

Report of Area Leader – East North East Leeds

Report to Outer North East Area Committee

Date: Monday 16 September 2013

Subject: Strengthening Links between Area Committee and Town and Parish Councils

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Alwoodley, Harewood Wetherby
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 Safer and Stronger Scrutiny Communities Scrutiny Board produced a report on strengthening the Council's relationship with Town and Parish Councils.
- 2 The Scrutiny Report highlights the role of Area Committees and Area Leaders in strengthening this relationship and makes recommendations on how this can be achieved.
- 3 This report outlines the arrangements in place for Outer North East Leeds which were cited as an example of good practice in the Scrutiny Report.

Recommendations

- 4 The Area Committee is asked to:
 - note the contents of the report and make comment as appropriate;
 - Endorse the revised terms of reference for the Outer North East Parish and Town Council forum attached at appendix A.

5 Purpose of this report

- 5.1 This report provides information on the relationship with Town and Parish Councils in the Outer North East area in response to the Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Report.

6 Background information

- 6.1 In October 2006 the Leeds Parish and Town Council Charter was agreed. This sets out how Leeds City Council and the local councils work together for benefit of local people and is reviewed annually.
- 6.2 The Localism Act 2011 reinforces the role of local councils, and represents a clear statement of intent from central government of its plans to devolve power to local communities.
- 6.3 In June 2012, the Executive Board Member for Neighbourhoods, Planning and Support Services made a request for Scrutiny to conduct a review of the council's relationship with local Parish and Town Councils.
- 6.4 The report outlining conclusions and recommendations from the review was formally agreed by the Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Board on 16th May 2013. The implementation of the recommendations will be monitored by the scrutiny board.

7 Main Issues

- 7.1 Outer North East Leeds has sixteen Town and Parish Councils:

Alwoodley

Alwoodley

Harewood

Aberford and District
Bardsey cum Rigton
Barwick in Elmet &
Scholes
Collingham with Linton
East Keswick
Harewood
Scarcroft
Shadwell
Thorner

Wetherby

Boston Spa
Bramham cum
Oglethorpe
Clifford
Thorp Arch
Walton
Wetherby Town
Council

- 7.2 The ENE Area Support Team maintains regular contact with these local councils which are very knowledgeable about the communities they serve.

8 Parish and Town Council Forum

- 8.1 The key means of engaging with these councils is through the Parish and Town Council forum. This forum provides an opportunity for all the parish and town councils to come together to discuss issues of common interest, and receive

presentations from guest speakers. It also provides a means for services and organisations to consult on issues, rather than having to attend individual parish and town council meetings. The meetings are well attended by both town and parish councillors and clerks.

- 8.2 Forum meetings usually last a couple of hours. Subjects for the agenda come from suggestions by ward members, or parishes, or issues which the ENE Area Support Team is aware of. The Area Officer (Outer North East) provides support for the meetings. The minutes are reported to the Outer North East Area Committee.
- 8.3 The mailing list for the forum includes all the town and parish clerks, ward members, the local MP and officers working in the area. Officers would only normally attend if they have an agenda item but by being on the mailing list they are kept informed of the discussions and key issues of interest to the parishes.
- 8.4 The forum was established in 2004 as the Harewood & Wetherby Ward Parish and Town Council Forum, chaired by Cllr Castle.
- 8.5 In 2009, it was agreed to rotate the chair around the Wetherby and Harewood ward members, with an agreement that there would be at least one member from each of the two wards in attendance at every meeting.
- 8.6 This year the forum started to include Alwoodley Parish Council. At its latest meeting on 11th July the forum adopted new terms of reference, and is now called the Outer North East Parish and Town Council forum to acknowledge that Alwoodley are now part of the forum. A copy of the terms of reference is attached at appendix A for the area committee to endorse.
- 8.7 The Scrutiny Board review recognised that the forum approach adopted in the Outer North East area has been well received by the Town and Parish Councils, the Area Committee and the Area Support team. The board acknowledged that this approach should be identified as a good practice model to promote.

9 Area Committee business plan

- 9.1 The Area Committee business plan contains information about the area committee, a forward plan of meetings, information on the wards, details of wellbeing budgets, and its priorities for the current year.
- 9.2 The Area Committee undertakes an annual refresh of the business plan, which includes reviewing the priorities. As part of the review the Town and Parish Councils are consulted on the proposed priorities for the Area Committee at the January forum meeting. All the parishes are sent a copy of the Area Committee business plan once it is finalised and signed off by the area committee.

10 Service level agreements

- 10.1 The Area Committees have delegated responsibility for Street Cleansing & Environmental Enforcement Services and negotiate a service level agreement on an annual basis. The Town and Parish Councils are consulted on the draft Environmental SLA at the forum.

10.2 The Environmental Locality Team manager attends all the forum meetings and has developed a positive relationship with all the town and parish councils. Good examples of actions being taken to support local priorities and issues include working with in-bloom groups around judging days, responses to urgent requests for example, gully cleansing and dealing with full litter bins.

11 Maximising resources

11.1 Where possible, Town and Parish Council funding is matched with area committee funding to deliver local projects. Recent examples of such projects include a residents parking scheme at Scarcroft and refurbishment of Jubilee Fields in Aberford for community use.

12 Regular Communications

12.1 In between meetings the Area Officer also circulates, by email, information which is of interest to the parishes and the communities they serve, this will include details of events, funding information, volunteering opportunities, information about Outer North East Area Committee meetings and anything else which may be of interest.

13 Corporate Considerations

13.1 Consultation and Engagement

13.1.1 The review undertaken by the scrutiny board gave an opportunity for all local councils, council officers, Area Leaders, Area Committee Chairs and the Chief Officer and Deputy Chief Officer of the Yorkshire Local Councils Association to share their experiences and opinions with the Scrutiny Board.

13.1.2 The Scrutiny paper has been discussed at the July meeting of the Town and Parish Council Forum.

13.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

13.2.1 Equality and diversity issues were considered throughout the scrutiny review and are considered when engaging with Town and Parish Councillors.

13.3 Council policies and City Priorities

13.3.2 Leeds City Council and the local councils within its area share the common belief that working closely together plays a vital contribution to the wellbeing of the communities they serve.

13.3.3 To this end, Leeds City Council and the local councils in the Leeds City Council area have a Charter which sets out how they aim to work together for the benefits of local people.

13.3.4 Leeds City Council and the local councils are committed to the principles of democratic local government. They are keen to see continued efforts made to improve our system of local democracy and to see greater public participation in and appreciation of this system.

13.4 Resources and value for money

13.4.1 There are no resource implications as a result of this report.

13.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

13.5.1 All decisions taken by the area committee in relation to the delegated functions from Executive Board are not eligible for Call In.

13.5.2 There are no key or major decisions being made that would be eligible for Call In.

13.5.3 There are no legal implications as a result of this report.

13.6 Risk Management

13.6.1 This report provides an update on work in the Outer North East area; no risks are identifiable.

14 Conclusion

14.1 The Safer and Stronger Scrutiny Communities Scrutiny Board Report has produced a report on strengthening the Council's relationship with Town and Parish Councils. The forum approach is acknowledged as an example of good practice. This has been discussed at the Outer North East Parish and Town Council forum.

15 Recommendations

15.1 The Area Committee is asked to:

note the contents of the report and make comment as appropriate;

Endorse the revised terms of reference for the Outer North East Parish and Town Council forum attached at appendix A.

16 Background documents¹

[Scrutiny Board \(Safer and Stronger Communities\) - Strengthening the Council's relationship with local Parish and Town Councils, 16th May 2013](#)

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available for inspection on request for a period of four years following the date of the relevant meeting. Accordingly this list does not include documents containing exempt or confidential information, or any published works. Requests to inspect any background documents should be submitted to the report author.