
Report of the West Leeds Area Manager

Inner West Area Committee

Date: 29th March 2007

Subject: Wyther Improvement Group (WIG)

Electoral Wards Affected: Armley

Specific Implications For:

Ethnic minorities

Women

Disabled people

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

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

1.1 To brief Members on the first 16 months of the Wyther Improvement Group, known as WIG.

2.0 Background Information

2.1 The Wyther Improvement Group

Leeds PCT (West area) and Leeds West Homes on behalf of the West Leeds District Partnership are leading on the improvement plan for the Wythers estate in the Armley Ward, this is an area which is in the worst 10% of multiple deprivation nationally.

The focus of the work has been to regenerate the local area and lift it out of the high levels of deprivation that is currently experienced by residents in this area.

The main issues in the area in order of priority include education, income and worklessness, crime, housing and the environment, health.

A detailed action plan has been developed and is being implemented in partnership with local organisations and residents addressing the main priorities in the area.

- 2.2 The WIG partnership is chaired by Councilor Alison Lowe and its membership is made up of over 20 local organisations and tenants in the Wythers area. Members of the WIG participated in a series of workshops to identify the main priorities and aims and objectives to address these priorities. They are as follows:

PURPOSE

To work with all relevant agencies to deliver tangible improvements in the Wythers Neighbourhood.

GOAL

To deliver economic, social and physical improvements to the neighbourhood and residents such that it is raised from the bottom 10% of deprived neighbourhoods in the country. That is from 1305 to 3483

KEY AREAS FOR ACTION: Education, Income Employment and Training, Health, Crime and anti social behaviour, Housing and the environment

EDUCATION

Aim: To increase the educational attainment of children living on the Upper Wythers estate targeting children and families on Wythers Estate

Objectives:

To target action and services to children living on Wythers estate to raise KS1, KS2, KS3 results

To promote existing adult learning opportunities to parents and residents on the Upper Wythers

To promote partnership working in the area to further develop education and training opportunities.

INCOME, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

Aim: To increase income levels of residents in the Wythers Estate

Objectives:

To reduce unemployment through the promotion of training and employment opportunities.

To ensure benefit uptake is maximised on the Upper Wythers

HEALTH

Aim:

To reduce incidence of Obesity, Smoking and Teenage pregnancy on Wythers estate targeting children and families.

Objectives

To reduce the teenage pregnancy rates on the Wythers estate through increased availability of c cards and by promoting self esteem sessions to vulnerable young people.

To increase access to fresh fruit and vegetables and exercise programmes to Wythers residents

To work with LESS to target all known smokers and offer smoking cessation classes.

CRIME & ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

To be agreed

HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT

To engage local community and partner organisations in initiatives to improve the local environment.

To improve maintenance standards and usage of public open spaces

To reduce the need for enforcement by promoting diversionary activities

To enable residents and families to fully participate in current activity on Wythers

3.0 Main Issues

3.1 Over the past 16 months the WIG group have met on a monthly basis to address the objectives with the partners from the voluntary and statutory sector. To date the following achievements have been noted under the priority headings:

Education, Training and Employment:

This work has been focused in the following two areas, addressing education attainment of Wythers children in KS1, KS2 and KS3 in Raynville, Hollybush and West Leeds High.

Increasing adult education and training opportunities for residents of the Wythers estate

Education attainment

In addressing education attainment of Wythers children in KS1, KS2 and KS3 in Raynville, Hollybush and West Leeds High an education attainment group has been established led by extended schools with membership from Raynville and Hollybush head teachers and children's centre manager. Actions have been developed on the following:

Promoting nursery provision and uptake on the Wyther estate

Identifying those children on the Wythers with low education attainment and targeting these families with adult education opportunities and additional family support.

Additional transitional support for Wythers children entering West Leeds High

Adult Education

In increasing adult education and training opportunities for residents of the Wythers estate the following progress has been made:

Increased partnership working between Raynville school and WLFLC in providing training opportunities to Wythers residents

Funding for Northern college places secured and Skipco courses at Northern College are going ahead targeting Wyther residents

Jobs and skills open days have been held at Raynville School targeting Wythers residents with increased numbers of residents accessing courses.

Arts and crafts 10 week course delivered for Wythers residents

Housing and Environment:

Wythers community house is completed due to be opened on the 18th march. However the Kitchen is still in need of a cooker, fridge etc and we have had difficulty obtaining funding for this. This has had a major impact on plans to use the house for community events and needs to be resolved. Please could Area Committee advise on funding streams.

Litter Picking day led by LWH was a success with 11 skips being filled involving local school children followed up with sessions at school for children. This initiative won the Community Prides Award from the Leeds City Council.

Environmental week has been planned for 19th March 2007 led by LWH in partnership with other local organisations. The week is packed with activities including coffee mornings, input from the road safety team, Dogs Trust, fruit and vegetable stall, fuel savers promotion, bean planting and many other activities with an environmental theme. The Community House will be the focal point for the week.

Estate walkabouts at different times of the day have commenced at the request of the Tenants Association they have been carried out early morning and are now taking place at different times with good effect.

Connaught and LWH are going to be working in partnership to tackle health and safety issues on building sites. They are proposing to carry out this training in schools in the next few months.

Another initiative is tackling ASB. The aim is to raise awareness and make children knowledgeable about personal safety. ASB unit have some video packages for primary and High School children.

Leeds West Homes is engaging with Raynville Primary School through the 'Worker of the Week' award, which rewards improving attendance and behaviour as well as academic performance.

Work has been completed on the void properties 2/2a Wyther Park Place and a tenancy has been secured. A window replacement programme is due to start this financial year. Additionally, significant improvement work has been completed to system built properties on the upper Wythers estate . Leeds West Homes is also funding environmental improvements

on the estate to improve quality of life for residents, and the concept of 'decent homes in decent neighbourhoods' is considered fundamental to what WIG is trying to achieve.

The kitchens on the Borrowdales are to be replaced.(Connect Housing)

10K secured for highways work from highways and Area management. Recommendations currently being finalized and work to commence in the new financial year.

Youth Intervention and Engagement

There are 8 new staff starting at the youth service which will have increase the availability of youth workers on the Wythers,

A BMX group has taken place, targeting Wythers children, which has had an educational focus as well as a fun activity.

Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour

Vacant Police Sergeant post filled to cover the Wythers Estate.

A senior warden has joined they will be responsible for the enforcement of gardens and any other environmental enforcement.

Police drop in at Raynville established in response to the WIGs request, continuing to be received well by residents and being used to get advice and share information

Police have been into Raynville and Hollybush schools to meet children and build relationships

Operation Strikeback took place in November with positive results. It involved putting in place preventative measures, horseback police presence, and use of force wide resources.

Also, operation Apollo was carried out in November with some positive results.

Health

Weight management courses have been delivered through extended schools at Holly bush primary targeting parents and carers living in Wythers area

LESS (smoking cessation service) has been established in Raynville targeting Wythers residents

Self esteem courses delivered at West Leeds High to be targeted at Wythers young people

Breastfeeding café based at Venerable Bede targeting the LS12 area particularly Wythers Mums has been a success with over 100 mums from the LS12 area attending.

Debt

Action plan developed and being targeted in the Wythers estate

LCCU Leaflet drop completed by YOT team

Increase in membership as a result

Year 7 Collection point at Intake started

Money management workshop commenced in Jan 07 funding agreed

Working with St Vincent's and Cab to increase provision with new resources in Wythers

St Vincents advice worker based at Hollybush childrens centre funded by SS Bramley.

West Leeds Family Learning Centre has a money management course running for 4 weeks after Christmas

Money management course running at Hollybush School on 16th for parents and carers.

3 Implications For Council Policy And Governance

3.1 WIG is part of the *Narrowing the Gap* agenda

4 Legal And Resource Implications

4.1 The WIG is currently led by the Leeds PCT (West area) and LWH. The Public Health Manager, Leeds PCT, Dawn Bailey provides coordination and leadership of the WIG in partnership with Mick Parker, Customer and Tenancy Services Manager from LWH. The hours contributed to this agenda by the PCT is approximately 80 per year with a similar contribution from LWH. Both of these posts are being reviewed under the organisational changes in the Leeds PCT and LWH. Future commitment to this work therefore is under review with immediate effect although both the PCT and the new ALMO, (west north west homes Leeds) are likely to be able to continue contributing to this agenda after the organizational changes.

5 Conclusions

The WIG has developed and coordinated some excellent initiatives with tangible outcomes, with no additional funding provided. All of the initiatives have been developed through partnership working, with LWH being the main contributor, particularly through Claire Tabert the Project Officer. These tangible outcomes include

- Cleaner living environment after successful litter picking initiatives and dog excrement clean up, awarded with the Community City pride award

- The refurbishment of the Wythers House with the support and lobbying of the WIG
- Improved relationship between Police and residents through active initiatives with Raynville and Hollybush schools and the local residents.
- Improved behavior of young people on the estate as reported by the newly appointed Warden (temporary)
- Increased numbers of residents participating in WLFLC adult learning courses including northern college course
- Increased membership of LCCU by residents
- Active education sub group to address education attainment of Wythers children on behalf of Children's Leeds West Strategy Group.
- Increased number of Wythers residents engaging in smoking cessation sessions.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 To gain commitment from both Leeds PCT and LWH that they are able to continue providing leadership and coordination to the WIG.
- 6.2 To explore funding opportunities for the WIG as there is currently no additional funding to administer this work (Urgent priority to provide kitchen equipment for the Wythers House)
- 6.3 For the partnership and area management to support the maintenance and housekeeping of the Wythers Community House.
- 6.4 To continue building the partnership to contribute to the main objectives of the WIG in partnership with the tenants and residents of the Wythers.