

Report of Area Leader – South East Leeds

Report to East Leeds (Outer) Area Committee

Date: Tuesday 15th October 2013

Subject: Strengthening the Relationship between Area Committee and Parish Councils

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| Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Garforth & Swillington Kippax & Methley |
| 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

It presents the Safer and Stronger Scrutiny Board Report on strengthening the Council's relationship with Town and Parish Councils.

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.

This report outlines options on how the recommendations from the scrutiny report could be achieved in the Outer East.

Recommendations

The Area Committee is asked to;

- a) Note the contents of the report and make comment as appropriate
- b) Discuss and agree to the actions that aim to strengthen links with Parish Councils in the Outer East, outlined in 3.3.

1.0 **Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 This report presents the Safer and Stronger Scrutiny Board Report on strengthening the Councils relationship with Town and Parish Councils.
- 1.2 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.
- 1.3 This report outlines options on how the recommendations from the scrutiny report could be achieved in Outer East Area.

2 **Background information**

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 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.
- 2.3 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.
- 2.4 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.

3 **Main issues**

- 3.1 The following are examples of good links between the Outer East Area Committee and local councils:
 - Area Committee Members have a good relationship with Parish and Town Councils in their area.
 - Kippax Parish Council leading on the Kippax Neighbourhood Plan.
 - Officer from AST member of Micklefield Regeneration Forum, a branch of the Parish Council.
 - Outer East Parish Councillors have regular contact from AST Officers, an 'open door policy'.
 - As recommended in the Scrutiny report, Members already have 'meaningful dialogue' where Elected Members and local councillors discuss issues of common interest, share information and good practise through village forums. Representatives from all Parish Councils are invited to relevant village forum. (Garforth and Swillington Forum meet four times and year and Kippax and Methley Forum meet twice a year).

- Ward Members have regular contact with parish councils, by meeting with the Chairs of parish councils and attending local council meetings.
- Area Committee support Kippax Parish Council on town centre regeneration.
- Wellbeing funding allocated to projects that local councils either manage or involved with e.g. Christmas events
- Active coordination of Area Committees and local council funding to achieve more, e.g. Allerton Bywater sensory garden, environmental walkway at Billy Wood, Kippax and a number of environmental improvement schemes throughout Micklefield.
 - Ward Members and local councils work together to secure funding from external organisations for community projects e.g. funding received from Caird Bardon towards Swillington playground.
 - Outer East Area Committee meetings held in locality, reports are locally focused and Chair is meeting with Area Leads to identify local priorities.

3.2 The Scrutiny Report recognises that both Area Committees and local councils have a key role in providing strong local leadership. Seven of the twelve recommendations are focus for the Area Committee and Area Leader. These are:

Recommendation 3 – That local councils and Area Committees give a commitment to work closely together to develop clear pathways and protocols that will enable open and meaningful dialogue on matters that have specific impact on their communities.

That Area Leaders take the lead on developing these clear pathways and protocols and report progress back to Scrutiny by December 2013.

Recommendation 4 – That the Council's Assistant Chief Executive (Customer Access and Performance) promotes the following as good practice amongst Area Committees:

- The development of a forward work programme and identification of a major 'theme' or 'topic' for each area committee meeting
- That Area Committee reports include a separate section indicating any potential local impacts or challenges

Recommendation 5 – That Area Leaders ensure that input is sought from local councils as part of any future area based delegation scheme and particularly around the negotiation of Service Level Agreements.

Recommendation 7 – That Area Leaders proactively work with local councils and Area Committees to identify opportunities for maximising available resources to best meet the needs of their local communities.

Recommendation 8

- (i) That local councils are proactive in promoting volunteering initiatives and encouraging people to take an active role within their community.
- (ii) That the Council's Assistant Chief Executive (Customer Access and Performance) and Chief Officer Localities and Partnerships lead on actively supporting approaches made by local councils for any advice and assistance directly associated with local voluntary initiatives.

Recommendation 9 – That the three Area Leaders actively promote partnership working with local councils as part of the integrated locality working agenda in the three wedges of East North East, West North West and South East.

Recommendation 11 – That Area Leaders work closely with Area Chairs to ensure that Area Committees continue to monitor their relationships with local councils in order to identify strengths and potential areas for improvement.

3.3 Implementing the Recommendations

- 3.3.1 A number of links have been outlined in 3.1 and it is assumed that where appropriate these would continue to function. Members are asked to consider agreeing to the actions outlined in the table below to build on the work already being achieved.

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| Strategic | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Add targets in the Area Committee Business Plan and AST Service Plan to show commitment to strengthening links.• Area Committee Chair annually meets with each local council and Area Support Team to discuss Area Committee Business Plan and local council priorities and projects.• Identify opportunities for maximising resources to best meet the needs of communities. |
| Communication | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Forward Plan of Area Committee reports to be shared with Parish and Town Councils.• Electronic link sent to local council clerks to access Area Committee reports online.• Dates, times and venues of Area Committees circulated to local councils.• Area Committee newsletters be sent to local councils to raise profile of work achieved. |
| Consultation | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Area Committee to seek views from local councils on annual Environmental Services SLA and other delegations as appropriate. |
| Supporting | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to support local councils who wish to undertake neighbourhood planning.• Continue to strive for Area Committee reports that are locally focused, especially to ward level. Area Support Team (AST) challenge services to provide this, rather than having a section within the report to look at local impacts or challenges as scrutiny recommendation suggests. |

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1.1 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.
- 4.1.2 Area Leader discussed the scrutiny paper at the South East Chairs Briefing on Friday 24th May. Area Support Team officer meet with Outer East Area Committee chair who agreed for the report to be introduced at Area Committee for discussion.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 4.2.1 Equality and diversity issues were considered throughout the scrutiny review and in the presentation of options to the Area Committee and where appropriate an Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken.

4.3 Council policies and City Priorities

- 4.3.1 The projects outlined in this report contribute to targets and priorities set out in the following council policies:
- Vision For Leeds
 - Children and Young Peoples Plan
 - Health and Well being City Priority Plan
 - Safer and Stronger Communities Plan
 - Regeneration City Priority Plan

4.4 Resources and value for money

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

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 4.5.1 All decisions taken by the Area Committee in relation to the delegated functions from Executive Board are not eligible for Call In.
- 4.5.2 There are no key or major decisions being made that would be eligible for Call In.
- 4.5.3 There are no legal implications as a result of this report.

4.6 Risk Management

- 4.6.1 This report provides an update on work in the Outer East and therefore no risks are identifiable.

5 Conclusion

- 5.1 There are several examples of how the Area Committee and Parish Councils are already working well together to the benefit of the local communities. By Members agreeing to the new actions outlined in 3.3, it strengthens the work already being achieved and demonstrates to the scrutiny board how Outer East Area Committee has responded to their recommendations.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 The Area Committee is asked to;
- a) Note the contents of the report and make comment as appropriate
 - b) Discuss and agree to the actions that aim to strengthen links with Parish Councils in the Outer East, outlined in 3.3.

7 Background documents¹

- 7.1 There are no background documents associated with this paper.

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.