

Report of West North West homes Leeds

Outer North West Area Committee

Date: 22 June 2011

Subject: West North West homes Leeds involvement in Area Committees

Electoral Wards Affected: Adel and Wharfedale; Guiseley and Rawdon; Horsforth; Otley and Yeadon

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

This report outlines the purpose of WNWhL involvement with the Area Committee, and explores ways of making WNWhL involvement as productive and meaningful as possible. Members are asked to note this report and make comment as to how joint and collaborative arrangement can be established.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

1.1 To outline the purpose of West North West homes Leeds (WNWhL) involvement in Area Committees, and to explore ways of making that involvement as meaningful and productive as possible.

2.0 Background Information

2.1 WNWhL is one of three Leeds ALMOs and provides a range of housing management services under the terms of a Management Agreement with Leeds City Council. Amongst the services we provide are management of the Leeds Housing Register, repairs and property improvements to Council homes, tenancy management including rent collection. We also manage the Leeds Anti Social Behaviour Team following the recent QUEST Review, and have an extensive Customer Involvement network.

2.2 In 2010, WNWhL was inspected by the Audit Commission and received a '2 star' rating, equating to the delivery of good housing management services, along with promising prospects for improvement.

- 2.3** WNWhL, along with the other ALMOs, has been invited to attend and work with the Area Committees across Leeds. WNWhL welcome this invite, and are keen to explore the opportunities for increasing co-ordination and co-operation within localities.
- 2.4** WNWhL Neighbourhood Performance Managers have been tasked with working with Area Committees, and have been attending Area Committee meetings over the last few months. Work has also been undertaken with area management colleagues to develop this approach.
- 3.0 Main Issues**
- 3.1** The ALMOs are by definition arms length from council governance. However, as the experience of having ALMO's within the broader provision of council services within Leeds matures there is a recognition that there needs to be a balance between achieving creative approaches to meeting the challenges of providing council housing in Leeds, and ensuring that provision through the ALMO's is contributing to meeting the wider strategic needs of service provision across a range of services within Leeds. This is particularly true at local level, where there is the opportunity to tailor services to meet specific housing related and broader service objectives. We welcome the opportunity to participate in Area Committees and to develop our approaches within local communities.
- 3.2** Participation in the Area Committee structure allows WNWhL to ensure that we are developing our approaches in ways which are consistent with the broader area management objectives and strategies, and to seek support in meeting the objectives of our service and our customers.
- 3.3** Within the current financial constraints we are keen to explore the patterns of provision of services within local communities and to contribute to joined up working which assists in developing service provision and quality, while generating savings and efficiencies in the provision of council services. There have been references to joint funding arrangements in recent Area Committee reports, for example joint funding towards the CASAC target hardening scheme and the current proposal to consider joint funding of renovation of car parking spaces at Shaw Close. This report envisages building on existing arrangements to further cement WNWhL's relationship with the Area Committees.
- 3.4** Through our recent involvement we have become more aware of the broad range of issues being discussed at Area Committees. While some of these do not seem at first to be directly relevant to WNWhL, it is envisaged that over time beneficial linkages may be found. We are very aware that the broad range of neighbourhood issues are of major relevance to our tenants and customers and that these issues strongly affect their experience and perception of the area they live in.
- 3.5** The Area Committees emerging role in relation to Streetscene, youth services, along with community safety reviews and opportunities for joining up community engagement present clear points of connection between the work of Area Committees and the ALMO. WNWhL has an established and extensive network for customer consultation, which could be used to promote further feedback from the community on how services are being delivered locally. We need to ensure that there is effective joined up working to drive efficiency and satisfaction in our communities that effective services are being delivered.

- 3.6** Conversations are underway on ways that the Streetscene services being overseen by Area Committee's and the caretaking services provided by WNWhL can work in mutually supportive ways. There are many areas throughout the West North West area where there is an interface between land which is maintained by Streetscene and WNWhL.
- 3.7** We need to ensure that there is effective joined up working to drive efficiency and confidence in our communities that effective services are being delivered. We would welcome thoughts and ideas from Area Committee members for any ways that we can make our involvement in area committees more meaningful and productive.
- 3.8** Following discussion with Area Management it is suggested that WNWhL provide a six monthly update to Area Committee of progress with areas of mutual interest. The first report would be submitted to the September meeting.

4.0 Implications for Council Policy and Governance

- 4.1** Council Policy and Governance arrangements will not be affected by these proposals.

5.0 Legal and Resource Implications

- 5.1** There are no legal implications of this report. No additional resources are needed to deliver the approach outlined in this report, which will be delivered within existing resources.

6.0 Conclusions

It is concluded that there are clear benefits and opportunities for WNWhL working closely with Area Committees as outlined in this report. Developing this approach provides the opportunity to develop services and join up working to the benefit of residents.

7.0 Recommendations

Members are invited to note this introductory report, and it is recommended that WNWhL provide a six monthly update to Area Committee of progress with areas of mutual interest, starting with the September meeting.

Background Papers

None