

Report of the Community Planning Officer

Report to the Inner North West Area Committee

Date: 21st February 2013

Subject: Community Planner Update Report

Are specific electoral Wards affected?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): Headingley Hyde Park and Woodhouse Kirkstall Weetwood		
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?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: N/A Appendix number: N/A		

Summary of main issues

1. The objectives of the Community Planner role include providing advice to ward members and community groups on planning matters, working with the inner north west Area Committee (INWAC) Planning Sub Group to respond to local planning issues, and working with council officers from a range of service areas to co-ordinate planning responses in the inner north west area.
2. The community planner work programme over the last 12 months has included working with the INWAC Planning Sub Group to co-ordinate responses to local planning issues, respond to local and national planning consultations, and provide advice and assistance to local community groups on neighbourhood planning. The Community Planner has provided officer support to the steering group of the Far Headingley, Weetwood and West Park Neighbourhood Design Statement (NDS), contributed to the adoption of revisions to the Letting Board Code, worked with colleagues to develop local planning policy in relation to Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), and attended the private sector strategic working group to engage with landlord groups and university representatives on relevant issues. In addition to this the day-to-day duties of the role make up a significant proportion of the community planner workload.
3. If Area Committee determine to continue funding for the community planner post for 2013 to 2014 there are a number of emerging projects and themes which are likely to

form part of the future work programme alongside the continuation of many of those above. The most significant of these will be in response to the increasing enthusiasm for neighbourhood planning in inner north west Leeds and the opportunities this gives communities to shape new development through the creation of Neighbourhood Development Plans. The Community Planner resource will continue to assist the Planning Sub Group in making representations to local and national planning consultations, particularly in relation to the emerging Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy and Housing Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD), and work to assist the steering group of the Far Headingley, Weetwood and West Park NDS through to the adoption of this document. The Community Planner will also continue to assist colleagues on local planning policy relating to HMOs and letting boards, provide assistance to ward members for community meetings for significant planning applications, and continue to update the community planner website as a source of local planning information for community groups and local residents.

Recommendations

4. Members are asked to note the contents of the report and comment as they feel appropriate.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The report is intended to give an update to Ward Councillors on the community planner work programme for the past 12 months. The report will also introduce those emerging projects and themes which are likely to be central to discussions at the inner north west Area Committee (INWAC) Planning Sub Group over the next twelve months and introduce the proposed work programme for the community planner over this period, if Area Committee determine to continue funding the post.

2 Background information

- 2.1 The overall objectives of the Community Planner role are outlined below:

- To advise and assist Ward Councillors, community groups and individuals on planning related matters;
- To work with the INWAC Planning Sub-Group to raise awareness of area specific planning related issues and to support the planning related initiatives of the Area Committee;
- To work alongside Council officers from a wide range of service areas to co-ordinate planning responses in the inner north west area.

- 2.2 In order to meet these objectives over the last 12 months the Community Planner work programme has included the following:

- The co-ordination of the INWAC Planning Sub Group; including the setting of the agenda to discuss significant planning applications, changes to national and local planning policy and other planning mechanisms, and the ongoing monitoring of 'community-led' planning documents.
- Drafting a response on behalf of the Planning Sub Group and Area Committee to the Council's Local Development Framework Core Strategy consultation in Spring 2012 and a follow up response to the later consultation in February 2013.
- Drafting a response to National Government on behalf of the Planning Sub Group and Area Committee on the proposed changes to permitted development in December 2012.
- Advising local community groups on neighbourhood planning including the production of an Issues and Options paper in September 2012 on behalf of the Planning Sub Group looking at the main issues surrounding the introduction of a Neighbourhood Development Plan in inner north west Leeds.
- Supporting the steering group of the Far Headingley, Weetwood and West Park NDS in the drafting of the latest version of their Neighbourhood Design Statement including being the officer representative throughout the supplementary planning document (SPD) adoption process.

- Contributing to the adoption process for the revised Letting Board Code addressing the display of letting boards and related advertisements in the Area of Special Advertisement Control and the Voluntary Code area. This included drafting the revised Code, co-ordinating public consultation, and working with colleagues in the Planning Enforcement team.
- Working with colleagues in the Forward Planning team on new House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) related planning policy following the introduction of the Article 4 Direction in Leeds including representing the Council in national discussions on planning responses to HMO issues.
- Attending meetings of the Private Sector Strategic Working Group to engage with landlord associations and university representatives on relevant planning matters such as the Council's Article 4 direction and Letting Board Code.
- Continuing to use the community planner website on the Council's web pages to provide an information resource for local community groups and residents.

2.3 As well as the above, the Community Planner resource has continued to be well used by ward members, community groups, and local residents as a first point of contact for planning related issues. Responding to these queries has formed a significant proportion of the Community Planner workload.

3 Main issues

3.1 There are a number of emerging and existing planning projects and themes which are anticipated to be priorities in inner north west Leeds over the next twelve months. The INWAC Planning Sub Group will continue to respond to these priorities through its monthly meetings. The Community Planner post will continue to support the group with a work programme over the next twelve months based on the following themes.

INWAC Planning Sub Group

3.2 The community planner post will continue to co-ordinate the INWAC Planning Sub Group to discuss significant local planning applications and issues and monitor the use of community planning documents such as Neighbourhood Design Statements. The group will also have a key role in informing and engaging community groups on neighbourhood planning.

Neighbourhood Planning

3.3 Neighbourhood planning represents a new and significant opportunity for local communities to engage in the planning system through a range of new planning mechanisms. Over the last 12 months the Council has designated ten neighbourhood planning areas across the city, all in parished areas. The Parish Councils in these areas are now looking to draft Neighbourhood Development Plans, with a number of other communities across the city also displaying considerable enthusiasm.

- 3.4 In inner north west Leeds a number of groups have expressed an interest in neighbourhood planning. The Planning Sub Group and Community Planner resource will continue to provide support to these groups with an event being planned in late February/ early March aimed at informing those groups who wish to form a Neighbourhood Forum and designate a Neighbourhood Development Plan area. It is anticipated that supporting local community groups to meet their neighbourhood planning aspirations will form a key part of the work programme of both Planning Sub Group and the Community Planner over the next twelve months.

Community Led Planning Documents

- 3.5 The steering group of the Far Headingley, Weetwood and West Park Neighbourhood Design Statement (NDS) have drafted a revised and updated version of the document which has now begun the supplementary planning document (SPD) adoption process. The Community Planner will act as the officer representative throughout the adoption process. Following the necessary stages, including a public consultation, the document is expected to be adopted in late 2013/ early 2014.
- 3.6 Planning Sub Group will continue to monitor the uptake of the other community led planning documents in the area through its monthly meetings.

Planning Policy Consultations

- 3.7 The Planning Sub Group will continue to provide responses to local and national planning consultations where appropriate. The Group's previous comments have proved effective by resulting in significant improvements to planning policies in the LDF Core Strategy over the past 12 months. Over the next 12 months the Core Strategy is expected to go to public examination and the Housing Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) is expected to be the subject of public consultation. Both of these documents will have a significant influence over planning decisions in inner north west Leeds over the next 15 years.

Article 4 Direction and HMO Planning Policy

- 3.8 The Community Planner will continue to represent the Area Committee in local and national discussions related to HMO planning legislation and policy. This includes working with the Planning Policy team in relation to the drafting of relevant local planning policy and working to engage with community groups, landlord groups, the universities, student groups and other interested parties.

Letting Boards

- 3.9 The Community Planner will continue to support the Planning Enforcement team in the enforcement of the recently revised letting board code in the Regulation 7 direction area and work with landlord organisations in the voluntary code area.

Drop-In Sessions for Significant Planning Applications

- 3.10 The Community Planner will continue to provide officer support for community drop-in sessions to discuss significant planning applications with local residents and community groups.

Community Planner Website

- 3.11 The Community Planner will continue to use the Community Planner website as an information resource for local residents and community groups.

Housing Strategy

- 3.12 The Community Planner will continue to liaise with officers from Housing Services, on behalf of the INWAC Planning Sub Group, in order to progress discussions in relation to housing priorities in inner north west Leeds.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1.1 This report is intended to inform ward members in inner north west Leeds of the community planner work programme. As such this report has not been subject to public consultation.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 4.2.2 There are no negative equality impacts as a result of the proposals discussed in this report. The Community Planner resource is used to support all ward members, community groups and residents in inner north west Leeds. As such it has not been necessary to prepare an Equality Impact Assessment.

4.3 Council policies and City Priorities

- 4.3.1 This report does not have any direct implications for Council policy.

4.4 Resources and value for money

- 4.4.1 The community planner is funded from the Wellbeing Fund and works alongside existing Council resources.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 4.5.1 There are no specific legal implications as this report does not relate to a key or major decision.

4.6 Risk Management

- 4.6.1 There are no significant risks identified in this report.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 The community planner resource has continued to be well used by ward members, community groups and local residents over the past twelve months. Those projects and themes outlined in section 3 of this report are anticipated to

form the core work programme of the community planner post over the next twelve months alongside the day-to-day duties of the role.

6 Recommendations

6.1 Members are asked to note the contents of the report and comment as they feel appropriate.

7 Background documents

7.1 None.