

**Report of West North West homes Leeds**

**Report to Inner North West Area Committee**

**Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2011**

**Subject: West North West homes Leeds involvement in Area Committees**

Are specific electoral Wards affected? <b>If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):</b>	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

**Summary of main issues**

1. 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. The report provides information on progress of current partnership work relevant to Area Committee work.

**Recommendations**

2. Members are asked to note this report and make comment as to how a joint and collaborative arrangement can be established

## **1 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.
- 1.2 The report also provides an update on progress on some of the current partnership working which is relevant to Area Committee work.

## **2 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 West 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. The Neighbourhood Performance Manager post forms part of the wider Senior Management Team for the ALMO. Work has also been undertaken with Jason Singh and Area Management colleagues to develop this approach.

## **3 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 . A recent example being WNWhLs contribution to the Covert and Crime Reduction Team for the purchase, maintenance and installation of covert cameras to tackle anti social behaviour and crimes traditionally seen as low level, such as graffiti, bin-yard fires and nuisance behaviour. 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 in which Streetscene services can be 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. In recognition of this we are currently working with Area Management on a pilot project in Kirkstall for agreeing joint working practices through a partnership arrangement.
- 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. Appendix 1 highlights our involvement with some of the joint working initiatives currently in place.

## **4 Corporate Considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and Engagement**

4.1.1 Residents living in the Inner North West area have been consulted using our Community Partnership Agreements to ascertain their priorities for the area and to identify improvements that they would like to see. Current priorities have been identified as

- Estate cleanliness
- Lack of car parking
- Decent Homes

4.2 Detailed consultation is undertaken for each Area Panel bid submission and post evaluation schemes following completion are also undertaken.

### **4.3 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration**

4.3.1 There are no specific equality considerations arising from this report

### **4.4 Council Policies and City Priorities**

4.4.1 The partnership working outlined in this report contribute to the Safer and Stronger Communities Plan and to the Sustainable Economy and Culture City Priority Plan.

### **4.5 Resources and Value for Money**

4.5.1 No additional resources are required to deliver the approach outlined in this report, it can be delivered within existing resources. There is however scope for delivering efficiencies and value for money with the potential for partnership working and match funding opportunities for future projects

### **4.6 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

4.6.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

### **4.7 Risk Management**

4.7.1 There are no direct risks associated with this report but there maybe missed opportunities for partnership working which brings opportunities for delivering more for less via efficiency savings and match funding.

## **5 Conclusions**

5.1 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 for partnership working to the benefits of residents which ensures that all agencies in the area target resources in a joined up way and thus prevent duplication.

## **6 Recommendations**

6.1 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. It is proposed that the first of these reports is presented to the Area Committee in March 2012.

## **7 Background documents**

7.1 None

## Appendix 1

1. The Neighbourhood Housing Team are involved in a range of joint working initiatives with other agencies and stakeholders including attendance at the **Multi Agency Tasking Meeting** each month. The purpose of which is to ensure a holistic approach when delivering local services which require joined up working arrangements. Any barriers that partners face during their work is fed up to this meeting, this has enabled the Inner North West to remove the Housing Action Group Meeting. Partners include; West Yorkshire Police, Community Safety, Environmental Action Team, Youth Service, the Leeds Anti Social Behaviour Team and Area Management. The meeting is designed to share local information and intelligence and agree local priorities and joint actions for delivering service improvements, primarily focussing on crime and grime.

2. Whilst WNWhL do not have many properties in the **Hyde Park area**, we are working with partner agencies to improve the area, recognising that we cannot tackle the issues alone. WNWhL have attended multi agency meetings specifically to address the issue of graffiti. The group are looking at ways to prevent repeat graffiti and to publicise to the community actions taken. WNWhL also attends the **Hyde Park Board tasking meeting** where it has been agreed that LCC will arrange a deep clean for the Hyde Park area before the new students arrive, this will show positive work to new students. Student representatives are to carry out some volunteer projects and engage with the other agencies to improve and maintain a good condition of the area. WNWhL are to provide an information leaflet to WNWhL tenants containing vital information and help line numbers including crime stoppers, the leaflet will display the logos of all the agencies working together. A joint day of action is being arranged to target specific issues such as drug crime, bin yards, graffiti and overgrown areas.

3. Kirkstall ward has been placed third for burglary rates in Leeds. Partners met on the 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2011 to undertake a burglary reduction workshop and went through Outcome Based Accountability. It was agreed that the geographical area should be **Hawksworth Wood** and that the actions agreed would be added to the existing plan. WNWhL has also funded through an Area Panel bid £12K for West Yorkshire Police Neighbourhood Policing Team to set up a local base on the estate, unfortunately a suitable base has not been identified and the Police are to look at utilising the funds for youth activities, a report is to be taken back to WNWhL Area Panel for approval of the change of use.

4. WNWhL are in the process of introducing a **Good Neighbour Local Lettings Policy** for the one bed room flats on the Hawksworth Wood estate, this will be one of the first in Leeds it is also being introduced for the one bedroom flats on the Holtpark Estate. We are working with the police to ensure that we meet the West Yorkshire Police data protection criteria and hope to be able to launch the scheme soon. In addition to this WNWhL are working with Safer Leeds, West Yorkshire Police and Area Management to set up a Community Engagement Board on the estate which Councillor Yeadon has agreed to be Chair. The first meeting took place May 2011 it was agreed that a newsletter would be delivered to every property on the estate to try and identify a street representative for each street. A partners meeting took place 1<sup>st</sup> August 2011 it was agreed to hold the next public meeting early September by which time the newsletter will have been delivered asking for community representatives.

5. An action day has been arranged for the 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2011. The day of action is to be incorporated into the **Operation Champion**, it will be based around Community Safety. West Yorkshire Police and West Yorkshire Fire Service will be attending to engage with local residents. WNWhL have arranged for skips to be on the estate on the day, funded by Area Management and Ward members. WNWhL have arranged for Groundwork to undertake gardening works for customers who meet the criteria for WNWhL Vulnerable Tenants Gardening Scheme. These tenants must have proofs of Disability Living Allowance, Incapacity benefit or Retirement pension. A small charge will be made for the service. We will also be carrying out Home Visits to carry out tenancy verification and identify any vulnerable tenants.

6. WNWhL attend Tenants and Residents meetings throughout the Inner North West area and have attended several public meetings with partners, held to address issues at **Norman Towers** regarding recycling, cleaning, choice based lettings, ASB, crime and repair issues. WNWhL also attend bi annual forums held at Holy Name School, this meeting is arranged by Ward members. WNWhL and the police attend and take questions and answers.

7. Our Neighbourhood Caretaking Team provide a front line environmental service, patrolling estates and communal buildings (multi storey flats) daily, ensuring a high visible presence to deter illegal dumping, illegal entry, vandalism and other acts of anti social behaviour. To act as the eyes and ears on the estate reporting and recording any illegal activity and breaches of tenancy. They provide a patrol service of estates on a planned basis, assessing and dealing with environmental issues in communal areas, such as ginnels, walkways and communal land where grot spots exist.

The team have carried out graffiti removal in Hyde Park on the action day. The Inner North West team have the highest number of Multi storey flats and the Lovells and Oatlands have been identified as hotspot areas. Resources are being used to target these blocks from the 1<sup>st</sup> August 2011 to tackle issues of discarded used needles, weeds and fly tipping. WNWhL are to pilot utilising **Probation to work with the caretaking team** to increase capacity.

The team have contributed to a pilot partnership scheme taking place for several weekends in the **Woodhouse area** to clear bin yards. WNWhL were originally asked to provide vehicles for the project with Probation providing the labour and Leeds City Council waiving tipping charges. If successful the pilot will be rolled out across Hyde Park.

The Neighbourhood Caretakers have also worked in partnership with Tenants and Residents, Probations Services, St Georges Church, Redhall, Milfords & Morrisons to create a memorial garden at Marlborough Towers in memory of Sean McIlroy who died earlier this year. Paths were de weeded, flowers planted, maintenance free shrub beds created, hand rails painted, trees pruned and pebbles laid.

8. WNWhL has instigated and is part of the working group with Leeds Anti Social Behaviour Team, Environmental Action Team and the other ALMOs to improve the service we offer to customers reporting **noise nuisance**, two meetings have taken place and a third meeting is arranged for September 2011

9. The Little London office are introducing **a bike scheme for the Woodhouse area** to improve visibility on the estate. This was piloted in the Inner West area and positive feedback was received.

10. WNWhL has **four Area Panels**, which have the same boundaries as Leeds City Councils Inner and Outer West and Inner and Outer North West Area Committees. The Area Panels have an active role in setting and agreeing local priorities using local Community Partnership Agreements. They have delegated budget responsibilities and are able to approve bid submissions for dealing with issues such as;

- Environmental Schemes
- Community safety schemes
- Tenant involvement schemes

During the current financial year, **16 bids have been submitted** to the Inner North West Area Panel for consideration, 5 were subsequently approved and 7 are in progress. 1 bid was match funded by the local housing office environmental budget to fund the Good Garden Competition. Bids have included, funding notice boards on the Gilbert and Sandford estate, providing bollards to prevent parking on grassed areas and flagged areas and the provision of bin stores to maisonettes to resolve an issue of fly tipping.