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

**To: West (Inner) Area Committee**

**Date: 14<sup>th</sup> April 2010**

**Subject: Area Manager's Report**

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**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

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**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**

**Culture**

3.1 The West North West Area Management Team will be working with organisations such as I Love West Leeds, the Armley Town Centre Manager, Armley Leisure Centre, Bramley Elderly Action, Youth Service, Armley Common Rights Trust, Aire Action Leeds and Extended Services to ensure a varied programme of events,

especially over the summer. In addition, the Arts & Regeneration Team has this year had some significant input to the ADP. The Area Management Team will ensure their suggested actions are implemented.

### **Thriving Places**

- 3.2 In New Wortley, work is underway to demolish 36 dwellings. Discussions are also ongoing with the local community regarding the potential of creating a temporary community garden on one of the sites made available as a result of the demolition.

#### Town Centre Manager update

- 3.3 The Town Centre Manager is exploring ways of working with local businesses to prevent businesses closing or moving out of the area. These include working with partners who are already working on these issues and taking a joint approach to liaising with landlords and letting agents. Currently, the TCM and Area Management Team are examining ways of most effectively utilising the CDLT funding and alternative uses for empty properties.
- 3.4 The TCM is also working on the promotion of the town to other businesses and has written to retailers asking them to consider locating on Armley Town Street. The initial feedback has been cautious and all have asked for information on the car parking provision in the area.
- 3.5 The Armley business forum is continuing, although support from the local businesses is fairly weak. It has been agreed that it would focus on specific issues in the town and try to develop a strategy for tackling these problems. The first priority is to tackle the parking problem as this is identified as a major issue for businesses and shoppers. The TCM is arranging business training and support but businesses are reluctant to take up this offer.
- 3.6 The Reward Card scheme has now been launched in Armley but there have been some initial problems:
- traders are not promoting the scheme to their customers – within 3 weeks of the scheme being launched, only 600 cards had been distributed to shoppers, compared with 4000 in Pudsey
  - negative comments from customers
  - retailers not displaying the Shop Local / Reward Card scheme poster
- 3.7 The TCM is focusing on pushing this scheme over the next 6 months, at which point it will be reviewed.
- 3.8 The TCM is planning to re-launch the 'Keep Armley Tidy', linked in with local schools and Streetscene Services to improve the standards of cleanliness following the completion of the Town Street improvements.
- 3.9 The Alertbox scheme has proved highly successful. It has given traders a sense of empowerment, safety and community spirit. Traders are happy to respond when the system activates and are actively looking out for each other.

## Harmonious Communities

### Community Cohesion

- 3.10 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.
- 3.11 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 is leading on this piece of work and has 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.
- 3.12 Work to develop a toolkit and methodology on how to take forward community cohesion in other neighbourhoods is being finalised by Area Management Team and Policy and Planning in Regeneration. The qualitative and quantitative research has been completed and interventions for the Wythers neighbourhood are currently being developed, and will be delivered through the Wyther Improvement Group to ensure that partners are engaged, involved and take ownership of this piece of work. The Area Management Team will report progress on this project to future Area Committee meetings.
- 3.13 On the back of this an Openspace event was held 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 were commissioned by LCC to host the event, which was held at Safety Central on the 9<sup>th</sup> March.
- 3.14 The objective of the day was 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.
- 3.15 The event was very well attended by 45 people from frontline services in Armley, inclusive of such organisations and services as Leeds Voice, West Yorkshire Police, Armley Helping Hands, Foundation Housing, Jobs and Skills, NHS Leeds, Christ Church Armley Youth Project, Armley Mosque and Armley Primary School. The morning session covered thoughts and views around community cohesion, what the term means to us and what the positive attributes of Armley are, utilising methods to enable networking, and building relationships amongst those present at the event. The afternoon session featured an openspace event, where attendees could post discussion topics and invite others to join them. Discussion topics included 'Team Wythers', activities for young people and integrating different cultures, creating a directory for 'Team Armley', a community centre for Armley, community cohesion,

responsibilities of front line services, children's play areas in Armley and one on myth busting.

- 3.16 The day's event is a pilot to analyse the benefits of hosting such events, an event briefing session is organised for April and the results will be reported on at the next Area Committee meeting.

#### Local Area Management Plans (LAMPs)

- 3.17 Area Management Team organised three workshops were held in January to review the current action plans and make them fit for purpose for 2010/11. The purpose of the workshops was to review and agree priorities for each of the LAMPs in order to deliver tangible economic, social and physical improvements in our priority neighbourhoods. The new action plans are themed. They have now been revised and are being implemented.

#### New Wortley Local Area Management Plan (LAMP)

- 3.18 Inter-generational work has taken place as well as work to support the community centre and promote social enterprise. Initiatives to tackle worklessness and promote financial inclusion have been developed. Various courses have taken place including Health Literacy. Community Pride initiatives have also taken place.

#### Fairfields Local Area Management Plan (LAMP)

- 3.19 Work has progressed on the Community Engagement Strategy and community cohesion as well as the development of social enterprise opportunities. BARCA Leeds and NHS have worked together to deliver advice around financial support and services and are considering the potential for providing a money management course in conjunction with 4 Families.

#### Wythers Improvement Group (WIG)

- 3.20 The Wythers Action Plan will deal with issues such as repairs at Wyther Community House, community development, integration and engagement work, developing a calendar of community events, raising awareness of alcohol misuse, promoting physical activity opportunities and developing a plan of multi-agency Wyther clean-up days.

#### Broadleas Neighbourhood Improvement Plan (NIP)

- 3.21 Action plan has been reviewed to focus on crime and grime. It requires input from key partners to ensure that actions address current short term and longer term issues. The ALMO is instrumental in driving this forward. They are currently looking for commitment from partners to sign up to help deliver on key priorities within the action plan. The NIP includes a range of actions to address crime and anti-social behaviour problems, improve housing and the environment. Further actions will be developed and agreed to improve health and well being and increase youth engagement.

## Community Centres Consortium

- 3.22 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.
- 3.23 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 was convened by Area Management to address the impending funding issues and deliver a more sustainable management model.
- 3.24 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.
- 3.25 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 was made to the Inner West Area Committee for funding towards a Facilities Manager to cover the three community centres within the three priority neighbourhoods in Inner West, and a pot of funding to help address any issues or gaps in funding between the three community centres.
- 3.26 Since the February Area Committee meeting, Area Management Team have met with BARCA Leeds, there has been a Community Centre Consortium meeting and subsequent to this the Area Management Team and BARCA Leeds have met with representatives from each of the Community Centres (New Wortley, Fairfields, Wythers) to discuss the BARCA bid and confirm the allocations that were put in the original application. In view of this the Area Management Team has therefore made necessary revisions to the running costs and financial assumptions on which the bid was initially based.
- 3.27 Each centre had originally included **£7,200** for caretaking and cleaning salaries, this gave a total of **£21,600**. Each centre, now feels there is greater need for an administration worker than a caretaker, therefore it is proposed that after taking out cleaning salaries for each of the centres, the remaining portion of the £21,600 (originally kept for caretaker's salary) be used to fund a administration worker to cover all three centres with an even split of hours for each, this person would be

employed by BARCA – Leeds. Each Centre felt volunteers would be able to carry out the role of a caretaker.

- 3.28 The total amount approved by Area Committee is **£75,680.32**, of this **£41,500** has been set aside for the Business Facilities Manager (this includes the salary and on-costs), this leaves us with **£34,180.32**, if we take out the cleaning and admin salary of **£21,600**. This leaves us with **£12,580.32** to provide additional revenue support to the centres.
- 3.29 Based on the meetings subsequent to the February Area Committee there have been some re-calculations to the original costings and gaps in funding for the three community centres, which will mean that the Well Being Funds will not cover all the gaps in funding, and that this will need to be a role for the Facilities Manager to work on.
- 3.30 BARCA will propose to the consortium group how best to allocate this amount across the three centres shortly. They are also in the process of writing the terms of reference for the consortium group and a protocol for governance structures in relation to administering the funds.

### Community Engagement

#### Citizens Panel

- 3.31 Following a series of detailed discussions with the Corporate Communications Team, the WNW Area Management Team are working to enhance the use of the city-wide Citizens Panel by developing an area-based approach to conducting surveys and focus group sessions. Existing city-wide panel members have been asked to join one of the four area based panels. As members of the Area Citizens Panel they will be invited to respond to print and on-line surveys and to attend focus group discussions. This element of the community engagement plan will make an important contribution to achieving the team's goals for achieving diversity within the demographics of its consultation responses.
- 3.32 A Focus Group for Inner West took place in early March to consider environmental issues in Inner West, engaging with people on the West North West Citizen's Panel. Five people attended and a useful discussion was had. A full report has been submitted by the consultants who facilitated this group and the Area Management Team is considering rolling this approach out to other areas of West North West. The findings of the report are currently being evaluated and appropriate action taken.

#### Online Services

- 3.33 A Leeds City Council webpage for the West North West area of the city has been developed with the aim of raising the profile of Area Committees, Area Management Team and the Area Delivery Plans. In addition to providing a source of useful information to the public on pages that relate to their locality, it will provide a vehicle for conducting on-line surveys which will be undertaken through Talking Point. The online services project will provide an important mechanism for undertaking surveys and will serve as a "shop front" to engage with the public and partners on a range of issues.

### Year of the Volunteer

- 3.34 As part of 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.
- 3.35 A West North West market-place style event took place 10am-2pm on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> March at Pudsey Civic Centre, to promote the March theme of 'Volunteering in Every Neighbourhood'. The event aimed to promote volunteering opportunities and increase volunteering in West North West. The event was attended by around 30 organisations and approximately 30 members of the public attended. Very positive comments were received and although the turn out was relatively low, the majority of people attending did sign up for volunteering. A full evaluation is currently being undertaken.
- 3.36 In addition to the promotional event, the Area Management Team will promote volunteering throughout the year at community events and the Town Centre Manager is developing some ways of linking businesses, agencies and schools in volunteering opportunities. The small grants programme will continue to support voluntary and community groups throughout 2010.
- 3.37 The Area Committee has also agreed to host a series of volunteer celebration events to recognise the contribution of volunteers to improving its local area. It is suggested that one event is arranged for West Leeds as a whole, a further event for Inner North West and an additional event for Outer North West to recognise the size of these areas.

### **Enterprise and Economy**

- 3.38 The worklessness action plans for the priority neighbourhoods in West North West have now been pulled together into a Local Action Plan for West North West, with an overall lead from Jobs and Skills. Champions from Area Management and partner agencies have been assigned to various activities to drive this work forward to meet NI 153 which seeks to narrow the gap between the Leeds out-of-work claimant rate and the overall rate for the combined SOA areas in West North West. A meeting took place on 22<sup>nd</sup> March to clarify roles and responsibilities.

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

- 3.39 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).
- 3.40 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.
- 3.41 Phase 2 of the Armley Town Centre improvement scheme has been completed. There were some areas where the York stone have heaved during the bad weather, this is currently being investigated, maintenance work to rectify damaged areas of

York stone and kerbing have been undertaken along with the installation of additional traffic management works to combat damage caused by heavy vehicles.

### Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI)

#### 2 Branch Road (Critical Project)

- 3.42 Work is continuing to bring about improvements to the property through the use of enforcement action. The property owner has expressed an interest in participating in the Armley THI scheme and the THI Officer is preparing grant scheme information to guide the property owner. The Council is considering making a formal offer to the property owner for the Council to acquire the building. This would be through Leeds LEGI funding. An options appraisal for developing the building, is being prepared. This will enable the Council to assess the various options that are available for encouraging the development of the building.

#### Target Properties

- 3.43 A grant rate of up to 80%, for buildings in use, has been established with the Townscape Heritage Initiative Monitor. Legal Services has been commissioned to carry out property searches and check and make recommendations on grant scheme documents. This is to enable grant scheme information packs to be sent out to all the property owners who are entitled to apply for a grant.

#### Heritage Training

- 3.44 The grant scheme includes raising awareness. This may take the form of providing training opportunities, in conservation standard construction skills, ideally for local unemployed people. Through the Armley Heritage Advisory Group the local community has an opportunity to become involved with heritage issues as part of raising heritage awareness.

### **Health & Well Being**

- 3.45 The Health and Wellbeing Improvement Manager in the West / North West of Leeds is a jointly funded post that works to Leeds City Council and NHS Leeds. The post aims to address health inequalities and improve community well-being. It will improve efficiency and reduce costs by integrating partnership working and through problem solving. It will ensure that local issues are heard by central commissioning structures. A full report highlighting progress to date and future plans of this post will be brought to a future Area Committee meeting.

### **Environment**

- 3.46 Work is continuing to identify possible funding sources for environmental improvements to Armley Moor. It is proposed to submit an application for GrantScape funding and the closing date for this round of applications is May 24<sup>th</sup>.



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

- 4.1 The Area Delivery Plan for Inner West is administered through the West North West Leeds Area Management Team.
- 4.2 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.

## **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 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.