

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

Attendance:

Councillors: P. Gruen (Chair), A. Khan, S. Hamilton, G. Wilkinson, A McKenna, A. Gabriel, K. Bruce, J. Akhtar, P. Wadsworth, C. Gruen,.

Officers: J. Rogers, K. Kudelnitzky, R. Barke, S. Mahmood, J. Maxwell

Minutes: S. Warbis

Attending for specific items: C. Dickinson, S. Wimsett, K. Morton

Item	Description	Action
1.0	Apologies	
1.1	Cllr J. Jarosz	
2.0	Minutes and Matters Arising	
2.1	<u>2.4 of previous minutes</u> It was clarified that the Youth Council set up in the North East Outer area was for the Wetherby area.	
2.2	The minutes of the previous Area Chairs Forum meeting on 6 th September 2013 were agreed as an accurate record subject to the above addition.	
2.3	<u>3.1 of previous minutes</u> It is the intention now for initial discussions around waste policies to take place with Environmental Area Lead Members. Part of these discussions will be about the best route to widen discussions with Area Committees.	
2.4	<u>7.17 of previous minutes</u> Cllr Peter Gruen has had discussions with Philip Crabtree, Chief Planning Officer, around the potential for planning enforcement to form part of a delegation to Area Committees. Philip Crabtree is receptive to the idea and a protocol will be drawn up for discussion on how these matters should be taken to Area Committees.	
3.0	Wellbeing Fund – Added Value / Carried Forward Projects	
3.1	Area Leaders brought a report which detailed the added value drawn in through wellbeing funding during 2010-13. A previous piece of work had been carried out regarding capital funding and this paper deals with revenue funding.	
3.2	Wellbeing revenue funding has been used to achieve 5 main benefits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing community capacity and pride • Sealing the deal for local projects • Acting as the spur to instigate local activity and gain leverage • Implementing planned targeted local actions • Supporting council departments and partners 	
3.3	Over the 3 years the wellbeing fund has drawn in an additional £2 for every £1 spent. Over the last 12 months this has risen to £2.50 for every £1. Due to different models of activity in each area it is difficult to compare levels of additionality between Area Committees, but it is possible to see a year on year improvement in returns for Area Committees. Overall a good return is being achieved but there is still scope to improve on this through discussions with	

Area Chairs and Area Committees.

- 3.4 Cllr Peter Gruen commented that the added value was clear but was interested in assessing impact and particularly gauging what would not have happened without the support of wellbeing funding. Area chairs provided examples of projects that would not have thrived without wellbeing funding. These included:
- Beeston Festival – initial funding allowed the festival to develop into what is now an established event
 - Bramley Baths – initial pump priming has allowed the facility to become self sustaining
 - Wetherby in Support of the Elderly – now had it's 10th anniversary but initial support, including the purchase of a vehicle, allowed the group to establish itself with approximately 150 volunteers involved
 - In bloom groups in North West Outer receiving support now sponsorship is becoming harder to find
 - Events in Rothwell such as the festival, may day and Christmas events, and older people events supported through wellbeing funds
 - Burmantofts gala established this year
 - Chapel Allerton arts festival
 - International older peoples week
- 3.5 The recommendations in the report include amendments to the application and evaluation forms, to capture more accurately information on match funding and in kind contributions. Figures for the past 3 years show that 80% of the projects supported would not have taken place without wellbeing funding.
- 3.6 It was agreed that these successes needed to be captured and publicised more effectively in the future.
- 3.7 Area Leaders then brought a report outlining the progress of wellbeing projects that were carried forward from the previous year.
- 3.8 Shaid Mahmood highlighted that Outer East Area Committee had carried forward £29k of funded projects and had a projected underspend against these of £140. Outer South had carried forward £10.5k and had a projected underspend of £50. Inner South had a 2 year plan to carry forward £136k and were projected to have a balance of £21k in March 2014 and an underspend of £5k which will go back into the pot.
- 3.9 Rory Barke reported that there was a hugely better position in his area than previous years due to a lot of effort by members and officers. Inner East have a projected spend of £84k from £110k with £16k to reallocate to other schemes. Outer North East carried forward £44k and have a planned £24k spend with £20k allocated to the Wetherby Development Fund. Inner North East carried forward £39k and have a projected balance of £820.
- 3.10 Jane Maxwell reported that Inner North West carried forward £41k and will have a balance of just under £3k which is being discussed with members at the moment. Outer North West carried forward £113k and are projected to have a zero balance. Inner West carried forward £27k and are projected to have a zero balance. Outer West carried forward £7k and are projected to have a balance of £2k which is under discussion at the moment.
- 3.11 Area Chairs mentioned several problems that had occurred in releasing allocated funding to the Highways Department due to curious financial rules being applied, logistical problems with projects and changes to specifications. It was also raised that there had been problems dealing with Highways on member case work.

- 3.12 It was agreed that Gary Bartlett, Chief Officer Highways and Transportation, would be invited to the next Area Chairs Forum meeting to discuss some of these issues.

4.0 Area Lead Members

- 4.1 Kathy Kudelnitzky, Chief Officer – Communities, provided an update on work taking place to embed and develop the Area Lead Member roles.
- 4.2 Meetings have taken place with Executive Board Members, Area Lead Members and relevant service officers for the “Environment and Community Safety” and “Employment Skills and Welfare” lead members. A workshop had taken place for the “Health and Wellbeing” lead members. Meetings will be taking place shortly for “Children’s” and “Adult Social Care”. Notes and actions from the two meetings that have taken place were circulated.
- 4.3 Area Chairs were asked how they could see the roles progressing and also how they were linking in with their Area Lead Members at this early stage. Different approaches have been adopted in different areas including one to one meetings (which are proving time consuming) and group meetings being arranged prior to Area Committee meetings. In some cases Chairs were delaying until the executive member meetings have taken place.
- 4.4 Cllr Peter Gruen stressed that support for the Area Lead Member roles should predominantly come from the services and not the area teams. This support should involve briefings to Area Lead Members on national, citywide and local issues. It was felt that in the past for the champion roles there were different experiences in different areas and that there needed to be consistency of support in all areas. Area Chairs need to make Cllr Peter Gruen aware if they feel that support is not forthcoming.
- 4.5 Kathy Kudelnitzky will be maintaining contact with service leads to iron out issues as they arise.

5.0 Corporate Communications / Area Committees

- 5.1 Colin Dickinson, Communications Officer, attended with a report outlining support available to Area Committees from the corporate communications press team.
- 5.2 Assistance can be given to address some of the issues raised in the review of area working such as advertising / promoting committee meetings, raising awareness of the role of the area committees, engaging the public around local issues and priorities, publicising area committee actions and crediting members’ input and financial support.
- 5.3 It is clear that this links into the wider aims for enhancing Area Committees and Kathy Kudelnitzky, Chief Officer – Communities, distributed a timeline for shorter term improvements to Area Committee business and also a timeline for establishing a “community council” model.
- 5.4 The issue of branding was raised and it was felt that using the LCC branding alone did not provide enough credit for the local input of members and Area Committees.
- 5.5 It was mentioned that Area Chairs should be issuing a press statement after each meeting to promote progress and decision making. These are already being produced by Area Teams but it was felt that assistance and guidance from Corporate Communications would be useful in this area.

5.6 It was stressed that as well as promoting individual successes, more work needed to be done to gain an understanding from the public of the role of Area Committees, the strategic work that is carried out, and how the public can influence this. Colin Dickinson stated that he was the contact for Area Committees if they needed wider issues to be promoted or publicised.

5.7 It was pointed out that significant support from the Communications Team would be needed if the council is to successfully change the identity of Area Committees. Questions were raised as to whether the team had the capacity to achieve this or if extra resources needed to be called upon. It was agreed that James Rogers would have discussions with Corporate Communications over capacity issues.

**James
Rogers**

5.8 There needs to be a move to more modern methods of publicity to include new social media. It was raised that the use of photographs would be more likely to interest the media, but that support would be needed to do this most effectively. It was mentioned that large organisations have a tendency to try to control messages. We need to be quicker and more spontaneous. Use of twitter, face-book and youtube can provide instant publicity opportunities.

5.9 It was suggested that more emphasis could be placed on community charters and the "you said – we did" model of updating the public. It was also suggested that more onus should be placed on partner organisations to publicise the support that they receive from Area Committees. This should include linking in with organisations that have their own publicity circulation. Also community radio stations can be a good way of providing local information.

5.10 It was also pointed out that more effort needed to be put in to reaching hard to reach communities such as those where English is not widely spoken.

5.11 It was agreed that Kathy Kudelnitzky would have a discussion with Colin Dickinson and Sally Wimsett to explore the short term and strategic approach to communications.

**Kathy
Kudelnitzky**

6.0 Youth Services

6.1 Ken Morton, Head of Service Young People and Skills, attended to provide an update on the Youth Service restructure and delegation to Area Committees.

6.2 It was pointed out that for the delegation to be successful the service would need to identify and make available officers to provide support and information to elected members. The Area Teams don't have the capacity or detailed knowledge to provide support on their own. Ken assured the meeting that the service is aware of the support needs required.

6.3 Ken Morton is in the process of meeting all Area Chairs within the three areas to discuss their particular needs. The service is also engaged with the scrutiny working group to establish what is "good youth work" and how this can be achieved. This work is also looking at targeted breeze activities and discussions and findings will be fed back to the Children's Area Leads.

6.4 Meetings have taken place within the service, and are taking place next week with the current third sector providers, to explain the new Area Committee client role. Area Chairs and Area Leads will be made aware of the existing external contracts that are in place within their areas.

6.5 The restructuring of the in-house service is well underway although some employee issues have cropped up which need to be dealt with. Middle manager appointments have been made and these details will be provided to Area Chairs. There may be a slight delay, approximately a week, before

appointments for the full team are made. This information will also be provided to Area Chairs before the end of the month.

- 6.6 Discussions with Area Chairs will provide transparency over staffing, resources available and contracts already in place in each patch. More detailed discussions can take place over deployment, commissioning issues and the appropriate mechanism for an ongoing dialogue with the Area Committees. Ken Morton will broker the relevant parties to be involved in local discussions.
- 6.7 Ken Morton will agree a timeline with the Area Leaders which can be worked up into a 2 year framework. Options for Area Committees will range from subtle improvements to a significant shake up of provision.
- 6.8 Area Chairs requested draft papers in advance of the meetings being arranged to allowed considered input to the discussions.
- 6.9 It was suggested that a timetable of meetings needed to be arranged locally with officers in Children's Services and Area Chairs.

7.0 Any Other Business

- 7.1 It was mentioned that Cllr Mulherin and Ian Cameron had been due to attend this meeting but due to the change of date of the meeting, and their commitments to an international visit, they were unable to attend. It was asked that they be invited to a future meeting. **Sarn Warbis**
- 7.2 A detailed report on this year's wellbeing spend at the half year stage will be brought to the next meeting.
- 7.3 A draft protocol for recording meetings of committees, boards and panels was circulated. This had been provided by Andy Hodson, Head of Governance Services and is being considered by General Purposes Committee at the end of October. Area Chairs were invited to provide any comments in advance of this meeting to Andy Hodson. Sarn Warbis will email the draft protocol to Area Chairs and ask for comments to be passed to Andy Hodson. It was pointed out that approval to record meetings is currently agreed by the chair of each meeting, and that although generally permission should be granted, chairs need to be mindful of confidential items. **Sarn Warbis**

8.0 Date of Next Meeting

- 8.1 Monday 25th November 2013, 13:30 – 15:30, Committee Room 4, Civic Hall