



Report of the Inner North West Area Committee

Date: 14th April 2011

Subject: Community Planner Work Programme 2011/2012

Electoral Wards Affected:

Headingley
Hyde Park and Woodhouse
Kirkstall
Weetwood

Specific Implications For:

Ethnic minorities
Women
Disabled people

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 Community Planner work programme over the last 12 months has included working with a number of projects and themes. Due to the well established nature of the role many of these themes will continue to form part of the Community Planner workload over the next 12 months.

Alongside these established themes there will also be the opportunity to integrate or prioritise emerging projects over the next 12 months. The report outlines those projects which are anticipated to form part of the Community Planner work programme and asks members to comment on which of these they consider to be priorities.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

1.1 This report is intended to advise Ward Councillors on the Community Planner work programme for the next 12 months. The report also includes a review of the work programme over the previous 12 months.

2.0 Background Information

2.1 The overall objectives of the Community Planner role are outlined below:

- To advise and assist Ward Councillors, community groups and individuals on planning related matters;

- To work with the Planning Sub-Group to raise awareness of area specific planning related issues and to support the planning related initiatives of the Area Committee;
- To work alongside Council officers from a wide range of service areas to co-ordinate planning responses in the inner north west area.

2.2 In order to meet these objectives over the last 12 months the Community Planner work programme has included the following:

- The co-ordination of the inner north west Area Committee (INWAC) Planning Sub Group; including the setting of the agenda to discuss significant planning applications, changes to national and local planning policy, and the ongoing monitoring of local 'community-led' planning documents.
- Working with the steering groups of the Headingley and Hyde Park Neighbourhood Design Statement (NDS) and Little Woodhouse NDS. Both documents have now been adopted as Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD).
- Working with colleagues from Planning Enforcement during the continued monitoring of the Regulation 7 Direction (To Let Board Code).
- Lobbying national government on behalf of the INWAC before and after the changes to Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) planning legislation brought into effect on the 1st October 2010.
- Working with colleagues from the Planning Policy team to co-ordinate the introduction of an Article 4 Direction in Leeds in response to changes to HMO planning legislation.
- Working with local community and resident groups, and alongside the Planning Enforcement team, to report breaches of planning control.

2.3 As well as the above, the Community Planner resource has continued to be well used by ward members, community groups, and local residents as a first point of contact for planning related issues. Responding to these queries has formed a significant proportion of the Community Planner workload.

3.0 Main Issues

3.1 The future work programme of the Community Planner will include the continuation of a number of existing, and the addition of a number of new, projects and themes. These are detailed below and will form a major part of the Community Planner work programme over the next 12 months.

INWAC Planning Sub Group

3.2 The Planning Sub Group monitors significant planning applications in the inner north west wards, reflects on changes in national and local planning policy, monitors the implementation of local community led planning documents (Headingley and Hyde Park NDS, Little Woodhouse NDS, Far Headingley, West Park and Weetwood NDS, and Kirkstall Vision), and co-ordinates planning responses in the inner north west in relation to other topics such as Planning Enforcement and Housing Strategy. The Community Planner resource will continue to be used to co-ordinate and inform the group on a wide range of planning related topics in the coming year and help to maintain a link between the City Development department and the INWAC.

Article 4 Direction and Local HMO Planning Policy Response

3.3 An Article 4 direction was made in Leeds in February 2011 with the wider aim of regaining planning control over the spread of high concentrations of HMOs. The

public consultation period for the direction has now ended. The Community Planner resource will be used to work alongside colleagues from the Planning Policy team to collate the responses to the public consultation and prepare a further report to the Council's Executive Board. The Council's Executive Board will then determine whether or not the direction is to be confirmed.

- 3.31 The Council has committed, if the Article 4 Direction is confirmed, to produce new local planning policy which will inform future planning decisions in relation to HMOs. The Community Planner will work alongside the Planning Policy team to introduce and inform these new local planning policies and represent the INWAC during this process.

Far Headingley, West Park and Weetwood NDS

- 3.4 The Far Headingley, West Park and Weetwood NDS Steering Group intend to update their existing NDS document and upgrade its status to a Supplementary Planning Document. The INWAC Planning Sub Group has expressed support for the use of the Community Planner resource to assist the steering group and co-ordinate with colleagues across the City Development department during this process. The NDS Steering Group intend this process to begin in April 2011 and last around 12 months.

Regulation 7 Direction - To Let Boards

- 3.5 The Community Planner will continue to assist the Planning Enforcement team in the monitoring of the Regulation 7 Direction area.

Inner North West Housing Strategy

- 3.6 In late 2010 the INWAC Planning Sub Group took on responsibility for monitoring the Council's housing strategy policy on behalf of the INWAC. As part of this work the Community Planner will work alongside colleagues in Area Management, to liaise with colleagues from the Housing Strategy team, in order to assess how local issues and concerns can be reflected in city-wide housing policy.

4.0 Opportunities for inclusion in future work programme

- 4.1 The projects and themes outlined in section 3 above will form the core of the Community Planner workload over the next 12 months. However there are also a number of opportunities for integrating or prioritising other projects, details of which are discussed below.

Localism Bill and Neighbourhood Planning

- 4.2 The emerging Localism Bill, which the government expects to receive royal assent in October 2011, will have significant implications for how the planning system operates, particularly at the local level. The introduction of neighbourhood plans, new planning enforcement rules, the new Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), community consultation requirements for certain applications, the community right to build, the community right to bid for 'assets of community value', and the new duty to co-operate are all likely to have far reaching impacts.

- 4.21 Since details of the Localism Bill began to emerge in 2010, the INWAC Planning Sub Group have discussed the implications for inner north west Leeds. The Community Planner will continue to advise the group on emerging developments in relation to the Bill. In particular there will be a need for the Community Planner

resource to be used to inform community groups on new opportunities to become involved in the planning system. Given that the current national government proposals in relation to neighbourhood planning appear to be better equipped to target areas which are parished this will bring particular challenges in inner north west Leeds where a need for effective co-ordination and information sharing will be vital amongst community groups who are looking to benefit from these initiatives. The Community Planner post is ideally positioned to deliver planning advice and liaise with the Council's development department in such a role to provide valuable assistance to community groups.

Community Consultation

4.3 The new Localism Bill is likely to include a requirement for developers to consult with local communities prior to the submission of certain planning applications. The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) invited comments from interested parties in relation to the type of planning applications which should be included in this requirement. The INWAC Planning Sub Group submitted comments to DCLG in relation to this in March 2011.

4.31 The Council's City Development department is currently undertaking work in relation to local community consultation which will aim to provide city-wide advice to developers. To supplement this work there are also opportunities to use the Community Planner resource to ensure local residents and community groups in inner north west Leeds have greater involvement in the public consultation process at the pre-application stage.

Community Planner Website

4.4 At present the Community Planner acts as a resource for ward members, community groups and local residents to enquire about general planning issues. There may be an opportunity to create an online resource for community groups and local residents as part of the INWAC web pages on the Council's website. However, such a proposal is likely to be impacted upon by the wider reforms which are planned for the Council's website, details of which are likely to emerge in the coming months.

4.41 A 'Community Planning' website for inner north west Leeds could include details of significant local planning applications, monthly planning application lists, and details of the current Community Planner work programme as well as more information regarding significant local planning issues. Such a resource could also act as a central hub for planning related documents which would be easily accessible.

5.0 Implications For Council Policy And Governance

5.1 The Community Planner works to advise Ward Councillors, community groups and community representatives on Council policy and assist the Inner North West Area Committee in making representations in relation to proposed changes in Council and national government policy where relevant.

6.0 Legal And Resource Implications

6.0 The Community Planner is funded from the Wellbeing Fund and works alongside existing Council resources.

7.0 Conclusions

- 7.1 The work programme discussed in section 3 of this report is likely to form the bulk of the Community Planner workload in the coming 12 months alongside the general day-to-day duties of the role. However, there is also an opportunity to pursue the projects discussed in section 4 or respond to unforeseen emerging issues which arise throughout the next 12 months.

8.0 Recommendations

- 8.1 Members are asked to note the contents of the report and comment as they feel appropriate.
- 8.2 Members are asked to comment on which of the opportunities in Section 4 they would like to see prioritised over the next 12 months.

Background Papers

None