

## Cover Note

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**From:** Cllr Peter Gruen, Chair, Safer and Stronger Communities Board and Stronger Communities Partnership

**Report to:** Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Board

**Date:** 29 May 2013

**Subject:** Working with Communities in Leeds

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The following report was presented to the Stronger Communities Partnership meeting on Friday 24 May 2013. Additional attendees from the Safer and Stronger Communities Board were also invited to attend, in order to inform the discussion.

The report contained 4 main recommendations about the future of the Safer and Stronger Communities agenda in a partnership context. The partnership agreed with each of the recommendations and offered continued support and cooperation to form a new Communities Board to make the best use of the partnership resources in order to develop effective working with communities in Leeds.

During June and July work will be underway to form a refreshed action plan which will act as the City Priority Plan, and will rework the 4 year priorities in order to ensure our partnership work on the Best City for Communities is targeted and effective. This partnership plan will aim to be signed off in September.

A draft terms of reference was presented to the partnership, and was agreed subject to further work on the membership of the new Board and the exact make up of the sub-board partnerships.

**Cllr P Gruen**  
29 May 2013.

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Report of: **Stronger Communities Partnership**  
Report to: **Stronger Communities Partnership**  
Date: **16 May 2013**  
Subject: **Working with Communities in Leeds**

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## Executive Summary

The Safer and Stronger Communities Board has worked successfully to bring together different elements of the communities agenda in Leeds in the last 2 years. The context for working with communities has now changed however and more limited time and resources means we must focus on what will be the most effective use of our collective input.

A focused Communities Board could be an effective vehicle for partners to work together to create the conditions where communities can thrive. Through dividing the “safer” from the “stronger” we can apply more focus to the area that needs the most development and would benefit from an improvement programme.

### 1.0 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To set out a proposed strategic context for working with communities in Leeds, and to provide a set of actions that can deliver a partnership approach to working with communities. It aims to set out the need for a coherent, purposeful approach to working with and investing in communities which builds on the good work that is already taking place.
- 1.2 To present proposals in the context of service and financial pressures which require radical solutions and capable, engaged communities who are able to work in partnership, deliver services and/or take action to meet existing and emerging needs.
- 1.3 To set out proposed amendments to our existing partnership arrangements on working with communities to deliver enhanced outcomes and a smarter use of our partnership resources.

### 2.0 Background information

#### 2.1 Partnership Context: working with communities

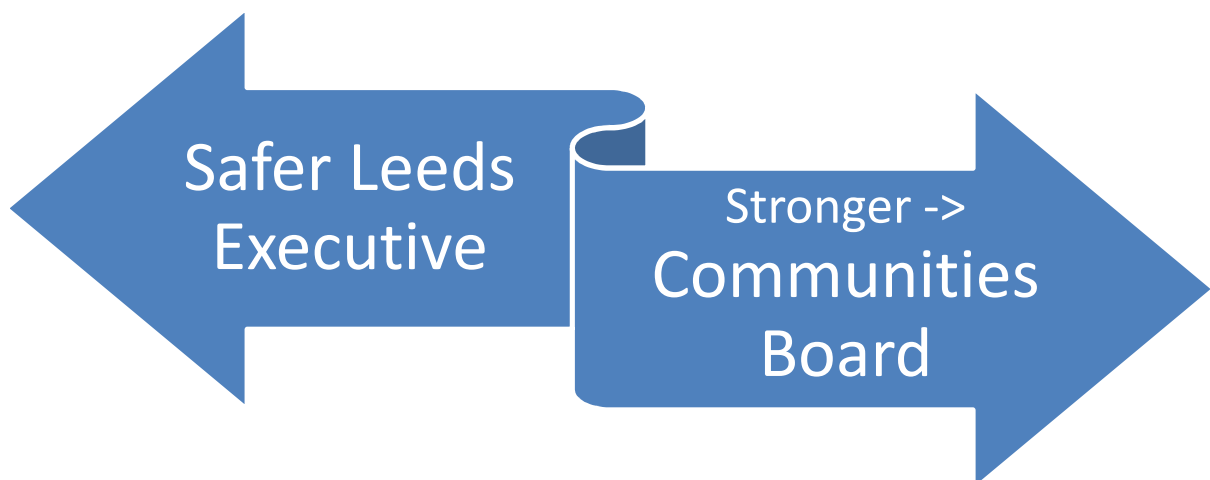
- 2.1.1 Technically, responsibility for working with communities cuts across all the Strategic Partnership Boards but there have been significant hubs of activity and leadership from the Safer and Stronger Communities Board (especially via Stronger Communities Partnership and sub-partnerships) and the former Leeds Initiative Board (via Third Sector Partnership).
- 2.1.2 The Safer and Stronger Communities Board (SSCB) has been one of the 5 city Strategic Partnership Boards<sup>1</sup> since 2011. It has responsibility for the aspects of Best City for Communities in the City Priority Plan.

- 2.1.3 The Stronger Communities Partnership is a strategic partnership that has supported the SSCB since its inception in 2011, and leads on the overarching issues of community relations and community capacity. It also is responsible for the partnership work conducted by Migration Partnership, Gypsy Traveller and Roma Strategy Group, BME Challenge Forum, and makes links with the Safeguarding Communities group that brings together work on community tension, and links with the Third Sector Partnership that leads on the relations between the city and the third sector.
- 2.1.4 The Safer Leeds Executive is the Leeds Community Safety Partnership that was embedded as part of the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act. It brings together the “responsible authorities<sup>ii</sup>” and “co-operating bodies<sup>iii</sup>” to align relevant service delivery to the three Safer Leeds commitments, ensures value for money through cost effective deployment of services and manages risks, threats and harms for the city’s communities.
- 2.1.5 The decision was taken to disband the Leeds Initiative Board in December 2012. This had previously fulfilled the role of overseeing the work of the 5 SPBs and supporting cross cutting work. This will be succeeded by the Best City Leadership Network later in 2013 that will aim to bring together relevant people from across the city to ensure effective partnership solutions. This will not however have the role of overseeing the work of the SPBs.
- 2.1.6 The Leeds City Council Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Board met in March 2013 to review the work of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board since 2011 and will report back in May 2013. Cllr Barry Anderson, Chair of the Scrutiny Board has allowed the draft copy of the report to be seen by the Stronger Communities Partnership and is included in these papers [as an appendix] in order to help with deliberations. The report largely praises the work of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board but encourages greater working with communities in the Safer and Cleaner-Greener agendas, and encourages the Stronger Communities Partnership to now action its clarified approach.
- 2.2 Changing national and local context for working with communities
- 2.2.1 The context of a renewed social contract with communities: empowering communities to share responsibility for a greater number of services, and be involved in the decisions or delivery that shape our lives, invites us to think more strategically about the way we work with communities across our partnership arrangements.
- 2.2.2 This is underlined by the context of austerity and limited funding meaning we are more than ever, required to work out the best and most efficient ways of working with communities to maximise our investment of time and resources.
- 2.2.3 The timing for a renewed partnership governance and delivery framework for working with communities is enhanced both by the changing context for work in the public sector (along the board spectrum with opportunities from the Commission for the Future of Local Government and threats from an ever decreasing financial settlement) as well as the third sector (along an equally broad spectrum of opportunities for greater involvement in public

sector delivery and threats from swingeing reductions in charitable funding and philanthropic donations).

- 2.2.4 Achieving better working with communities is essential for all partners and the needs looks only set to increase in importance as we go forward.

### 3.0 Main proposals for discussion



- 3.1 **To establish a (Working with) Communities Board to replace the existing Safer and Stronger Communities Board**
- 3.2 In the Vision 2030 and City Priority Plan 2015 there are clear outcomes for the Best City for Communities: where people are safe and feel safe, that the city is clean and welcoming, that people are active and involved in their communities and that people can get on well together. The 4 priorities in the City Priority Plan are on reducing crime (safer), tackling ASB (safer), ensuring local neighbourhoods are clean (cleaner-greener) and increasing the sense of belonging that builds cohesive and harmonious communities (stronger).
- 3.3 One of the aims in bringing together the Safer and Stronger Communities Board in 2011 was to achieve greater working across agendas: across the safer and stronger spectrum but also across our other priority areas of health and wellbeing, business, children and young people and housing and regeneration. And work across the whole safer-stronger agenda has risen to this challenge in different ways. However, it is fair to say that this has largely been initiated and successful at sub-board level: for example the work linking Health with Safer on key topics like alcohol and drugs. Or the work to look at troubled families which has been led by Children's but well supported at community (Stronger) level as well as multi-agency (Safer) level.

- 3.4 Where the Board has been less successful has been in delivering the change at community level – both in terms of outcomes and structural change. The overall ambition of the Board to be the Best City for Communities has at times been lost in the detail of performance management of each strand, or in trying to give equal weight to 3 different (and very differently resourced) strands.
- 3.5 Moving into the second half of the City Priority Plan therefore, it seems timely to reassess what the partnership can achieve, how it can allocate its resources best, how it can continue to improve in the areas where it is working well and how it can refocus its activities to set a trajectory of improvement.
- 3.6 In this context it is proposed:
- 3.6.1 **To convene a Communities Board** (or Working with Communities Board) to succeed the Safer and Stronger Communities Board. The refreshed Board could then focus on creating the conditions for the Best City for Communities which would still include elements of the safer and cleaner-greener agendas – but look specifically on how they relate to communities. The Executive Board Member and Chair would remain as Cllr Peter Gruen Executive Member, Neighbourhoods, Planning and Support Services, and the “Lead Director” would change to James Rogers, Assistant Chief Executive, Customers and Communities. A proposed Terms of Reference is included as Appendix 1, based on the existing Strategic Partnership Board standard terms.
- 3.6.2 **For the Safer Leeds Exec to remain unchanged** – to retain its function of Community Safety Partnership, and for any amendments to its make up or reporting arrangements to suit the new priorities and change in status in relation to the Police and Crime Commissioner election – to be determined by the Safer Leeds Executive itself, in conjunction with the Executive Board member and Lead Director in Environment and Neighbourhoods. Any issues about Safer Communities can still be referred to the Communities Board for support and direction, and the reporting on the Priority Indicators can still be viewed for reference and comment by the new Communities Board – but that the Safer Leeds Exec should use its own reporting arrangements currently in place for the majority of its work programme.
- 3.6.3 **To formalise the current arrangements for Cleaner Greener that these are largely Council priorities and not enhanced by a partnership board role – but rather by localised partnership working** – in agreement with the Executive Board member and Lead Director in Environment and Neighbourhoods. Similar to the position of Safer, if there are Cleaner-Greener issues that would benefit from improved working with communities, the Communities Board would be available for strategic advice and direction – but that the cleaner-greener workstream should use the reporting arrangements currently in place for the majority of its work programme.
- 3.7 **To establish a work programme and structure to support the new Communities Board**
- 3.7.1 In 2012/13 the Stronger Communities Partnership developed work to better define “stronger communities” and to highlight the areas that are most essential to building and supporting communities.

- 3.7.2 The statement that was agreed<sup>iv</sup> showed some priorities around good relations: building community capacity and resilience, supporting communities to establish their own identity and how this relates to Leeds (defining how we work with minority/ marginalised/ isolated communities) and promoting a Leeds-wide buy in to shared community values such as community spirit, neighbourliness, tolerance and celebrating difference.
- 3.7.3 At the same time some work had been underway in different forums to look at what is needed in Leeds for an approach to working with and supporting communities more generally. This has been looked at through a variety of lenses: through the locality working “design principles” and through attempts at developing a community development strategy.
- 3.7.4 Colleagues in the LCC Localities and Partnerships team, along with NHS and third sector colleagues have been developing a framework that sets out the key building blocks required for working with communities in a city and this shows some key identifiable factors to creating the best conditions for working with communities. The aim was to use this work to develop a methodology both for assessing progress but also a realistic way of getting the right support to where communities need it and investing in the right kinds of support that will be cost effective for delivering on other outcomes across the city.
- 3.7.5 The partnership agreed to set a series of objectives that could monitor progress with the overall aims to work together to ensure all communities have fair access to cultural, leisure or social space; have the right support to develop capacity to have voice and influence, have adequate protections for the vulnerable and isolated built in; have the right level of investment to build skills for independence; are connected and networked with each other across the city – to share strengths, resources and ideas and have their opinions and ideas sought out, heard and acted on wherever possible, and the diversity of these voices will be processed fairly, with cultural sensitivity and with common sense. Plans would be made recognising that not all communities are equal in the city – but we would be committed to establishing a new relationship with and between communities and wanting to ensure that all communities can have a fair chance of success.
- 3.8 In this context it is proposed:
- 3.8.1 **To develop a Board work programme** that includes:
- § Work on a “Best City for Communities” development programme.
  - § Work on a citywide approach to community relations including maintaining links with the Safeguarding Communities work.
  - § The work of the Leeds Migration Partnership.
  - § Work with the Leeds Poverty Challenge.
  - § Agreement on the development of the current strands of work of the BME Challenge (a separate update paper is included as a separate agenda item and the work of the Gypsy Traveller and Roma Strategy Group (a separate paper will be tabled at the meeting for reference).
  - § Continued linkage to the Third Sector and formally through the Third Sector Leeds Partnership.

- § Links to the Area Leadership Teams to cement locality working to the working with communities agenda.
- § Links to the Safer and Cleaner-Greener agendas, as well as links to the other Strategic Partnership Boards.

# (Working with) Communities Board



## 4.0 Implications for partnership governance

- 4.1 The Communities Board would play the role of a Strategic Partnership Board for the city and continue to comply with the partnership governance arrangements shared by all the Strategic Partnership Boards.

## 5.0 Legal and resource implications

- 5.1 A Communities Board would anticipate making better use of the partnership resources available and create opportunities for shared resources to invest in working with communities.

## 6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 That the Safer and Stronger Communities Board has worked well in its first two years – but that there is little continued benefit expected in convening it in its current form.

- 6.2 That the excellent work lead by Safer Leeds will continue unchanged, and would be expected to continue to work well with a new Communities Board and all the Strategic Partnership Boards.
- 6.3 That the good work achieved in bringing together some joint work on specific topics will continue through the new board, and specifically the workstreams on restorative practice, families first and safeguarding communities.
- 6.4 That the partnership work to support the city's outcomes for a cleaner and greener city will be most effective at local levels.
- 6.5 That a Communities Board would enhance the outcomes of all aspects of the City Priority Plan as well as raise achievement and improve outcomes on working with communities.

## **7.0 Recommendations**

- 7.1 That the Stronger Communities Partnership discusses the proposed change to partnership working arrangements.
- 7.2 That the Stronger Communities Partnership discusses the transition arrangements required to developing a new Communities Board.
- 7.3 That the Stronger Communities Partnership agrees or suggests amendments to the proposed draft terms of reference included here at Appendix 1.
- 7.4 That a small working group be appointed across partners to work on the development of a Communities Board work programme as quickly as possible.

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<sup>i</sup> The 5 SPBs are: Children's Trust Board, Health and Wellbeing Board, Sustainable Economy and Culture Board, Housing and Regeneration Board and Safer and Stronger Communities Board

<sup>ii</sup> Responsible Authorities – Leeds City Council, Leeds City Council Executive Member, NHS Airedale, Bradford and Leeds, West Yorkshire Police, West Yorkshire Police Authority, West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service, West Yorkshire Probation Trust.

<sup>iii</sup> Co-operating Bodies – Leeds Children's Trust Board, Leeds Safeguarding Children Board, Youth Offending Service, Arms Length Management Organisations (ALMOs), HM Prison Leeds.

<sup>iv</sup> Agreed statement of intent: "We want to see all Leeds' communities being strong and resilient: communities that can influence and shape the decisions that affect them; communities that can identify their own strengths and vulnerabilities; communities that mediate their own solutions to problems and know where to go to for help; and communities that are capable of withstanding the unexpected when it occurs. We want each of Leeds' communities to be able to determine their own individual identity; to be confident of where they relate to the wider city, and to buy in to the shared Leeds values of: community spirit, neighbourliness, tolerance and celebrating difference. This applies equally to communities of place and communities of identity. "Stronger communities" will come when we work together to achieve these aims."