

**Area Chairs Forum  
Monday 25 November 2013  
Committee Room 1, Civic Hall**

**Attendance:**

Councillors: K. Bruce, C. Gruen, P. Gruen (CHAIR), S. Hamilton, J. Jarosz, A. Khan, A. McKenna, P. Wadsworth.

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

Minutes: J. Sharp

Attending for specific items: Cllr L. Mulherin, Ian Cameron, Gary Bartlett, Sally Wimsett, Chief Superintendent Paul Money, Liz Jarmin

<b>Item</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>1.0</b>	<b>Apologies</b>	
1.1	Cllr Javaid Akhtar, Cllr Angela Gabriel, Cllr Gerald Wilkinson, Jane Maxwell.	
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Minutes and Matters Arising</b>	
2.1	The minutes of the previous Area Chairs Forum meeting on 4 October 2013 were agreed as an accurate record.	
2.2	<u>3.12 of previous minutes - Highways</u> Gary Bartlett, Chief Officer Highways & Transportation, was invited to the meeting and is on today's agenda.	
2.3	<u>4.0 of previous minutes - Area Lead Members</u> Cllr P. Wadsworth expressed concerns over potential duplication of roles, particularly where active sub groups were taking work forward. It was suggested that future meetings of lead members should be put in diaries for the full year.	
2.4	<u>5.7 + 5.11 of previous minutes - Communications</u> Cllr P. Gruen noted that the idea behind changing the name / format of the Area Committees is to make them more accessible and meaningful to the public.  Cllr A. Khan raised the issue of press releases. James Rogers suggested revisiting the protocols in light of the new Area Lead Member roles. Cllr P. Gruen encouraged press releases from Area Chairs and Area Lead Members to highlight the activities of Area Committees.	
2.5	<u>7.1 of previous minutes - Health</u> Cllr L. Mulherin and Ian Cameron were invited to the meeting and are on today's agenda.	
2.6	<u>7.3 of the previous minutes - protocol for recording meetings</u> Sarn Warbis emailed the draft protocol for recording Area Chairs committees to all Area Chairs. Comments were forwarded to Andy Hodson on 4 October 2013. It was pointed out that further guidance / regulation was likely to come from central government and that Leeds City Council will need to develop their own arrangements in light of this.	
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Public Health</b>	
3.1	Cllr L. Mulherin distributed copies of 'Revised Proposals to Strengthen Area Health and Wellbeing Arrangements 2013-15'. This paper contains proposals to strengthen the Area Health and Wellbeing arrangements. Each Area Committee has identified a health lead; the three Area Support teams have an area Public Health team working closely with them.	

- 3.2 Cllr P. Gruen asked what the key issues were. Cllr L. Mulherin mentioned the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Key commitments are: longer and healthier lives (i.e. address lifestyle via a reduction of smoking, a reduction of alcohol consumption and increasing exercise; mental health and wellbeing; health related aspects of healthy and sustainable communities).

There is also a desire to work more closely with Children's Centres which currently fall outside the NHS health remit and also to support older people to live independently.

- 3.3 The health agenda links closely with other agendas such as tackling poverty and worklessness and there needs to be coordination across agendas and links between the different boards and themed partnership arrangements.
- 3.4 Different arrangements exist in different areas to meet local needs. This is a sensible approach but there needs to be sharing of successes and good practice between the areas.
- 3.5 Ian Cameron noted that there needs to be a contribution made towards city priorities at an area level and to align local issues. The Area Lead Members will be crucial to provide feedback on the impact of initiatives at a local level.
- 3.6 Cllr L. Mulherin said it was important to forge effective working partnerships between the council, NHS, other partners and the third sector. Cllr L. Mulherin asked for examples of where collaboration is not working well, to be reported back to her.
- 3.7 Cllr A. McKenna mentioned an audit of GP practices in East Outer Area Committee and frank discussions were taking place over local issues. Because the role of the Area Lead Member for Health covers such a wide scope, in East Outer they are concentrating on one or two key issues at a time and will move on to other areas in turn.
- 3.8 Cllr C. Gruen said that a working group has been set up in West Inner which involves GPs, other health professionals and youth workers, to try explore local connections and determine shared local priorities.
- 3.9 Rory Barke mentioned work in East to co-produce facilities with GPs and the third sector. They are also investigating a possible centre for excellence in East Leeds. There is also work to encourage people with coughs to go for a health check-up at Seacroft Hospital.
- 3.10 Cllr P. Gruen asked Ian Cameron if there might be any funding to support the Area Support teams. Ian Cameron mentioned that the majority of local funding is towards commissioned services and there is still some uncertainty over the role of the local authority relating to this. Commissioning options will be looked at and Area Committees should have some role in this in the future.
- 3.11 Cllr L. Mulherin noted that a lot of work is commissioned via the third sector and that there might be an opportunity for Area Lead members to review the success of current contracts to inform future decisions. Rory Barke added that investing in the third sector is an important part of building effective neighbourhoods and that local Cllrs have a contribution to make with this agenda.

#### **4.0 Highways**

- 4.1 A briefing note was distributed with the meeting papers: 'Highways Local Road Maintenance Programme'. Gary Bartlett explained that the purpose of the paper is to outline the process of consultation for the highway maintenance local road programme for 2014/15 (and beyond) and to ensure that the delivery of the programme during 2014 is aligned to local needs.

- 4.2 Gary Bartlett explained that Highways assigns a three-year programme of road maintenance. He explained that it is difficult to plan beyond three years because the maintenance priority of roads will change during this period, i.e. a road not on the three year plan might become high priority by the end of that period due to general deterioration and /or the weather. Maintenance teams will carry out a visual / technical examination and road maintenance is listed by priority need. There is, however, flexibility for members to change the order / priority of repairs and their input is sought each year on this basis
- 4.3 Cllr P. Wadsworth questioned the strategy for kerbs when roads are repaired. He feels that good kerbs are often removed unnecessarily. Also members need more information on when remedial work will be completed to be able to keep residents up to date.
- 4.4 There was a discussion about potholes. Cllr P. Gruen felt that the general public perception was that potholes are repaired inadequately. Gary Bartlett said that budget restrictions limit the scope of some repairs and that some maintenance work is carried out to tackle immediate issues and not long term solutions. Dangerous potholes are given a temporary fix within 24 hours of being reported. More permanent repairs can mean work taking place on much larger areas of road and therefore need to be planned.
- 4.5 Cllr A. Khan expressed concerns that not enough consultation appears to take place, regarding the road maintenance lists that are sent to Cllrs.
- 4.6 Both Cllr C. Gruen and Cllr S. Hamilton expressed concerns at the length of time it takes to get a response when issues are raised. Sometimes, there is no response at all. Gary Bartlett said that the performance indicators for his teams' response times to correspondence are 90% to 100% so he wants to get to the bottom of why these figures do not seem to be reflective of the experiences of members at the meeting. Gary Bartlett asked members to provide him with names of officers / areas in Highways Services where response times are slow.
- 4.7 Cllr P Gruen feels there is a disconnection between the local agenda and the strategic agenda, e.g. resident parking schemes which residents appear to prioritise but for which there is no central budget. Gary Bartlett explained the limited traffic budgets that are available for this type of work which in recent years has been threatened with removal altogether, until it was pointed out this was the only source of funding to pursue locally important traffic schemes. Demand for this type of work far outstrips the funding available.
- 4.8 Members reported that it appeared that the Highways Service was unwilling to engage with members. Gary Bartlett explained that this clearly was not the case and that work is currently taking place with Cllr Taylor and Cllr Lewis about the perception of the service and how best to improve this. Senior staff are available for joint site visits and/or meetings to discuss local issues and priorities if that would be helpful to members.
- 4.9 There was a general consensus from Area Chairs that Area Committees need to be more involved, local knowledge needs to be utilised and that Cllrs need to be consulted earlier.
- 4.10 Members also mentioned that decisions need to be taken that will future-proof new estates that are being built to prevent the Council funding works at a later date. Gary Bartlett explained that his Transport Development Services team sought to secure appropriate levels of funding from developers but there was increasing tension and pressures to securing funding and allowing development to take place. Members were not aware of any pressures that had come through planning panels on such matters.

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- 4.11 It was agreed that Gary Bartlett would attend a future meeting with Cllr P. Gruen and Area Leaders and that he would return to a future Area Chairs meeting to provide a further update.

## **5.0 A New Approach To Locality Working**

- 5.1 A report was distributed with the meeting papers: 'Developing a new approach to locality working'. Sally Wimsett provided an overview of the report and explained that it is linked to the report going to Executive Board next month on approaches to tackling issues of poverty and deprivation in Leeds.
- 5.2 A discussion took place about the naming of what will replace the Area Committees. Even though 'Community Council' was generally endorsed, it was acknowledged that there may be issues with this term as it already has a formal definition relating to Parish and Town Councils. The title of "community Committees" is currently being considered. Full Council will ultimately make a decision on the name but the public and others will have a chance to make recommendations.
- 5.3 There was discussion about the timing and content of future Area Committee meetings. There is a proposal to reduce the number of formal meetings to 4 per year and to consider theming the meetings around specific issues or areas of work. Community engagement is more successful at a neighbourhood level and a variety of "community conversation" events will be scheduled at a neighbourhood level.
- 5.4 James Rogers felt that the new format Area Committee meetings will not necessarily be the main forum for community consultation. He suggested that each Area Committee should create an engagement plan with community consultation events arranged through the course of the year. He suggested an overall city-wide brand with a local element, i.e. Citizens@Garforth; Citizens@Bramley; etc. The brand would need to have a strong visual / photographic element to it.
- 5.5 Principles, based on discussions with Area Chairs, will be taken to Executive Board in December with further consultations taking place in the new year.
- 5.6 It was felt that if there was to be a reduction in the number of formal meetings, these would need to be planned and scheduled in advance to ensure agendas were split evenly across the year, and to enable themed discussions to be planned.
- 5.7 Other considerations discussed included: reducing the level of bureaucracy; a consistent use of language; adding decision bullet points to papers; inviting the appropriate officers to meetings; clear recommendations in reports; balancing Area Officer time in supporting meetings and carrying out work on the ground; clarifying the logistics of where any sub-groups report to.
- 5.8 It was felt that recommendations relating to the new name, branding and frequency of meetings should have support from all 10 Area Chairs to ensure that a consistent view is taken for wider consultation.

## **6.0 Leeds Police Changes**

- 6.1 Chief Superintendent Paul Money attended with Liz Jarmin, and gave a presentation on 'Leeds District Proposed Neighbourhood Management Operating Model'. Copies of the presentation were also distributed at the meeting.
- 6.2 The main focus of the presentation related to Leeds moving from three police divisions to one. The drivers for this change are to: improve force performance; increase public trust and confidence which has decreased in the last twelve months; provide clearer service delivery and accountability particularly in relation to standards; introduce new operating structures

underpinned by improved partnership working; change cultures by embedding a shared ambition; deliver financial efficiencies by making savings of £70m in West Yorkshire across three years.

- 6.3 A key element of the changes are about making resources much more responsive by changing how officers work and where they work from, i.e. basing officers in the heart of the community, perhaps in other community buildings such as council offices / libraries / etc.

A key factor is to change the police force from being a very reactive organisation to one that is proactive and deals with the issues of crime instead of the aftermath of crime. Examples of this flexible working will include: changes to working patterns of 999 call centre staff; more resources being provided to city centres on Friday and Saturday night; city centre staff perhaps being allocated to outer areas on quieter mid-week days.

- 6.4 There was reassurance given that there would be no reduction in front line policing. There would be streamlined leadership with links strengthened between the police and services such as Children's Services. There will be 11 Safer Neighbourhood Areas. One covering the city centre and 10 matching the Area Committee geography.
- 6.5 Closer links with Area Committees can be established through inspector led teams and Area Committees can have a role in providing leadership and accountability at the local level. Area Committees will also be able to work together with the police to improve performance at a local level.
- 6.6 Three locality areas will be established which will provide clear links with ASB teams, families first and locality working Area Teams.
- 6.7 There was a general discussion about possible plans / changes for current police stations and other locations police officers could work from. This also included discussions of government proposals for tri-service venues where the police, fire and ambulance services operate from the same building. Currently, there are no set plans.
- 6.8 A needs and demands based analysis of every ward has taken place and data is now being analysed. Partnership asset mapping is taking place. Consultation with Area Committee Chairs and Community Safety Area Lead Members is taking place during November and December and consultation with the ten Area Committees will take place through the Locality Chief Inspectors during January 2014.

## **7.0 Any Other Business**

- 7.1 Rory Barke passed on some information via Cllr G. Wilkinson. He noted that Environmental Services and Parks & Countryside had pulled out of an Area Committee meeting with an environmental theme. There has also been a withdrawal of a bi-annual report to the Area Committee. There was a suggestion to introduce an SLA to counter this in the future.
- 7.2 Jonathan Sharp will be replacing Sarn Warbis as facilitator of future Area Chairs Forums.

## **8.0 Date of Next Meeting**

- 8.1 Monday 20 January 2014, 1.30pm to 3.30pm, Committee Room 1, Civic Hall