

**Report of Business Facilities and Social Enterprise Manager (BARCA Leeds)**

**Report to Inner West Area Committee**

**Date: 14<sup>th</sup> December 2011**

**Subject: Inner West Community Centres Consortium update**

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): Armley; Bramley & Stanningley	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input 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**

This report provides an update on the Inner West Community Centres Consortium (CCC) project and specifically the Business Facilities and Social Enterprise Manager (BFSEM) post which is funded by the Inner West Area Committee and works under the umbrella of the CCC. The report has been completed with input from BARCA Leeds, New Wortley Community Centre Board and the Fairfield Partnership.

A Well-being funding workshop, including all Inner West members is being arranged for the new year and it is suggested that at this workshop, Members consider whether they would wish to continue funding this project into 2012/13.

**Recommendations**

The Inner West Area Committee are asked to note the contents of the report and consider whether it wishes to continue funding this project into 2012/13.

## **1 Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the Inner West Community Centres Consortium (CCC) project and specifically the Business Facilities and Social Enterprise Manager (BFSEM) post which is funded by the Inner West Area Committee and works under the umbrella of the CCC.
- 1.2 A Well-being funding workshop, including all Inner West members is being arranged for the new year and it is suggested that at this workshop, Members consider whether they would wish to continue funding this project into 2012/13.

## **2 Background information**

- 2.1 The CCC and BFSEM posts were established through Area Committee funding to increase usage of the centres and community engagement, improve their financial stability and secure longer term sustainability. A report was submitted to the Area Committee in October 2010 to report on the findings and work to date of the BFSEM, who at that point had been in post for three months.
- 2.2 Originally, the Wythers Community House (WCH) was also included within the CCC. However, it became evident that the premises were not fit for purpose as a community centre, mainly due to its size and layout but also due to lack of usage and cost of the building, security issues and acts of vandalism. The reasons for WCH to be excluded from the project were reported to Area Committee and regular updates have been provided through Area Manager's / Area Progress reports submitted regularly to Area Committee over the last year.
- 2.3 At the start of the project, New Wortley was in a very poor financial situation, threatened with immediate closure and had just been in receipt of an Area Committee funding to pay outstanding monies. Financial controls were almost non-existent. Staff and volunteer morale was very low, the building was tired looking, with broken lighting which meant the main area was semi dark, and the exterior of the building was very unwelcoming.
- 2.4 Fairfield Community Centre was experiencing a lack of community engagement and low morale amongst Board members and volunteers, the centre was almost at the point of closure. Fairfield was reliant on Safer and Stronger Communities funding that was coming to an end in March 2010 and was losing £1000 a month; as a result Fairfield Community Centre was facing closure as the Board were not happy to run the centre under such circumstances. Centre usage was very poor and some events or activities were cancelled with little notice. The building was very unwelcoming, and uncared for.
- 2.5 The Fairfield building was targeted by vandals on an almost weekly basis.
- 2.6 BARCA Leeds is a community anchor organisation and has a strategic objective to ensure that there is investment in the communities within the area they work. BARCA Leeds role within the CCC is that of the host organisation for the BFSEM post. Community Centres are essential for the delivery of services at a local level and BARCA recognise their importance in relation to the social fabric of the communities. For a number of years they have observed the impact of under investment,

duplication of energy and effort, and the use of Community Centres being controlled by small numbers of people benefiting a small percentage of their communities. As an organisation they felt that encouraging the Community Centres to share key functions including administration would be a positive step. Going forward, this will drive greater consistency, publicity and reliability which will improve the footfall and financial viability of these centres.

### **3 Main issues**

#### Financial Position

- 3.1 At the start of the CCC project, Fairfield Community Centre was looking at closure as costs were exceeding income. The BFSEM has worked with the Board to cut costs significantly, for example reducing catering staff hours from 20hrs down to 10 hours per week with no apparent loss of output.
- 3.2 The Fairfield Board gained agreement with the Council to reduce overheads through a rent amnesty for 2010/11 and 2011/12. In addition the board has secured funding from a number of small grant pots to help towards the running of the centre e.g. maintenance, cleaning and rates.
- 3.3 At the start of the CCC project New Wortley Community Centre was looking at closure as costs were exceeding income. The BFSEM estimated that the centre was losing around £1500 per month at this stage. New Wortley is still running at a loss. However, grant funding is keeping it going, plus the increase in income from the social enterprises. To address the financial problems, one part time member of staff was made redundant and work has focused on increasing income through the café, shop, laundry and room hire.
- 3.4 New Wortley has signed up to FareShare – a national UK charity supporting communities to relieve food poverty. It provides surplus ‘fit for purpose products’ from the food and drink industry to organisations working with disadvantaged people in the community. Fairfield pay a small amount to New Wortley so that they also receive some FareShare products to help reduce costs.
- 3.5 A spreadsheet is attached at Appendix 1, showing the financial position of the two centres.

#### Financial Management

- 3.6 Good financial management systems are now in place at both centres.
- 3.7 A new volunteer accountant has been recruited to Fairfield through the Year of the Volunteer programme and she has joined the Board as treasurer. She ensures that the financial systems are kept in good order and resolved issues such as petty cash.
- 3.8 A new volunteer accountant has also been recruited to New Wortley and is currently considering the possibility of joining and strengthening the Board.
- 3.9 New Wortley Community Centre has been paying back the HMRC liability at £200 per month this year; this should be cleared by March 2012. NWCC has also had to pay back some utility bill liabilities built up in 2010.

- 3.10 BARCA retains salary costs and directly contributes a proportion of its income towards the running costs of New Wortley and Fairfield.

### Staffing

- 3.11 The previous staffing arrangements at Fairfield of 2 x 20 hour posts were identified by the BFSEM as excessive and unsustainable. Staffing has now been reduced to 1 x 10 hour post and 1 x 14 hour post. These staffing levels are much more appropriate and affordable.
- 3.12 At New Wortley, 1 part time member of kitchen staff has been made redundant. There is now a full time (36 hours) kitchen and centre manager and 1 x 16 hour kitchen worker in post.

### Income

#### a) Fairfield Community Centre

- 3.13 A spreadsheet, showing income for both centres is attached at Appendix 1. There has been a 20-30% increase in rental income at Fairfield. This has been mainly due to the increased number and range of activities taking place, shown in the timetable attached at Appendix 2. BARCA-Leeds have for example increased their usage and therefore rental income from £3,000 in 2010/11 to £3,500 in 2011/12. Their rental income for 2012/13 is currently under negotiation.
- 3.14 Fairfield now has a wide range of activities and events; Getting Ready for Work with partners Next Step and Connections offers employment and training advice for all ages, there are Housing surgeries with Accent and WNWH, a Knit and Natter group, Line Dancing, Zumba, cookery courses and Funky Monkeys, see Appendix 3 for publicity material. Table top and car boot sales are now held regularly, which increases income for the centre. The café is open on Wednesdays and Thursdays and the Board are considering opening for additional hours to tie in with other activities taking place. Fairfield Catering also provides a limited amount of outside catering (generally cold buffets).
- 3.15 Lunch Clubs are also a key source of income. Fairfield provides lunches for Moorside Community Centre on a Thursday and run their own lunch club in association with Bramley Elderly Action on a Friday. Armley Helping Hands are currently considering whether they would like to use the catering service on a Tuesday or Wednesday. This may generate a small amount of profit and create the potential for increasing staff hours in the café.
- 3.16 The laundry is also now generating a small amount of income. The figures are shown in Appendix 1.

#### b) New Wortley Community Centre

- 3.17 At New Wortley, the appearance of the café has been improved and has attracted new customers. Income from the café has increased by 30% April – August 11 and this is shown in Appendix 1. By re-pricing the menu they have increased their gross profit from 35% to 50%. External catering bookings have recently increased.

However, detailed information is not available to compare these figures with last year's performance. There is also a possibility of Swallow Hill Community College using the centre for additional classes during school holidays. The Catering Manager has been on a Leadership Course to improve his skills. They have also arranged mentoring for him from another Community Centre Catering Manager.

- 3.18 The community shop at New Wortley has benefited from new signage and takings are up around 30% (2010/ 2011). It is staffed by volunteers Monday - Friday 9am-2pm and Saturday 10am-1pm. The BFSEM is continuing to explore the possibility of establishing a community shop in a retail unit on Armley Town Street. However, the costs associated with this are being carefully considered.
- 3.19 The laundry at New Wortley has also benefited from new signage and is always busy. Takings are up to £60-80 per week.
- 3.20 There is now in place firm control over costs, there is no expenditure without approval of BFSEM.
- 3.21 Room hire has increased, for example there is a youth club every Tuesday evening, Zumba every Thursday evening and ad-hoc bookings for parties and events. Appendix 3 shows the range of activities now taking place at New Wortley. There is no longer a Job Club at New Wortley, all sessions are run from Strawberry Lane.
- 3.22 New Wortley were successful in an application for a National Lottery Grant to make some limited improvements( £6.5K) , new lighting, decoration to improve appearance inside and out, new signage, improvements to café service area and new signs and logos for Social Enterprises, Café 40 (catering) Bit's and Bobs (Shop), plus laundry and room hire. This is vital in promoting what the centre has to offer (see appendix 3). Marketing has had a positive impact on sales and usage of centre, particularly between May 11 and August 11.
- 3.23 There are currently problems with people who suffer from substance misuse using the centre, it is felt that they create an intimidating atmosphere and put off regular customers. It is a difficult situation as surely the centre is a place where these people should be welcomed. Financially it is evident that since September when the Board took on a number of volunteers who suffer from substance misuse, that the Café income has dropped about £250 a week (£1000 a month). This is a real pity as May – August Café income was increasing every month. This has affected morale of volunteers and staff. The Board has agreed to try and address these problems, but this is proving problematic.
- 3.24 New Wortley Community Centre is losing the Health and Fitness over 55's session, (this will cost centre £750 in income every 6 months) – due to changes in the way this is being funded. The youth club has been threatened with closure as it had low numbers over summer, hopefully this is not the case now, and numbers have improved in October. We have lost the Job Service (Leeds City Council) on a Wednesday, firstly provision changed from 10-2 to 10 till midday on Wednesdays, now the service has been pulled due to cost cutting by the service. NWCC now refer people to Strawberry Lane where the service operates Mon- Friday.

- 3.25 Activities at New Wortley are difficult to get started compared to Fairfield as the BFSEM can work with BARCA at Fairfield, who have community development workers in place. At New Wortley, BARCA are not commissioned to deliver Community Development work; Healthy Living Network have the contract for the area. Healthy Living Network do not have workers based in the community or at the centre, and the BFSEM believes this is a key reason why activities are poorly attended and supported.
- 3.26 Usage of the centre is good as the centre is open 8am – 2pm Monday to Friday with evening activities on Tuesday, Wednesdays and Thursdays at the moment, but the main hall could be better used during the day.
- 3.27 NWCC has worked closely with a local business sponsor TORQUE who have printed some of their newsletters and sponsored this year's International Fun Day.
- 3.28 NWCC has been working with the Probation Service offering a placement in the kitchen for the last 10 weeks; they are hoping this may grow to offer up to 4 placements at any one time. In time they hope this may provide a source of income for the centre offering posts for ex-offenders to re-habilitate back into work.
- 3.29 NWCC has been discussing having a more focussed presence from West North West Homes to ensure that the local tenants concerns about the estate and New Wortley are being dealt with, and that appropriate action is being taken.
- 3.30 The levels of alcohol in use within the New Wortley area remains a concern. BARCA's Community Drug Treatment Service will continue to identify means of engaging this client group which may or may not include the use of the Community Centre.

### **Partnership Working**

- 3.31 Partnerships have been established through the Fairfield Local Area Management Plan (LAMP) and New Wortley LAMP. The BFSEM and LAMP group have also established strong links with local schools, Barnardos and PCT outreach workers. Police surgeries have been set up in both centres. Accent Housing, who are leading the social housing development on the Fairfields have joined the LAMP group to look at community integration between existing and new residents and promote activities available at the centre to new residents.
- 3.32 There is significant and increased joint working between the two centres through the CCC project, for example, Fairfield baking for the New Wortley Christmas events, FareShare arrangements and sharing good practice.
- 3.33 The BFSEM has also built an effective working relationship with Accent Housing, group the new social landlord on the Fairfield estate. Accent Housing is providing monthly housing surgeries for Tenants. Accent Housing and Fairfield Community Centre have organised a Jobs and Training event (9<sup>th</sup> Nov) working in partnership with a number of agencies and employers. As a result of this Accent Housing are looking to offer some training courses to residents on the estate through Fairfield Community Centre.

- 3.34 Partnership work between Fairfield CC and Aramark, an American catering company, has developed over the lifetime of the CCC project. This has seen practical results in terms of 'days of action' to improve the interior and exterior of the centre. The creation of an internet room to offer job search facilities and the opportunity for local residents to have access to the internet. Aramark also offer free printing of promotional materials to publicise community events. Their involvement has also improved the Fun Days, making them more appealing and generating more resident's interest and attendance. They have provided some catering supplies and have offered to mentor staff at the centre to aid their development.
- 3.35 Security issues at Fairfield have been addressed through partnership working, for example anti-vandal paint has been applied to the guttering and roof. A magnetic door system has been installed, fence repaired, the gates are now locked at night and a lockable storage area has been created within the centre. As a result of these measures, there has only been one incident of vandalism since April and the centre has become more attractive for service providers and users. This has resulted in savings to the maintenance of the building. There are no particular security issues at New Wortley.
- 3.36 Volunteers are a vital component in increasing sustainability of both centres. As highlighted earlier in the report, there are now volunteer accountants at both centres. At Fairfield there is a regular pool of 8 volunteers plus some ad hoc volunteers. At New Wortley there is a pool of about 20 volunteers. The BFSEM has actively encouraged more volunteering and organised targeted training for volunteers.
- 3.37 There are some great examples of people who have built an association with the centres over the year, developed this association through volunteering and are now in paid employment. These examples show how the centres can help build peoples confidence through volunteering, leading to the possibility of considering employment.
- 3.38 Volunteers are offered full access to training and support provided by BARCA in addition to what is provided by Voluntary Action Leeds and other training providers. At a Community Centre level, volunteers may access management committee members and key holders directly assisting with service provision. Volunteers are subject to CRB checks and safeguarding is a priority for both centres.

### **Future Plans and Exit Strategy**

- 3.39 The intention is to build on the good work at Fairfield, continue to increase the number and range of activities and increase attendance at these through improved promotion and marketing. Links have been made with Accent Housing on the Fairfields estate and they are keen to support their residents to engage in activities at the centre and identify training needs.
- 3.40 The administration post has been a key component of the turnaround of fortunes at Fairfield and the Fairfield Partnership Barca and New Wortley want the administration post to continue.
- 3.41 The improvements at Fairfield are underpinned by Barca's direct involvement in the centre, and by the ongoing support offered by the Area Committee, to support the

centres transition to self sustainability the partnership would hope to get £3000 support from the Area Committee for year 2012/2013.

- 3.42 At Fairfield the Wednesday youth club has been re launched, with a more structured approach to activities with the young people on the estate.
- 3.43 Fairfield Partnership may become liable for utility bills going forward so this will be an additional cost to factor in for 2012/13.
- 3.44 At New Wortley, plans are currently being developed and discussed to expand the centre through building an extension. Plans are currently with Leeds Metropolitan University architects and planning permission will be required. NWCA wants to find relevant partners to make the delivery of the new extension more possible, with a view to becoming a resource centre. This is a very clear way forward with a real chance New Wortley could secure a new building to operate the café and much needed services from.
- 3.45 New Wortley Community Centre has got extra costs (in comparison to Fairfield) going forward, as the Board is responsible for the maintenance of the building (at least £2400 a year) and all utility bills (£3000 a year).
- 3.46 At New Wortley there is very little left to cut in terms of costs, other than staff, if this was to happen the building would have to cut opening times which would have a further detrimental effect on income.
- 3.47 For New Wortley Community Centre to be self sustaining it needs to generate about £200 in income 5 days a week, £4000 a month/ £48,000 a year.
- 3.48 Over the summer months we were starting to approach that figure with an average of almost £150 a day (this had increased from about £70- £80 the year before). To achieve that income the centre has to focus on being run like a business, not allowing for some of the socially motivated reasons for being a centre.
- 3.49 This then is a problem if the centre cannot welcome the most needy members of the community as it affects income. New Wortley would therefore not be fulfilling its role as a community centre. The choice between being accessible for all or being run as a business is a very difficult one for the management board to take. This dichotomy will continue to pose challenges.
- 3.50 Barca is looking at a Reaching Communities bid around worklessness using the two centres as a hub for volunteers to build their confidence and get back into the workplace.
- 3.51 The New Wortley LAMP are considering developing a funding bid, focussing on key issues identified in the recent health needs assessment conducted in New Wortley. These issues include social isolation, integration of members of different communities and asylum seekers, repairing community links between the diverse groups that inhabit New Wortley including the young unemployed and those who suffer from substance misuse, to build and repair the problems faced in the area.



- 3.52 There are some encouraging volunteer examples at New Wortley of people lacking confidence or coming back from illness, volunteering at the centre, building their confidence and ending up in paid employment.
- 3.53 The BSFEM feels that if New Wortley could replicate Fairfield's community development model this would help long term sustainability, but this would require more involvement from other organisations and partners in the delivery of activities to the New Wortley area and the basing of staff at the centre.
- 3.54 There is a feeling from local residents groups and users of the centre that the New Wortley area misses out on help and support for the local area. The BFSEM has seen the hard work the Councillors do to address peoples' concerns, but the New Wortley area has such a large and diverse range of problems – highlighted in the recent health needs assessment and the community plan from 2009, that a different more focussed approach is necessary to address local residents' issues. It is difficult to get people or organisations who want to be based at the community centre to base themselves there, as the building requires some investment.
- 3.55 In September 2010 the centre was generating a loss of about £1500 per month. They have cut costs and raised income to reduce the monthly loss. Figures for May – August 2011 show losses were reduced to £500 (or a £100 a month) a combination of increased café and catering income due to improvements at the centre, marketing and winning new business. But September and October show a loss of £2000, since people who suffer from substance misuse have been using the centre, which caused a large drop off in the new trade the centre had won.
- 3.56 In general, from April, it is thought that at a minimum the centre needs £750 a month, £9,000 a year, financial support from the Area Committee. In return for this, a vital service is secured for the people of New Wortley. It would continue to offer a place to meet, a hub for volunteers, an information centre, a Laundry and Café and shop all vital in an area that has few services to offer.
- 3.57 Critical to the future of both centres will be access to quality and consistent business support. This goes beyond any community development function and is evident that the past 12 months have demonstrated that centres can be sustainable if they maintain a balance between a business focus and social outcomes.

### **Corporate Considerations**

## **4 Consultation and Engagement**

- 4.1 The CCC is made up of representatives from both Fairfield and New Wortley Community Centre boards and local residents. All BFSEM proposals are discussed through the CCC group.

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

- 5.1 All centres need to demonstrate that they comply with the Council's equality commitments, ensuring that all centres are accessible to all sections of the community. This applies to both directly managed centres and leased centres. Advice and

guidance and appropriate monitoring procedures need to be developed and implemented to better address this issue. This work will be incorporated within the community centre action plans as they are developed.

## **6 Council Policies and City Priorities**

- 6.1 The work that has been carried out in the priority neighbourhood areas of the Fairfield and New Wortley estates has helped to meet the Council's objectives of narrowing the gap; improving cohesion and integration and regenerating deprived areas.
- 6.2 The BFSEM suggests that the Fairfield area is improving. Multi-agency problem has helped as has the regeneration of the community centre.
- 6.3 At New Wortley however the BFSEM believes that recent statistics show things are getting worse, (health, employment and drug use). The BFSEM feels that more integrated partnership work needs to be undertaken to focus on the area to see what can be pooled together and offered, utilising the community centre as a hub for provision and community engagement.

## **7 Resources and Value for Money**

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

- 7.1.1 This report is the report of the Area Leader for West North West Leeds who has delegated responsibility to action decisions in accordance with Area Management's work programme in accordance with part 3 of the Council's Constitution in relation to Area Committee Functions.
- 7.1.2 This report is not confidential, neither is it, or part of it exempt. This report is subject to Call-In as the Area Committees functions are delegated Executive functions.

### **7.2 Risk Management**

- 7.2.1 A full risk analysis has been completed, please see Appendix 4.

## **8 Conclusions**

- 8.1 Fairfield - The Fairfield Partnership Board has undergone a number of changes in the last year; it is a mixed Board of local residents, workers and volunteers. It is a strong and supportive Board that has worked closely with the BFSEM to develop a wide range of activities and to underpin a solid infrastructure. The Board has also developed a close and supportive working relationship with Barca Leeds and New Wortley Community Association. The Board is also very grateful for the support of Area Management and local Councillors as well as the PCT. The centre is moving towards a position of sustainability, with a wider range of activities and much more local involvement. Going forward they are hoping to build on this and to engage and encourage more resident involvement through a Residents Association and new Board members.

- 8.2 New Wortley - The one clear outcome from having a BFSEM in situ working between both centres is that the centres are now managed as businesses. This outcome means that they are now better able to serve members of the community, in areas which suffer from high levels of deprivation. Moving towards a community and resource centre is essential in providing good services that cover the communities needs in these areas, especially in the context of welfare reforms and the potential impact on local communities. The PCT needs to be more involved in New Wortley; they have recently undertaken a Health Needs Assessment report, which strongly highlights New Wortley's needs. The BFSEM is working on a joint funding bid to address some of these issues and look at repairing our community.
- 8.3 It is felt that the work undertaken within the Fairfield and New Wortley Community Centres has been effective. The centres are beginning to demonstrate that they can manage their social enterprises whilst maximising the use of their building and community engagement. There is a concern that the centres could slip backward if support is no longer available, such as a return to poor practice and financial loss. Despite considerable progress New Wortley Community Centre remains vulnerable and it is in need of extra support for the year ahead in order to try and get it to a position similar to Fairfield. It is vital to secure long-term partnerships for New Wortley, in the way that there is at Fairfield Community Centre. It is felt that extending the funding arrangement for social enterprise support will continue to build community resilience and independence.
- 8.4 Over the past 12 months BARCA Leeds have seen an improvement in what both Community Centres have offered both in terms of programme and physical buildings. It clearly demonstrates that there are consistent behaviours, good decision making and improved reliability. The centres have become a hub of community engagement and activities; they also increase their own capacity to earn income to help sustainability. BARCA Leeds also recognise that sustainability is not deeply imbedded and there is a need to continue to work on maintaining a positive business focus and ability to respond to the needs of the community.
- 8.5 The two community centre Boards feel that to lose the BFSEM at this time could result in the centres not moving forward at a time that is crucial in the current economic climate. The two centres are not staffed by salaried roles either at Board or volunteer level; they are kept open on a daily basis by people who reside in the area. This could be supported by a BFSEM post at £34, 501, £41,961 with on-costs.
- 8.6 Funding the BFSEM has indicated that support to Fairfield could be reduced to £3000 per year. It is suggested that support for New Wortley is in the region of £9000 per year. Due to the problems that have been highlighted in this report, they will require additional grant support in this financial year, in the region of £750 per month, from January 2012, see appendix 5 for further information. The BFSEM and New Wortley Board are seeking funding and putting together contingency plans to support the continued opening of the centre from January 2012. The BFSEM would divide their time between the centres in relation to the support required, so one day a week at Fairfield, three days a week at Wortley and 1 day a week at BARCA Leeds.

8.7 The administration post (16 hours) is an additional £9000 p/a, this would be a joint resource between the two centres.

## **9.0 Recommendations**

The Inner West Area Committee is asked to:

9.1 Note the contents of the report and comment on progress made under the CCC

9.2 Consider continuing funding for the BFSEM post, admin post and support costs for the two community centres into 2012/13 at the Well Being funding workshop.

## **Background papers**

Report to Inner West Area Committee 20<sup>th</sup> October 2010: 'Inner West Community Centres Consortium update'