



Report of the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods

To: Inner West Area Committee

Date: 16th February 2011

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.

3.0 Main Issues

Culture

- 3.1 The work of the Town Centre Manager in Armley has included developing a proposal for 'I Love West Leeds...in a Shop' (also known as 'The Festival Shop'). The Festival Shop is now in the last 6 weeks of its presence on Armley Town Street. Since it was set up in the former Cooperative on Town Street, there have been exhibitions, performances and workshops open to the general public. Recent events have included a series of photographic portraits of the shopkeepers on Town Street, an exhibition by Richie Fox who lives in Westerley Croft, a video installation twinned with an exhibition in Portugal, live video projections onto the windows that interact with the passer-by, a dance performance by professional dancers in the windows of the shop, free festival workshops to make Christmas cards and presents, a photo treasure hunt along Town Street and weekly bike repair workshops with the Youth Offending Service.
- 3.2 I Love West Leeds has started discussions with the new occupiers of the unit about a partnership, working together on exhibitions and events to maintain an artistic presence on Town Street from spring 2011. Details of events at the Festival Shop can be found at www.ilovewestleeds.co.uk. The project is being promoted via social networks such as Facebook and Twitter and it is hoped that it will encourage more people to Armley.
- 3.3 The Town Centre Manager (TCM) is planning a number of events for this year including the annual summer celebration. The TCM will be drawing on his experience from past events to constantly improve the entertainment offer, publicity and attendance. Events may include teddy bears' picnics in Charlie Cake Park and Armley Moor which are relatively inexpensive to organise.
- 3.4 The Regeneration Service are working with City Development and the Museums Service to consider ways of revitalising Armley Mills. A Conservation Appraisal for the site and neighbouring Hill has been completed and consultation has been undertaken with local Members, Friends of the Museum, the Armley Forum, Leeds Civic Trust, Phil and Lit Society and Rachel Reeves MP. The approach was supported.
- 3.5 A development prospectus is now being prepared, identifying how the various elements of the site can be treated. Soft market testing with private sector investors and developers has been ongoing. It is anticipated that the development opportunity will be advertised later in the year to attract developers interested in progressing a comprehensive scheme for the site, which will incorporate a revitalised museum.
- 3.6 As part of the Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) scheme a group, consisting of local community and business members, Armley ward Members and the Armley THI Officer, has been set up to engage with heritage issues. The group is currently working on developing a keystone leaflet. The keystones are based on historical events and local celebrities associated with Armley and is part of the public art featured in the natural York stone pavement scheme on Town Street.

Enterprise and Economy

Town Centre Manager (TCM) update

- 3.7 The TCM has reported that a few local business have closed in Armley over the last few weeks. On a positive note, however, letting agents are reportedly actively negotiating rents with potential tenants to try and secure occupation. This has previously not been the case. There are currently four vacant units on Town Street and the TCM will be working to secure their take up.
- 3.8 In evaluating the Christmas lights switch-on event, which was widely considered to be successful, the retailers have expressed concerns regarding the road closure taking effect from 10am. If the event is held again this year, Town Street could be closed later in the day. A number of retailers confirmed that their takings increased on the day.
- 3.9 The TCM aims this year to increase business involvement in the Pudsey Business Forum and identify priorities for the year ahead. A letter will be sent inviting all businesses to the next meeting in February. In addition, training and development schemes will be offered to prepare traders for the impacts of the proposed new supermarket locating in Armley.
- 3.10 Jobcentre Plus are currently in discussions with partners regarding the establishment of 'Work Clubs' in West Leeds. These essentially provide unemployed people with a place to meet, exchange skills, share experiences, find opportunities, make contacts and get support to help them in their return to work. No two workclubs will be the same as they reflect the needs of the members and their community. Individuals and organisations with relevant skills and experience could set up a Work Club and are encouraged to contact the appropriate regional office for the Department for Work and Pensions. A representative from Jobcentre Plus is attending the Armley forum on 15th February 2011 to provide information about work clubs.

Transport

- 3.11 The Traffic management works on Armley Town Street are now complete. However, the traffic island at the Town Street / Whingate junction is to be re-built in a slightly different position. Traffic calming on Hill Top Road / Green Hill Road is being constructed from w/c 7th February for around four weeks, including a new zebra crossing and two new pedestrian islands. A new pelican crossing is being constructed on Tong Road, commencing w/c 31st January for around three weeks. The closure of Aviary Street is currently being programmed in by the Council's contractor. The Chief Highways Officer approval for the closure should be in place during March. Two other potential schemes on Canal Road and Hall Lane in Armley are currently on hold.
- 3.12 In Bramley, Traffic Management has issued a scheme to provide two pedestrian islands on Leeds and Bradford Road and this should be completed in early March. A zebra crossing has been constructed on Broad Lane and the lining and electrical connections should be completed shortly.

Environment

- 3.13 Work is taking place on the enhanced Environmental Services delegated functions to Area Committees to bring together services identified in the Streetscene report presented to the last Area Committee. A full report is presented elsewhere on this agenda.
- 3.14 The TCM will be developing a Keep Armley Tidy campaign during 2011, in conjunction with local primary schools. As yet, the school's commitment has not been confirmed.
- 3.15 Concerns have been expressed regarding litter on Armley Town Street. Streetscene Services have agreed to deploy the street cleaning machine on a Sunday to deal with this issue.
- 3.16 Groundwork Leeds has established a project with a Youth Service girls group on the Wythers to undertake an environmental audit funded by the ALMO. The Area Management Team plan to set up a competition with an environmental theme to design posters and bin stickers in conjunction with local primary schools.
- 3.17 Following confirmation that Grantscape could not support the funding application for improvements on Armley Moor, work has been undertaken to cost engineer the scheme. The scheme is now valued at £103,000 and includes improvements to pathways, new street furniture, refurbishment of existing benches and a 'green gym'.
- 3.18 The Green Leeds funding application was reconsidered by the board in November 2010. However, this was again deferred as concerns were raised about the use of Section 106 monies and whether this was supported by Members. Ward Members have subsequently confirmed their support and the scheme was approved by the Board on 26th January 2011. Discussions are ongoing with the Armley Common Rights Trust about the detailed arrangements relating to maintenance and the role the Council will play.
- 3.19 The Holdsforth Place site in New Wortley which has now been cleared is available for development by the Leeds Affordable Housing Strategic Partnership and a Compulsory Purchase Order is being progressed to bring the site into Council ownership. Background work is underway to consider how the various development sites in New Wortley can be developed using a phased approach but in a coordinated and comprehensive way. A license agreement has been prepared allowing the community to use land for a temporary community garden. This cannot be signed until the community are able to provide evidence of adequate public liability insurance. It is likely that small grant funding will be requested to cover the increased cost of insurance to cover work and activities outside of New Wortley Community Centre, including work on the community garden site.

Health & Wellbeing

- 3.20 The Armley Credit Union, which has been supported this year by the Area Committee, continues to grow. Final figures for quarter 3 (September – December 2010) show that 80 adult and 12 junior credit union accounts were opened.
- 3.21 Teenage conception rates in Inner West area are amongst the highest in Leeds. An event was held on 13th January 2011 at Stanningley Rugby Club to bring together

frontline workers, managers, parents, community members and local businesses to consider a partnership approach to preventing teenage pregnancy and parenthood through targeted support to vulnerable young people. The aim of the event was to consider how to build on what is already working well, identify any gaps in provision and consider how to improve the connectivity of work to ensure that maximum impact on local teenage pregnancy rates is achieved. The event was attended by around 70 workers and facilitated by the Children's Commissioning Team.

- 3.22 The PCT, supported by the Area Management Team and Health Improvement Officer, are leading on an event entitled 'New Wortley New You' on 22nd February. The event will offer debt advice, healthy eating advice and mid-life health checks at New Wortley Health Centre. It will take place during half term to encourage families to attend. In addition, families are being encouraged to sign up to the Change4life movement.
- 3.23 The Health Improvement Officer and Armley Cluster Extended Services have been promoting use of the new St Bartholomews Community Kitchen through a launch event on 9th February 2011. The kitchen has been funded by Local Food, a strand of The Big Lottery Fund. It is hoped that by having a cooking facility, local people will have the opportunity to access cookery lessons which will use local produce and promote healthy eating. A toolkit and training is being developed to provide family support workers and frontline workers in the Armley area with information and support to run a community cooking group with parents and carers. This will include consistent healthy eating messages, food safety and practical support including recipes and resources. The proposal is to run initial training for eight Family Support Workers over three two hour sessions with ongoing support for groups as set up.
- 3.24 A health and money awareness day took place on Saturday 29th January at the former Co-op premises on Armley Town Street where the I Love West Leeds festival shop is currently located. Local residents were encouraged to open a credit union account through being entered into a prize draw giving them £25 towards their credit union account.

Learning

- 3.25 The West Leeds Coaching Scholarship scheme has been operating very positively in Inner West. Two young people have been involved in the programme this year. One 17 year old young man from Armley is currently unemployed and not affiliated to a sports club. He has already been enrolled on a level 2 football coaching course and a child protection course. He has already attended a first aid course at Leeds University. It is hoped that he will be offered mentoring opportunities at Armley Leisure Centre. An 18 year old young man from Bramley, associated with the Bramley Ebenezer Table Tennis Club has also enrolled on the scholarship. He has attended and passed his UKCC Level 3 senior table tennis coaching award.

Thriving Communities

- 3.26 A detailed community safety update report is presented elsewhere on this agenda.
- 3.27 The Alert Box scheme on Armley Town Street is continuing to prove successful. Traders are responding to activations both in person and over the phone. Alert Box, the company, has contacted the TCM with a view to showcasing the Armley system

to other town centres. The TCM has agreed as this could promote the positive interventions taking place in Armley.

- 3.28 At 2 Branch Road, a prosecution case relating to the failure of the building owner to comply with enforcement notices was initially heard on 2nd December 2010. A not guilty plea was entered and a trial is pending. The owner has expressed an interest in applying for a THI grant and bringing forward a comprehensive refurbishment scheme for the building. Additional surveys have been undertaken to inform the scope of a scheme which could be progressed with the support of THI funding. To make this as attractive to the building owner as possible, the opportunity to include some of the works required to comply with the Listed Building Enforcement notice is being explored. Recently, the building has been put up for sale at £550,000.
- 3.29 Outline Planning was approved on August 10th 2010 for residential development on the Mistress Lane site. The Outline Business Case (OBC) for the Round 6 Housing PFI scheme was submitted to the HCA in September 2010. However, the Government announced in November that support could no longer be given to projects whose OBC had not been approved. The site continues to be part of the Leeds Affordable Housing Strategic Partnership's land portfolio and alternative approaches to secure development of the site are being considered.
- 3.30 In relation to the 'island site', the former Nelson public house has been converted into an Indian restaurant and the Council is keen to facilitate discussions with owners of the site with a view to promoting a comprehensive redevelopment scheme although land ownership is complex with seven ownerships across the site.

Harmonious Communities

- 3.31 The open youth club in Bramley on a Tuesday evening usually attracts between 25 and 40 young people. Staff and young people apply an almost zero tolerance on behaviour and hence the atmosphere is friendly and welcoming and as a result the service average three new contacts each week. This club, although effective in its own right, also serves to guide young people into more focused provision. All the projects are running well, particularly the Skool of rock / Bramley music project which is promoting cohesion between the young people.
- 3.32 The Garden Group is also working well. Eight NEET (not in Education, Employment or Training) young people, with youth worker support, have raised funds and training has been arranged for them. As a result of the experience some have now gone in to jobs and full time training. In addition to other accreditations achieved, a minimum of four of this group will achieve Open College Network (OCN) level one bricklaying by April. Credibility has now been achieved with these young people and they are beginning to recommend the Youth Service to other young people some of who are marginalised and at risk of offending.
- 3.33 A newsletter will be issued shortly to provide further details to partners. The work in Bramley is strongly supported by eight trained youth work volunteers. Many of them have been with the Youth Service for over a year and make a valuable and consistent contribution.
- 3.34 The Youth Service continues to deliver 26 units of work regularly in the Armley ward. Full use is made of the Lazer Centre and many sessions are jointly run between Lazer and Armley staff teams. Young people are being successfully attracted to New

Wortley Community Centre and it is hoped that a further session will start shortly. A successful partnership has been set up with Lloyds Pharmacy at New Wortley with a drop-in service for Chlamydia testing, pregnancy testing and C-Card. Work is also being set up with autistic young people and their siblings through one of the volunteers. Urban Arts continues to attract a good number of young people each week and some have been accredited with the Arts Award.

- 3.35 The mobile provision has enabled more sessions to be delivered. Its modern facilities have been utilised to their full extent.
- 3.36 The Lazer Centre itself has now fully opened on a Saturday and has opened a youth café to try and enable more young people to access youth workers and the facilities. The Youth Service is hoping to further develop the site. A West wide celebration event is planned for 23rd February which Members are more than welcome to attend.
- 3.37 The schools work at the Lazer Centre continues to be successful and young people are now being attracted from four educational sites and are getting involved with all the activities on the site. Seven young people from Swallow Hill are due to achieve accreditation through Open College Network.
- 3.38 Barca Leeds is currently facing huge challenges. Their Children's Services have faced a 12.5% in-year cut and it is expected that Barca's income will have reduced by 40% between 2009/10 and 2011/12. Barca suggests that early indications show that the recession is beginning to impact on employment opportunities throughout West Leeds. This will result in an increase in demand for their services whilst facing substantial reductions in funding. Barca anticipate over the next year, there may be opportunities to bid for work that can no longer be delivered by statutory providers. Initial opportunities may come about through practice based commissioning and the transfer of public health functions to the local authority.

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.

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 The Inner West Area Committee is asked to

- note the contents of the report and comment on any aspect of the matters raised
- suggest items for inclusion on future Area Manager's reports

Background Papers

none