



Report of the Assistant Chief Executive

Inner North West Area Committee

Date: 14 July 2011

Subject: Area Update Report

Electoral Wards Affected:

Headingley,
Hyde Park and Woodhouse,
Kirkstall,
Weetwood

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

This report provides members with information on a range of Area Committee business including key messages from forums and sub groups, project and service updates and details of proposed area committee venues for 2011-12.

The Area Committee is asked to approve the key messages from forums and sub groups. Members are asked to note the progress made in relation to project and service activity and the proposed area committee venues for 2011-12.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

The purpose of the Area Update Report is to bring together a range of information relating to Area Committee business into a single report to help limit the number of items being presented at each Area Committee meeting.

The Area Update Report will be presented by Area Management at each Area Committee meeting in the future and will combine the following information which was previously presented in separate reports:

- Forums and Sub Group Key Messages
- Project and Service Updates (previously contained within the Area Managers report)
- Wellbeing Budget Statement

The new Wellbeing Budget Statement will also be included in all future Area Update Report where no other Wellbeing Report is on the Area Committee agenda for that

meeting. For the July 2011 Area Committee meeting this budget statement is appended to the Wellbeing Update Report.

2.0 Forum and Sub Group Key Messages

Since the last Area Committee there have been three meetings of the Planning Sub Group, two meetings of the Environment Sub Group and one meeting of the Hyde Park Forum. The following sections (2.1, 2.2 and 2.3) summarises the main points of discussion at these meetings. Section 2.4 lists the key messages from these meetings.

2.1 Planning Sub Group

Planning sub group has met on the 13th April, 11th May and 8th June. Cllr Bentley acted as Chair for the May and June meetings following the Cllr Monaghan losing his seat in the election elections. They discussed a variety of issues and planning applications including:

- Proposed Localism Bill; A summary of the draft Bill was given, the Bill is aiming to gain Royal Assent in November which will coincide with when the Government will release its new National Planning Policy framework. A discussion was had regarding the new financial considerations clause in the Bill which makes financial assistance a factor in the planning decision process.
- Liberalisation of Change of Use; A letter to Chief Planning Officers from the government was discussed. The letter regarded consultation on enabling more 'changes of use', such as a business unit changing to residential use, falling under permitted development and not requiring planning permission. This letter is to be circulated to community groups for consultation.
- English Heritage Good Practice Guide to Local Listings; This guide is a means for the local community and LPA to jointly decide what they would like to be recognised as a local heritage asset. The work needed to provide a city wide list would not be possible using existing council resources so the approach therefore is likely to be to provide a document outlining the criteria for non-designated heritage assets which will assist planning officers when making decisions on individual cases.

2.2 Environment Sub Group

Chaired by Cllr Matthews, the Environment Sub Group met on the 11th April and 23rd May. Various service updates were received including;

- Bins on Streets Enforcement; Environmental Action Team reported that the bins on streets project can now begin on the Haddons in Kirkstall as the bin route rationalisation has now finished and all routes should be collected. This will be linked with the 'Action Plan for Waste Management in Student Areas', to ensure the best use of resources. Streetscene reported that 1200 new black bins would be distributed in the Headingley & Hyde Park area prior to student changeover.
- Woodhouse Moor; Feedback was given on the Area Committees investment in extra patrols on the Moor to enforce bylaws. A significant reduction in the number of barbeques has been recorded for this year.

2.3 The Hyde Park & Woodhouse Forum

Chaired by Cllr Akhtar, the Hyde Park and Woodhouse Forum met on the 7th April. The group received updates from the Police, The University of Leeds and on the Environmental Services delegation.

2.4 **Summary of Key Messages:**

The following section lists all the key messages from sub-groups and forums since the last Area Committee meeting for consideration by the Area Committee:

Planning

- Planning sub group requests that Area Committee seek an agreement with Housing Services to hold a Housing Strategy meeting for the Inner North West area and take this up with the relevant Director if appropriate
- Planning sub group asks that Area Management refer any developer requests for public consultation advice to the sub group and that the group is used as a forum for pre-application discussions where appropriate.
- Planning sub group would like to thank Cllr Monaghan for his much valued contribution as chair of the INWAC and to planning matters in general in inner north west Leeds.
- Planning sub group asks that the Community Planner website be prioritised in order to get the resource online as quickly as possible.

Environment

- Environment sub group recommends that a request should be made to both the University of Leeds and Leeds Metropolitan University to help fund the delivery of student changeover in future years.
- Environment sub group requests that a programme of bins on streets enforcement should be implemented beginning with the Haddons in Kirkstall.

Hyde Park & Woodhouse Forum

No key messages were recorded

3.0 **Sub Group Representation**

The Inner North West Area Committee has used a range of sub groups in the past to address issues of thematic importance. The committee currently operates three active sub groups: Environment, Planning and Transport. This section of the report highlights the current arrangements for elected member representation to these sub groups and seeks members views on the representation for 2011-12.

3.1 Planning Sub Group

The Planning Sub Group meets monthly to review recent planning applications and to discuss planning policy as it relates to the Inner North West area of Leeds. Officer support is provided by the Wellbeing-funded community planning officer. The group operates in an advisory capacity and passes key messages for approval by the Area Committee. The most recent of which are detailed above in section 2.4 of this report.

3.2 The current Elected Member representation to the Planning Sub Group is as follows:

- Headingley Ward, Vacant
- Hyde Park and Woodhouse, Cllr Penny Ewens
- Kirkstall Ward, Cllr John Illingworth
- Weetwood Ward, Cllr Sue Bentley (acting chair)

3.3 Resident representation

The Planning Sub Group also has one resident representative from each ward in the Inner North West. These are as follows:

- Headingley Ward, Richard Tyler
- Hyde Park & Woodhouse Ward, Barbara Mitchell
- Kirkstall Ward, Ken Torode
- Weetwood Ward, David Hall

3.4 Members are asked to agree the ward representation and selection of chair and note the resident representation for the Planning Sub Group.

3.5 Environment Sub Group

The Environment Sub Group meets bi-monthly. It receives service reports from the refuse and cleansing services, environmental action team and parks and countryside. The group is attended by representatives from universities and student unions and co-ordinates the annual response to peaks in service demand during freshers week and student changeover. The sub group is provided officer support by the area management team.

3.6 Proposals are currently being developed to delegate additional responsibilities to area committees in relation to cleansing and environmental enforcement services. While the Environment Sub Group would continue to operate in an advisory capacity by passing key messages for approval by the Area Committee, in its new capacity it would play a key role development and review the annual service level agreements.

3.7 Under these new arrangements the chair of the Environment Sub Group would function as the Environment Theme Lead for the Inner North West Area Committee. Proposals for the collective support of these theme leads are currently being considered, with the aim of ensuring a co-ordinated approach to implementing the environmental services delegation.

3.8 The current Elected Member representation to the Environment Sub Group is as follows:

- Headingley Ward, Cllr Jamie Matthews, (Chair)
- Hyde Park and Woodhouse Ward, Cllr Akhtar
- Kirkstall Ward, Cllr Lucinda Yeadon
- Weetwood Ward, Cllr Judith Chapman

3.9 Members are asked to note the position of the Environment Sub Group in relation to the delegation of responsibilities to the Area Committee and agree the selection of chair and member representation of the Environment Sub Group.

3.10 Transport Sub Group

The Transport Sub Group meets approximately 4 times a year to receive reports from officers in relation to local transport, highways and parking matters. The group operates in an advisory capacity by passing key messages for approval by the Area Committee. Administrative support is provided by the Area Management Team, however the group lacks the necessary dedicated technical support similar to that of the planning sub group, which would enable it to better influence transport policy and strategy.

3.11 The current Elected Member representation to the Transport Sub Group is as follows:

- Headingley Ward, Cllr Martin Hamilton
- Hyde Park and Woodhouse Ward, Cllr Penny Ewens
- Kirkstall Ward, Cllr John Illingworth
- Weetwood Ward, Cllr Ben Chastney (Chair)

- 3.12 The format of the meetings is similar to public forum where the attending public are able to directly engage in the business of the meeting. And while the group has resident representation from each of the four wards in the area and receives regular attendance from the public, the Transport Sub Group meetings do not necessarily add any additional consultation value than would be offered by a standard public meeting or forum. It can therefore not be recommended that the Transport Sub Group continue to meet.
- 3.13 Members are asked to note the position of the Transport Sub Group and agree to discontinue its functioning and seek to undertake consultation on transport issues through public meetings. Area Management will continue to support the Area Committee to draw on the support of officers with suitable technical capacity to engage directly at the ward and area committee as part of individual transport projects or at the request of the Area Committee.

4.0 Arrangements for Forum Meetings

The Inner North West Area Committee uses Forum meetings to provide greater opportunity for public debate on a range of issues than would be possible during the business of an Area Committee meeting. During the last 12 months, nine forum meetings were held in Headingley, Hyde Park & Woodhouse and Kirkstall. A further three forum meetings were held in Little London. Twelve forum meetings a year is consistent with the level of demand for public meetings of this nature and reflects the capacity of Area Management to provide officer support.

- 4.1 It should be noted that while forum meetings provide an important opportunity for public consultation on a range of issues, they are not appropriate in all cases and should not be delivered in isolation. Forum meetings should be considered as part of a wider programme of consultation that includes the full spectrum of community engagement and includes the input from a range of partners and council services where appropriate. A report will be brought to Area Committee in October which will seek members views on a programme of community engagement for the Inner North West which will include the use of forum meetings, alongside doorstep surveys the use of the Leeds Citizens Panel.
- 4.2 Members are invited to continue to request support from Area Management for up to twelve forum meetings a year. It would be useful if members could use the following guidelines for forum meetings, which may aid in maximising the value of this method of public consultation:
- Arrange forum meetings throughout the year as issues arise rather than scheduling them 12 months in advance. This will avoid the need to cancel meetings at short notice where suitable attendance from members and officers or venue availability cannot be secured.
 - Allow 4 weeks notice to arrange a forum meeting. This will allow sufficient time to undertake the necessary publicity, arrange venues and confirm the attendance of presenting officers.
 - Confirm who will chair the meeting when the date for the forum is set. The chair will be responsible for agreeing the agenda and approving the minutes. Area Management will endeavour to produce the minutes of the forum meeting within one week and pass these to the chair for approval to be published. Feedback has been received that delays in publishing forum minutes limits their value.

5.0 Project and Service Update

This section of the Area Update Report will provide information to members which would do not require a full report on the Area Committee agenda. Members are

invited to request that brief service updates are included in this section up to a month before the date of the next Area Committee meeting. It should be noted that a full report to area committee would be required where issues require detailed explanation or a decision by Area Committee.

5.1 Student Changeover

Student Changeover is co-ordinated through a multi-agency steering group which has met four times this year in the lead up to student changeover when student leases ended on the 30th of June. The meetings were well attended by environmental services, the police, the universities, student unions and residents. Officer support to the group is provided by Area Management.

The Inner North West Area Committee provides significant investment towards Student Changeover, this year providing £19,568 to fund additional refuse collection and £13,000 to fund the Leeds University Student Union activities. Environmental Services have paid for the cost of tipping the estimated 900 tons of waste an additional refuse collection. Environment Sub Group will co-ordinate an evaluation of this year's changeover response which will consider how resources from a range of services and partners can best be targeted at addressing this significant annual service challenge.

5.2 Batcliffe House

Batcliffe House is on the border of Kirkstall / Headingley ward, near the junction of Queenswood Drive / Kirkstall Lane. The property is detached and in substantial grounds a distance away from the main road, which makes it vulnerable to intruders. Nearby residents have complained the property is regularly vandalised and as a result appears in a state of disrepair in grounds that are overgrown and unkempt. The property was rented to some individuals who over a period of weeks attempted to prepare the property for the apparent cultivation of cannabis (for example; setting up hydroponics, altering the lighting, etc). Despite forensic examination it has been not been possible to identify the men. No cannabis was grown at the property.

The Environmental Action Team has been involved with the case a number of times dealing with reports from Councilors and members of the public. At the times the team visited, some of the reports were justified and some were not. The team works within the legislative framework which requires that such properties are secure against entry by intruders. In the first instance the team will request owners to make arrangements to secure the property. Where property owners are uncooperative, notice is served and if it is not complied with the team will arrange for the property to be made secure and will recharge the property owner.

In the case of Batcliffe House the owner has been cooperative and has secured the property when requested to. The owner has stated that it is his intention to bring the property back into use, but this task is made difficult due to vandalism and theft of metal / lead from the property. There is evidence that this is the case with signs of new windows and at one point a new heating system was installed, however, the owner informed the team that the property was broken into and the radiators and boiler was stolen, which has caused further damage to the property. On occasions when the property has needed securing the landlord has been quick to respond and has sent tradespersons the same day to secure the property.

The local neighbourhood policing team is aware of the vandalism to the property and has also received reports of vandalism to nearby allotments. Extra patrols have been directed to the area and PCSOs are speaking to young people in the area directing them to local youth provision.

Following a site visit with the Council's Empty Property Team, the owner has arranged for the grounds to be cut back and re-roofing work has recently been completed. The owner has stated that internal work is due to commence shortly.

In light of the above, the owner is complying with legislation in place to deal with empty homes and properties vulnerable to entry by intruder. There is evidence to suggest that the owners intention to bring the property back into use is genuine as evidenced by the fitting of new windows, work to the roof and recent work to cut back the vegetation in the grounds.

A juvenile has been recently arrested having removed radiators from the property and stacked them up awaiting removal. His two accomplices are awaiting apprehension. The youth has been bailed pending the results of identification.

6.0 Area Committee Venues

Venues for 2011/12 Inner North West Area Committee meetings have been confirmed for the remainder of this calendar year. These are as follows;

- 14 July 2011 – Woodsley Road Community Centre (Hyde Park and Woodhouse Ward)
- 22 September 2011- HEART centre (Headingley Ward)
- 27 October 2011- Kirkstall St Stephens Church Hall (Kirkstall Ward)
- 15 December 2011- St Chads parish hall (Weetwood Ward)
- 23 February 2011- Venue to be confirmed
- 12 April 2011- Venue to be confirmed

Many of the Area Committee's preferred venues will not take bookings for the next calendar year this far in advance. Members will be informed of the venues for the February and April 2012 closer to the date.

7.0 Implications For Council Policy and Governance

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

8.0 Legal and Resource Implications

There are no legal implications of this report. Unless specifically indicated, no additional resources are needed to address any of the issues outlined in this report.

9.0 Recommendations

Members are requested to:

- 9.1 Note and comment on the purpose of the Area Update report as set out in section 1.0
- 9.2 Note and action as appropriate the Key Messages from Forums and Sub groups as set out in section 2.4.
- 9.3 Agree the ward representation and selection of chair and note the resident representation for the Planning Sub Group as described in section 3.4.
- 9.4 Agree the ward representation and selection of chair and note the resident representation for the Environment Sub Group as set out in section 3.8.
- 9.5 Note the position of the Transport Sub Group and agree to discontinue its functioning as set out in section 3.13
- 9.6 Note the arrangements for forum meetings as described in section 4.0
- 9.7 Note the project and service updates as set out in section 5.0
- 9.8 Note the area committee venues for 2010-11 as set out in section 6.0

Background Papers:

Area Committee Roles