

**Area Chairs Forum
Friday 6th September 2013
Committee Room 4, Civic Hall**

Attendance:

Councillors: P. Gruen (Chair), S. Hamilton, G. Wilkinson, P. Wadsworth, C. Gruen, J. Jarosz.

Officers: J. Rogers, K. Kudelnitzky, S. Mahmood, J. Maxwell, S. Hughes

Minutes: S. Warbis

Attending for specific items: S. Wimsett

Item	Description	Action
1.0	Apologies	
1.1	Cllr Asghar Khan, Cllr Andrea McKenna, Cllr Karen Bruce, Cllr Javaid Akhtar, Rory Barke	
2.0	Minutes and Matters Arising	
2.1	The minutes of the previous Area Chairs Forum meeting on 28 th June 2013 were agreed as an accurate record.	
2.2	<u>2.2 of previous minutes - Health</u> Cllr Mulherin and Ian Cameron to attend the next meeting on 11 th October.	
2.3	<u>2.3 of previous minutes – Youth Service Engagement</u> Cllr C. Gruen has been involved in youth consultation. A consultation board is being set up which will attempt to represent youth across the area and not merely established youth groups.	
2.4	A youth council has been set up in Wetherby Town in the North East Outer Area involving Cllr Lamb as the Children’s Area Lead Member.	
2.5	Cllr Hamilton has had discussions regarding the Youth Service delegation in her area.	
2.6	Cllr Wadsworth mentioned that the young people sub group had met and there were good signs that school clusters were coming on board and reporting into the sub group.	
2.7	Concerns were raised over provision for 8-13 year olds following the removal of specific national funding aimed at this group.	
2.8	It was mentioned that appointments would shortly be made in the Youth Services restructuring and that Area Chairs should get in touch with panels to express the needs for their areas.	Area Chairs
3.0	Waste Policies – Engagement with Members	
3.1	This item was removed from the meeting agenda. Confirmation will be sought on how this engagement will take place, either through this meeting or through Environment Area Lead Members.	Sarn Warbis
4.0	Area Committee’s Annual Report to Full Council	
4.1	Anne McMaster brought a draft copy of the Area Committee’s Annual Report to Full Council to the meeting for comment / amendment. The report needs to be finalised by midday on Monday 9 th September to meet deadlines for submission to the Full Council meeting on Wednesday 11 th .	

- 4.2 The report expands on the report that was brought to the Area chairs Forum meeting on 3rd May outlining the achievements of Area Committees in 2012/13 and looking at the challenges ahead. The report aims to highlight good work and best practice and demonstrate the wide ranging use of wellbeing funds and the additionality that is achieved as a result.
- 4.3 It was felt that this was an opportunity to place the work of Area Committees higher up the agenda for full council. Figures show that last year there was a return on investment of £2.50 for every £1 spent through wellbeing funding which was a great achievement.
- 4.4 The report tries to capture action taken against recommendations in the review of area working and also to demonstrate how Area Committee work is addressing the city priorities by using a range of case studies. It does not attempt to capture all of the work that has taken place. The report also covers future challenges.
- 4.5 Comments on the report were invited from Area Chairs and Cllr P Gruen particularly asked if there were any pieces of work that Area Chairs were particularly proud of that had not been included in the case studies submitted so far. It was not possible to include all work carried out and it was pointed out that attempts were being made to include a balanced selection of case studies that reflected good work across all ten Area Committees.
- 4.6 It was pointed out that deadlines were tight to submit the final report for the full council meeting on Wednesday 11th September and that any comments or additions needed to be submitted to Anne McMaster by midday on Monday 9th.

5.0 Report on Area Committee Working Arrangements

- 5.1 Sally Wimsett, Policy and Performance Manager – Citizens and Communities, attended with a report on delivering the area working review recommendations regarding Area Committee working arrangements. This also took into account views gathered during the recent Area Chairs work-shop.
- 5.2 It was pointed out that meetings with the recently appointed Area Lead Members, relevant Executive Board Members, and key service officers had been arranged. The first meeting regarding environment and community safety had taken place this week and had gone well. It was agreed that these would be reported back on at the next Area Chairs Forum meeting.
- 5.3 It has been agreed that there needs to be a long term vision for Area Committees, which includes consideration of moving towards a “community Council” type approach, but there are also some short term fixes that can be applied.
- 5.4 One of the issues is that there is no common understanding of an agreed corporate process for setting Area Committee agendas. It was felt that this needed to be in place and followed up.
- 5.5 Public attendance at meetings and the profile of Area Committees needs to be improved. This is not just about broadcasting what we are doing, but about linking in with local groups and networks to set agendas that are of interest locally.
- 5.6 It was stressed that care needed to be taken to ensure that Area Committees weren’t seen as just another layer of bureaucracy. Emphasis should be placed on the added value that Area committees achieve locally when publicising their work.
- 5.7 It was pointed out that currently Area Committees receive attendance when

**Kathy
Kudelnitzky**

they were allocating funding, but there is a difficulty in encouraging attendance otherwise. Agendas regarding specific local issues could improve this.

- 5.8 It was also mentioned that, although there had been improvement in some recent reports, generally papers received by Area Committees were still too full of "council speak" and were not engaging, or even understandable in some cases, to members of the public. It was recognised that in some cases reports were dealing with abstract concepts which were hard to express simply, but that there should be an attempt to make reports more accessible. There was also common agreement that papers need to be shorter.
- 5.9 It was raised that the name "Area Committee" did not mean anything to the public and that the term itself does not attract attendance. Previous "forums" were better attended and the name should be reconsidered.
- 5.10 It was raised that the name "Community Council" was being considered and Area Chairs were invited to provide any alternative suggestions. It was raised that geographical labelling of Area Committees such as North East Outer, West Inner etc. did not mean anything to the public. Place names would be more easily understood, although it was agreed that this could prove difficult due to the wide boundaries of Area Committees.
- 5.11 It was suggested that dates of meetings should be publicised to local groups and that contact lists should be used more effectively. It was pointed out that this would be made easier if meetings were scheduled more regularly i.e. first Tuesday of alternative months. It was pointed out that there could be problems with this approach regarding member availability due to the range of other scheduled meetings in the council diary, however it was felt that this should be explored. This will be included in the work to address practical issues such as agenda setting, attendance, venues, publicity etc.
- 5.12 It was raised that communities should be aware of where money is coming from for projects in their areas. It was suggested that there should be a common "Area Committee" logo that could be used on leaflets, banners etc. It was pointed out that North East Outer had already used a plaque stating that improvements had been funded by local ward members.
- 5.13 It was suggested that there should be a requirement for funded projects to reference Area Committees when publicising funded work. It was also suggested that there should be a requirement for Area Teams to see proofs of promotional material.
- 5.14 It was suggested that a menu of options for promoting Area Committee work should be available to be used as is appropriate.
- 5.15 It was pointed out that Area Team officers from East North East are meeting with colleagues from the Communications team next week and that these areas will be followed up. It was also raised that generally officers in services needed to make more use of the expertise in the communications team.
- 5.16 The report was welcomed by the Area Chairs Forum.

6.0 Scrutiny Report – Strengthening the Council’s Relationships with Parish and Town Councils

- 6.1 Kathy Kudelnitzky brought a report detailing actions coming out of the scrutiny report on strengthening the council’s relationship with Parish and Town Councils.
- 6.2 Area Chairs were content with work to progress on the agreed actions.

7.0 Any Other Business

7.1 Health

- 7.2 Jane Maxwell referred to the Inner West Improvement Board meeting that had taken place the previous day. Working relationships are good in the West they are now looking at how the commissioning of local work can be influenced locally.
- 7.3 The Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) has £100k to use to improve access to services at an early stage, and are now looking beyond merely addressing health symptoms, and are recognising a need to address the underlying causes such as welfare, debt etc.
- 7.4 This is linking in with work that other agencies are carrying out and there is a subtle move towards an informal community budget model which may be strengthened in the future.
- 7.5 Cllr C. Gruen mentioned that where long term objectives are being set it is sometimes difficult to prove outcomes. There are positive signs that shared objectives are leading to cross boundary working, and that there is an understanding now of the external factors that can affect health.
- 7.6 It was pointed out that the Improvement Board was linked to the Area Committee and that partners would be coming back to the Area Committee shortly for a health themed meeting.

7.7 Welfare Reform

- 7.8 Sharon Hughes mentioned the work being carried out in the East North East area to address welfare reforms. The group that has been brought together has led to a better understanding of the cross cutting themes involved and has led to more co-ordinated approaches in this area.

7.9 Employment and Skills

- 7.10 Shaid Mahmood raised the focus that has been put on this theme in the South East area. The Area Committee Employment and Skills group, chaired by Cllr Groves is looking at addressing the breakdown in pathways to success.
- 7.11 A job shop has recently been opened in the St George's centre and there is also a credit union presence. Part of the success of this has been drawing in central support to enable the local ambitions to be realised.

7.12 Middleton Regeneration Framework

- 7.13 This links to the Neighbourhood Improvement Board and has enabled work to be carried out in areas that make sense to the community, linking parts of Belle Isle and Middleton. They are creating a master plan for buildings in the area and accelerating local activity.

7.14 NEETS

- 7.15 Cllr Wilkinson mentioned work that is going on in Outer North East with local businesses following a decision to provide support to all NEETs in the area rather than focusing on one or two apprenticeship opportunities. Local businesses are linking into local high schools and are providing work experience 1 day per week over a period of time, rather than a one off weeks placement, and this is leading to wider gaining of experience and has led to at least one permanent job appointment.

7.16 Area Committee Delegations

7.17 Cllr Wilkinson mentioned that after the successful environmental delegation, and the work being undertaken on the Youth Service delegation, the North East Outer Area Committee would like Planning Enforcement to be considered for the next delegation. Cllr P. Gruen agreed to explore this with officers in the Planning service.

**Cllr P.
Gruen**

7.18 Budgets

7.19 Cllr P. Gruen has asked for finance to report on how much has been spent of the budget that was carried over from last year identified as committed to existing projects.

7.20 Area Committees have been encouraged in the past to consider sharing money between each other where there are balances that can be used in other areas. Cllr P. Gruen also referred to the rules regarding school budgets where it is only permissible for a set percentage of the budget to be carried from one year to the next. Area Chairs were urged to examine their budgets as we approach the halfway point in the financial calendar.

Area Chairs

7.21 Items for the next meeting

- Health – Cllr Mulherin / Ian Cameron
- Targeted Youth Work update – Ken Morton
- Feedback from Area Lead Members meetings – Kathy Kudelnitzky
- Detailed report on added value from well-being spending – Shaid Mahmood

8.0 Date of Next Meeting

8.1 Friday 11th October 2013, 14:00 – 16:00, Committee Room 4 - Civic Hall