

**Report of Assistant Chief Executive (Customer Access & Performance)**

**Report to West (Inner) Area Committee**

**Date: Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2012**

**Subject: Inner West Community Centre Consortium**

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 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. The Community Centre Consortium co-ordinates support for New Wortley community centre in Armley Ward and Fairfield community centre in Bramley and Stanningley Ward.
2. The Area Committee has provided Well-being funding for two years to employ a Business Facilities and Social Enterprise Manager (BFSEM) to develop the social enterprises at the centres and help them become more financially sustainable.
3. Funding for the BFSEM post ended in September 2012. This report provides an update on the current position of the two community centres, and explains how support for the centres will be co-ordinated in the future.

**Recommendations**

4. The Area Committee is asked to:
  - Note the contents of this report
  - Nominate a Ward Member from Armley to sit on the New Wortley Community Centre support group.

## **1 Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on the current position of the two community centres receiving Area Committee funding this year.
- 1.2 New Wortley community centre requires ongoing support from the Community Centre Consortium and partner agencies. This report seeks to establish a multi-agency support group to help the New Wortley Community Centre Board strengthen its policies, apply for grant funding and attract more services to the centre that will meet the needs of the local community.

## **2 Background information**

- 2.1 Since 2008, the West North West Area Support Team has been working with BARCA Leeds to help support community centres in the inner West area through a Community Centre Consortium. It originally included three centres, New Wortley community centre, Fairfield community centre and Wythers community house. Since the closure of Wythers community house, the consortium has continued to support the centres at Fairfield and New Wortley.
- 2.2 Neither centre is directly managed by Leeds City Council. Fairfield community centre is on a long term lease to the Fairfield Partnership and the New Wortley centre was built with funds raised by the local community.
- 2.3 In 2010, the government funding for centre manager posts ended. The Area Committee supported a proposal to employ a Business Facilities and Social Enterprise Manager for a fixed term to focus on improving the financial viability of the social enterprises at the centres including outside catering, laundry and café in both and charity shop at New Wortley.
- 2.4 Both centres have greatly increased their income. Fairfield also benefits from having BARCA community development workers co-located at the centre to develop services and increase bookings.
- 2.5 New Wortley community centre has also seen improvements in income and profits by taking difficult decisions about staff hours and pricing structures. Despite this, the centre is still some way off becoming free from the need for grant funding.
- 2.6 Area Committee funding for the BSFEM post ended in September 2012. This has been temporarily extended with funding from NHS Leeds, and it is hoped that a successful application to the council's Transition Fund will maintain the post until March 2013. This will enable the BSFEM to see through a large grant application for £400,000 to the Big Lottery for an extension to the centre that aims to secure its long term future.

## **3 Main issues**

- 3.1 Fairfield Community Centre Current Position
- 3.2 Fairfield Community Centre is a local success story. A few years ago, it was threatened with closure, suffering from anti-social behaviour and low use. Thanks to the efforts of local residents, the Board and the BFSEM, it now hosts a range of

activities for the whole community. It has the support of BARCA community development workers who are funded by NHS Leeds to deliver health improvement activities in the community.

- 3.3 The centre's outside catering social enterprise has suffered a recent fall in income. Consideration is being given to partnering or merging with New Wortley community centre's Café 40 to benefit from economies of scale. This will be explored with the two centres over the coming months.
- 3.4 The Fairfield Partnership is confident that the centre will continue to improve and grow. There is a concern that the administration duties at the centre are too onerous for a volunteer to take on, and grant funding is being sought to employ someone on a part time basis.
- 3.5 New Wortley Community Centre Current Position
- 3.6 Whilst the social enterprises at the centre are experiencing their best results, the financial situation at the centre remains fragile. Without an anchor tenant, the centre is reliant on room hire and local residents using the social enterprises.
- 3.7 The BSFEM continues to be very involved in the day to day running of the social enterprises. The volunteer programme has been strengthened, and both volunteers and paid staff are completing accredited training. The Board is concerned however, that without the direction of the BFSEM or similar post, the businesses are at risk of decline.
- 3.8 A major issue at the centre is around security and anti-social behaviour. New Wortley has the second highest needle exchange in the city, and some of the highest rates of alcohol related admissions to hospital. A number of people suffering from alcohol or drug addiction access the centre, and sometimes their behaviour causes alarm and distress. There is also a core group of anti-social drinkers who hang around outside the centre and the nearby shops. Centre users have complained their presence is threatening and puts them off coming into the centre.
- 3.9 The BSFEM has been supported by the Neighbourhood Policing Team, Leeds Anti-Social Behaviour Unit and West North West Homes to report instances of anti-social behaviour and identify the main culprits. Those causing the most disruption have been temporarily banned from the centre, and the police have increased patrols to move on groups of street drinkers.
- 3.10 It is important for users, staff and volunteers at the centre to feel it is a safe environment to visit and work in. Tackling persistent anti-social behaviour benefits from the presence of the BSFEM.
- 3.11 The outcome of the Leeds Transition fund will be known in the next few weeks. Other sources of grant funding have been identified, and a number of applications have been submitted to contribute to the temporary funding pot for the BSFEM post.
- 3.12 The current long term plans for the centre rest on a successful application to the Big Lottery Reaching Communities Buildings Fund. The centre is applying for almost half a million pounds to extend their building and improve the existing

facilities. A first stage application has been submitted, and if approved, the Board will be invited to complete a full application form.

- 3.13 The extension will provide long term sustainability for the centre as it will create space for an anchor tenant, BARCA, to deliver drugs and alcohol outreach services. The improved centre will also be more attractive to a wider range of activities and provide more suitable venue for meetings.
- 3.14 Whether the Big Lottery bid is successful or not, partners will support the centre's Board to apply to other grant funds and trusts to continue the employment of the BSFEM.
- 3.15 New Wortley Community Centre Support Group
- 3.16 A proposal has been put forward by the Area Leader and West North West Health Improvement Manger to establish a multi-agency steering group to support the New Wortley community centre Board and staff during this transition period.
- 3.17 The support group will involve a range of partners who will offer advice and support on how the Board operates, what services are delivered and needed at the centre, how other organisations can get involved, and plan for the centre's long term future.
- 3.18 The West North West Area Support Team will co-ordinate the meetings and discuss membership and terms of reference with the community centre's Board. The support group will benefit from Ward Member involvement, and the Area Committee is asked to consider appointing an Armley Ward Member to attend the meetings.

## **4 Corporate Considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and Engagement**

- 4.1.1 The Community Centre Consortium includes representatives from both community centre Boards. The BSFEM has carried out consultation with residents and users of both centres about the services they offer.

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

- 4.2.1 This section is not applicable to this report.

### **4.3 Council policies and City Priorities**

- 4.3.1 Through the services they provide, the community centres contribute at a local level to the themes contained in the:

Vision for Leeds

Leeds Strategic Plan

Health and Wellbeing City Priorities Plan

Children and Young People's Plan

## Safer and Stronger Communities Plan

### **4.4 Resources and value for money**

4.4.1 The purpose of the Community Centre Consortium is to help the community centres become more self sufficient in the future with less reliance on grant aid.

4.4.2 The BSFEM post has been funded by the Inner West Area Committee and monitoring information is provided quarterly.

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

4.5.1 This report is not confidential, neither is it, or part of it exempt.

4.5.2 This report is not subject to Call-In

### **4.6 Risk Management**

4.6.1 A multi-agency support group will help the New Wortley Community Centre Board through a six month transition period to help secure the long term future of the centre. A risk log will form part of this work.

## **5 Conclusions**

5.1 The Area Committee funded BSFEM post has contributed significantly to the growth of Fairfield and New Wortley community centres.

5.2 New Wortley community centre requires support from partner agencies to identify other sources of income to maintain the BSFEM or similar post to continue the improvements at the centre, oversee the Big Lottery and other grant applications, and tackle anti-social behaviour.

5.3 A multi-agency support group will work with the New Wortley community centre board for a limited period to help identify other sources of funding and further develop services at the centre that meet local needs.

## **6 Recommendations**

6.1 Members are asked to:

- Note the content of this report, and
- Nominate an Armley Ward Member to join the New Wortley community centre support group.

## **7 Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

7.1 None

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<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.