/2011 and a report will be brought to the April Area Committee meeting.

Neighbourhood Index

2.2A Neighbourhood Index has been developed by Environments and Neighbourhoods directorate to provide an overall picture of the relative 'health' of all neighbourhoods across the city, measure the relative success of neighbourhoods across the city over time and provide a mechanism to measure the combined impact of interventions in a local area.

2.3 This will help to make information more accessible and improve understanding of issues affecting neighbourhoods across the City, develop a shared understanding of neighbourhood needs between partners, provide a robust evidence based approach to formulating policies and allocating resources, and improve performance management at a local level by monitoring the impact of key services on a range of agreed indicators.

2.4 Appendix 1 provides information on the ranked positions of each Middle Super Output Areas in Inner West within each domain, highlighting those with significantly poorer outcomes.

Thriving Communities

Worklessness Events

2.5 There are a number of events happening across the City to support NEET and the unemployed, and Job Centre Plus are working very closely with LSC, Connexions and the NHS.

2.6 The events have been organised by Prospects Services Ltd and supported by Job Centre Plus, to bring together a cross section of organisations from the fields of employment, training and further and higher education to help young people to discover the many exciting career opportunities available to them.

2.7 Students in Year 11 and their parents / carers will be invited to visit the events, along with unemployed young people aged 16 – 19. Year 12 & 13 leavers will also be made welcome.

2.8 The event in West will be held on the 1st March, at Pudsey Civic Hall, and will open at 11am and will run through to 7pm in the evening so that parents have maximum opportunity to attend.

Harmonious Communities

Community Cohesion

- 2.9 The Area Management Team set out the approach that Leeds City Council is taking towards Community Cohesion at the June Area Committee meeting. The approach being to pilot and evaluate different interventions in different neighbourhoods in order to build effective community relations, and to gain an improved understanding of how to measure and improve cohesion at the local level.
- 2.10 Within West North West the area in which this approach is being implemented is Armley, and presently the focus is on the Wythers neighbourhood. The Area Management Team are leading on this piece of work and have set up a steering group to take this piece of work forward. Work in the Wythers neighbourhood was supplemented by COGS: Communities & Organisation: Growth & Support. COGS is a small training, development and action research consultancy organisation. They were funded by Leeds City Council to support the work being undertaken in Armley and Middleton, specifically to undertake some qualitative research to help inform interventions.
- 2.11 Work to develop a toolkit and methodology on how to take forward community cohesion in other neighbourhoods is being finalised. The qualitative research has been completed and interventions for the Wythers neighbourhood are currently being developed through the Wyther Improvement Group to ensure that partners are engaged and involved in this piece of work. The Area Management Team will report progress on this project to the Wyther Improvement Group and future Area Committee meetings.
- 2.12 On the back of this an Openspace event is being organised by Area Management Team and the Equalities Team aimed at frontline members of staff (public sector staff, community groups, schools, health, libraries, youth and faith groups) working in the Armley area. Together 4 Peace have been commissioned by LCC to host the event, which is being held at Safety Central on the 9th March.
- 2.13 The objective of the day being to do some myth busting and capacity building with front line members of staff on what cohesion means to us, and how this can help build cohesive communities; enable networking, relationship building and identifying who is doing what and where and how we can work more closely together to create a 'Team Armley' feeling, and information sharing on recent work undertaken in Armley to help build cohesive neighbourhoods.

Youth Provision Update

BARCA Leeds

- 2.14 In partnership with 'the project' and LCC youth service, we have recruited 6 young people to sit on the west wedge L\$Cash panel. They were able to make decisions about distributing Youth Opportunities and Capital funds to other groups of young people who had submitted funding applications from across the area for a range of activities or make improvement to their youth centres. A number of youth groups from across the area have

been successful in their applications for funding. At Barca-Leeds funding has been acquired by a group of young people to support them in delivering a peer-led education group.

2.15 BARCA-Leeds is a member of International Federation of Settlements (IFS) and the following is being planned. BARCA-Leeds is one of 14 teams originating from 9 countries in both Western and Eastern Europe, the US and Canada which have registered to take part in a new youth program for young people with fewer opportunities which will consist out of 3 conferences for all 70 participants and 2 seminars for the 14 youth leaders within a period of 13 months.

2.16 Some of the aims are:

- To stimulate participants to develop themselves socially and culturally into responsible youth leaders who can manifest themselves both locally and internationally;
- To award participants with the Youthpass certificate by evolving the program around the 8 key competences of Life Long Learning as recommended by European Parliament and European Council.

Youth Service

2.17 There is a health drop-in in New Wortley, and a Connexions drop-in at Armley One Stop Centre, and a mobile provision in Cedars/ Clyde Court.

2.18 There is youth provision delivered from Strawberry Lane Community Centre, New Wortley Community Centre, Wyther Community House, Sikh Temple, Christ Church Primary School and Swallow Hill Community College. Mobile provision on Oak Road New Wortley, Cedars, Armley Park/ Avaries and Armley Top Wythers.

2.19 There is a football group at Castleton Primary School, motor cycling and BMX activities and an Urban Arts Project at the Lazer Centre, and when the Armley Leisure Centre opens they will deliver a sports project.

New Wortley Local Area Management Plan (LAMP)

2.20 Residents were concerned about the potential closure of New Wortley Community Centre; however the Inner West Area Committee agreed to fund the centre until March 2010. By March 2010 New Wortley Community Association hope the Community Centre will be more self sustainable, a laundrette is due to open at the Centre, and they have reported that the café is running well.

2.21 Many activities are taking place in the area such as Weight Management Programmes, bhangra classes, youth club, etc. The main community issues currently in the area are kerb crawling, prostitution and youth intimidation/ ASB. With regard to this, the Police and partners are working hard and deploying resources into the area to tackle these issues, and there are good links to the Neighbourhood Watch Group. Youths in the area are showing improvement in behaviour and this is having a positive effect, the Neighbourhood Wardens have played an instrumental role in achieving this change.

Fairfields Local Area Management Plan (LAMP)

- 2.22 Crime figures have improved in the area and there have been very few housing issues. The Community Centre is working well, they have been successful in gaining funding for new computers, improvements to the main hall to create a medium sized meeting room, by partitioning a section of the main hall to help make the hiring of space more attractive, and intergeneration work through existing projects.
- 2.23 Revenue funding from Safer Stronger Communities Fund is due to finish in March 2010 and there are concerns about sustaining sufficient funds to keep the centre and existing staffing structure running from March onwards.

Wythers Improvement Group (WIG)

- 2.24 Under reporting of crime is still an issue and there have been several incidents of verbal abuse towards frontline staff, the Police are looking into this. The ALMO raised a problem with a number of properties being abandoned, with belongings being left in the properties; this was being looked into by the ALMO, to be reported on at the next WIG meeting.
- 2.25 Neighbourhood Wardens have been undertaking environmental audits, and there is a Credit Crunch event, looking at ways to save money etc. in the first week of February, NHS Leeds are leading on this.
- 2.26 The safety issues at Wythers House need addressing otherwise the building may close. BARCA are looking into this. A Well Being application has been sent to the ALMO to request what short to long term improvements could be considered for funding.

LAMP Workshops

- 2.27 At each of the last LAMP meetings, workshops were held to review the current action-plans, and make them fit for purpose for 2010. The purpose of the workshops have been to review and agree priorities for each of the LAMPs in order to deliver tangible economic, social and physical improvements in our priority neighbourhoods.

Broadleas Neighbourhood Improvement Plan (NIP)

- 2.28 The Broadleas area is improving and its ranking of 9.3% nationally is helping to narrow the gap. However there are still issues that need attention. The Broadleas covers three Super Output Areas that have improved overall in the Indices of Multiple Deprivation in 2007. As such, it was suggested that work in this area is now concentrated around crime and grime issues responding to concerns that are raised by the community and dealing with ongoing issues.
- 2.29 The action plan has been redeveloped to focus on crime and grime and this was discussed at the last NIP meeting, it requires input from key partners to ensure that actions address current short term and longer term issues.
- 2.30 WHWHL are leading on the action plan, supported by Area Management Team, focusing on crime and grime issues and driving forward the redevelopment of the action plan.

Community Centres

- 2.31 There are five community centres in Inner West, these being Moorside Community Centre, New Wortley Community Centre, Fairfield Community Centre, Strawberry Lane/ St. Batholomew's Centre and Wyther Community House. All of these are leased to independent organisations who manage the centres via their management committees. The exceptions are Strawberry Lane/ St Batholomew's Centre, which is vested with Environments and Neighbourhoods Directorate of Leeds City Council and Wyther Community House, which is managed by West North West Homes Leeds. The Heights Centre, which although located in Outer West, is part of the Inner West Community Centre Consortia group and is close to the Armley ward boundary.
- 2.32 The community centres are a valuable asset in engaging with residents in deprived communities. They offer many services and facilities, as well as being a local focus from which partner agencies can deliver initiatives, such as worklessness and health. However within the next 12 months most of the community centres (with the exception of Strawberry Lane/ St Batholomew's) will run out of funding. Consequently a Community Centre Consortia group has been convened to address the impending funding issues and deliver a more sustainable management model.
- 2.33 To date a proposed business model has been drawn up as to how the community centres can be managed. This involves a lead organisation taking responsibility for managing the centres and co-ordinating the day to day running (recruitment, legal issues such as health and safety, organisation of staff etc.), which will free up community centre staff and volunteers to engage with local people and to develop and deliver programmes of work. A similar model exists in Huddersfield and has proved to be very successful; a visit by the Community Centre Consortia group has taken place.
- 2.34 To address the lack of funding, bids to external funding organisations have been submitted, including a recent application to the Hardship Fund. Unfortunately these applications have been unsuccessful. In view of this an application is being made to the Inner West Area Committee for funding towards a centre manager to cover the three community centres within the three priority neighbourhoods in Inner West, and funds are requested to help support the caretaker and cleaner costs and the centre running costs. More detail on this is provided in the Well Being Fund Report.

Enterprise and Economy

Armley Town Street Town and District Centre Regeneration Scheme (TDC).

- 2.35 Progress to Phase 2 of the Armley Town Centre improvement scheme is now near completion. The only remaining areas of work to be completed are between Wesley Street and The Gang. There has been some delay due to the weather, but work is underway again. This scheme seeks to improve the vitality and viability of Armley town centre for workers, residents and visitors, reverse the physical decline and increase the popularity of the area as a desirable place to work and shop. It will also contribute to improving the general appearance of Armley town centre and is an element of the West Leeds Gateway Regeneration Programme (WLGRP).

- 2.36 The works include resurfacing pavements, replacing kerbs, street furniture and public art. SEC have installed the Heritage style lighting columns, there are a number to be painted when the weather improves.
- 2.37 The businesses effected so far have expressed no concerns or complaints to the Town Centre Manager or the contractor, other than they are very pleased with the way it looks.

Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI)

Grant Rates

- 2.38 The estimated scheme costs and property valuations have been updated by Strategic Design Alliance (SDA) and Lambert, Smith, Hampton. Based on the grant rate calculations it is suggested that an 80% grant rate should be used for works to the properties. Confirmation of the grant rates from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) is expected in January 2010.

2 Branch Road (Critical Project)

- 2.39 The Council is considering making a formal offer to the property owner for the Council to acquire the property. In the meantime the property owner has since expressed an interest in the THI scheme and discussions have been held to progress a potential scheme. The property owner has liaised with the Enforcement Team to agree stages of works to comply with the enforcement notices. The first stage of works have commenced on site.
- 2.40 The Project Team is preparing an Options Appraisal. This is in order to be able to make informed decisions about which options for restoring the building should be pursued.

Target Properties

- 2.41 Once the grant rates have been confirmed the THI Project Officer will be contacting all property owners to encourage schemes to be developed.

Training

- 2.42 There is a relatively small amount of THI grant funding which has an objective to improving heritage construction skills and raising awareness of heritage. One possibility is to provide opportunities for local unemployed people to develop a career in the construction industry whilst learning heritage construction skills. The practical part of this may involve working on a restoration scheme for 2 Branch Road which potentially offers a wide range of heritage construction skills.

3.0 Implications for Council Policy and Governance

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

4.0 Legal and Resource Implications

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

4.2 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.

5.0 Conclusions

5.1 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.

6.0 Recommendations

6.1 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.