

Scrutiny Inquiry into the development of Community Committees

Draft Report



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Desired Outcomes and Recommendations

Desired Outcome – That all directorates are committed to providing a dedicated resource in supporting Community Committee Champions to undertake their role effectively.

Recommendation 1 – That the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) takes the lead in working with Directors to secure a dedicated resource across directorates in supporting Community Committee Champions to undertake their role effectively.

Desired Outcome – That Community Committee Champions undertake an appropriate level of challenge towards their relevant service areas on behalf of their Community Committees.

Recommendation 2 – That the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) takes the lead in working closely with Area Leaders in providing key tools that will assist in encouraging and supporting Community Committee Champions to undertake an appropriate level of challenge towards their relevant service areas.

Desired Outcome – That Community Committees are given the authority to take lead sponsoring roles for commissioning projects and funding bids.

Recommendation 3 – That the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) explores the feasibility of extending the authority of Community Committees to take a lead sponsoring role for commissioning projects and funding bids.

Desired Outcome – There is transparency and accountability of the funding allocated by Community Committees in addressing local priorities set out in the Community Plan.

Recommendation 4 – That the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) ensures that a mid-year and end of year audit of the funding allocated by Community Committees against the priorities set out the Community Plan is undertaken at a formal meeting of the Community Committees.

Desired Outcome – That Community Committees are made fully aware of how relevant ward based initiative funding and capital monies are being spent within their localities.

Recommendation 5 – That the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) develops a reporting mechanism which allows Community Committees to be kept fully aware of how relevant ward based initiative funding and capital monies are being spent within their localities.



Desired Outcomes and Recommendations

Desired Outcome – That Highways and Transportation services actively engage with Community Committees and Community Committee Champions to share information and gather Member intelligence to help inform service delivery.

Recommendation 6 – That the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) works closely with the Director of City Development to promote the mutual benefits of engaging closely with Community Committees and Community Committee Champions in gathering local Member intelligence and experience to help inform service delivery within Highways and Transportation. In particular, the development and delivery of local traffic management schemes and the development of local flood management schemes.

Desired Outcome – That there is an effective action tracker system in place that includes the involvement of relevant service areas and external partners.

Recommendation 7 – That the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) ensures that relevant service areas and external partners are also made accountable for actions agreed by Community Committees through robust monitoring of their actions as part of the new action tracker and performance management framework.

Desired Outcome – That reporting mechanisms are put in place to assist in strengthening links between Cluster Partnerships and the Community Committees.

Recommendation 8 – That the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) works closely with the Director of Children’s Services to explore opportunities for strengthening links between the Cluster Partnerships and Community Committees.

Desired Outcome – That there are robust communication mechanisms between Community Committees and local Parish and Town Councils.

Recommendation 9 – That the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) works with the Area Leaders to ensure that robust communication mechanisms between Community Committees and local Parish and Town Councils are put in place in accordance with recommendations made previously by Scrutiny and in ensuring that Community Committees are complying with the Parish and Town Council Charter.



Desired Outcomes and Recommendations

Desired Outcome – That residents are actively encouraged and supported to engage with Community Committees.

Recommendation 10 – That the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) works with the Area Leaders to ensure there are consistent processes in place for publicising details of Community Committee events and meetings and responding to public requests for feedback or to be kept regularly updated on the work of their Community Committee.



Introduction and Scope

Introduction

1. In December 2013, the Executive Board endorsed the “Responsive to the needs of local communities” proposition, including the proposed development of a new approach to build on the work of Area Committees, to improve local democratic leadership of local areas, as well as providing a more meaningful way of involving local people in decisions that affect their local neighbourhoods. Linked to this, Community Committees were established in June 2014 with the expressed aim to be more locally responsive, more accountable to local members and local people and to improve outcomes in localities..
2. There are currently 10 Community Committees in Leeds (see appendix 1) which are made up of local Councillors from the 33 wards in the city. Having been operational for over a year, we agreed to assist the Citizens and Communities directorate in evaluating the extent to which the Community Committee model is enabling local elected members to look at key local issues, local needs and aspirations, as well as genuinely involving the communities they represent in the decisions that affect them.

Scope of the Inquiry

3. The terms of reference for our inquiry were agreed in September 2015 and set out the key purpose of this inquiry, which was to make an assessment of and, where appropriate, make recommendations on the following areas:
 - Clarity surrounding the role and capacity levels of Community

Committees and their respective Communities Teams.

- The role of Community Committee Champions.
- Administration and accountability arrangements for funding allocated to Community Committees.
- Examples of good practice across the Community Committees and mechanisms for sharing such practice.
- Performance management frameworks linked to the work of Community Committees (particularly in demonstrating community engagement)
- The extent to which Community Committees are engaging with other established community forums/partnerships (i.e. Cluster Partnerships; Parish and Town Councils; CCGs).

Best Council Plan

4. The developing role of Community Committees fits with the Best Council objective of ‘supporting communities and tackling poverty’ and is directly aligned to the ambition for Leeds to be ‘the best city for communities’.
5. These changes in the nature and focus of community engagement are supportive of the Council’s values of working as a team for Leeds, being open, honest and trusted, treating people fairly, spending money wisely and primarily working with communities.
6. Making it easier for people to do business with the Council is also a key



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outcome set out in the Best Council Plan. The development of Community Committees in bringing an increased focus on locality influence and decision making will make a significant contribution in achieving this outcome.

Desired Outcomes, Added Value and Anticipated Service Impact

7. As well as being able to share our own experiences as Community Committee members, we have welcomed the contribution of representatives across the different directorates in sharing their experiences and ideas linked to the work of Community Committees. We also valued the contribution of local Parish and Town Council representatives in sharing their views from an external partnership perspective.
8. There are many existing systems and processes in place that are working effectively and meeting the differing needs of the 10 Community Committees. As part of the development process of Community Committees, we recognise that it is equally important to highlight and share existing good practices as well as identifying areas for further development.
9. Our inquiry acknowledges the positive work undertaken by Community Committees and their respective Communities Teams but also recommends actions in supporting the development of a more consistent approach towards priority setting, tracking actions and reviewing, monitoring and challenging the progress made by the Community Committees.

Equality and Diversity

10. The Equality Improvement Priorities 2016 to 2020 have been developed to ensure that the council meets its legal duties under the Equality Act 2010. The priorities will help the council to identify work and activities that help to reduce disadvantage, discrimination and inequalities of opportunity to achieve its ambition to be the best city in the UK.
11. Equality and diversity issues have been considered throughout this scrutiny inquiry and the individual, organisation or group responsible for implementation or delivery of the recommendations arising from this inquiry should also give due regard to equality and diversity and where appropriate, an equality impact assessment will be carried out.



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Working more intelligently and flexibly in identifying and addressing local priorities.

12. Community Committees were established to represent a move towards a greater focus on local issues by local people and away from the bureaucratic nature that was often found with the former Area Committee meetings which resulted in little or no attendance by the public.
13. Community Committees play an important role in the Council's ambition to bring place, people and resources together by ensuring that we work more intelligently and flexibly than before; making it easier for people to do business with us and improving the way we make decisions locally with residents.
14. In line with this new approach, a series of locality working design principles were adopted to provide a common framework for the operation of each Community Committee, whilst giving them the flexibility to work in the way best suited to them and the areas they represent.
15. Linked to this, the Council's Constitution states that a Community Committee may also establish and set terms of reference for one or more area or issue based Community Forums to act in an advisory or consultative capacity. However, the Council's Constitution also stipulates that all decisions or recommendations to be made by a Community Committee must be determined at a formal meeting of the Committee. As such, each Community Committee is expected to hold at least four ordinary meetings in each municipal year to accommodate this function.
16. As Community Committee members, we do acknowledge that changes have been made to the way that meetings are run to include more discussions and workshops with partner organisations and residents in identifying local priorities and thus supporting the council's commitment to involve local people more closely in decisions taken about their area.
17. Each year all ten Community Committees set out their local priorities – the key areas they want to address over the next twelve months. These are chosen using local data which gives information on a range of issues, including population, ethnicity, unemployment and health, combined with consultation with local councillors and residents.
18. Community Committees do play a fundamental role in understanding and addressing issues of concern to local people but it is equally important that we work smarter in also translating key strategic issues to the locality level and avoiding any unnecessary additional costs. Key to achieving this is through the unique role of Community Committee Champions.



Conclusions and Recommendations

Community Committee Champions.

19. Community Committee Champions were introduced in July 2013 to provide a key link between the Community Committee and corporate centre on the following specific themes:
 - Health, wellbeing and adult social care
 - Children's services
 - Employment, skills and welfare
 - Environment and community safety
20. The role of Community Committee Champions is primarily to ensure that local issues are shared with Executive Board members and fed into policy decisions so that the Council's priorities and its delivery meet local needs and aspirations.
21. We learned that a new and simplified job description for Community Committee Champions was recently introduced to provide further clarity of the expectations surrounding this role, which are as follows:
 - Know and understand the council's priorities for the specific theme;
 - Be aware of the local challenges in the Community Committee area;
 - Work closely with Community Committee members to understand their views;
 - Work closely with the executive portfolio holder and to ensure that the views of members on local issues are understood.
 - Support the development of Community Committee workshops and other engagement with residents on the themes;
- Champion reports presented to each Community Committee or other forums on a regular basis.
22. Whilst this role does not attract a Special Responsibility Allowance, it is important for appointed individuals to be enthusiastic and dedicated in undertaking this role.
23. It is also clear that for the role to succeed in making a difference to the work of the Community Committees, and provide for connectivity between local and corporate working, it will require closer alignment and better connectivity to the role of services and their leaders and managers. During our inquiry, the Executive Member for Communities also stressed the importance of improved understanding and buy-in from Executive portfolio holders. We were therefore pleased to learn that she was already leading on this work and initiating discussions with Executive Member colleagues.
24. We also learned that the Communities Teams will take a more active role in supporting the new Community Champions as members have asked for additional support. This area of support focuses on: facilitating meetings between Community Champions, the Chairs and relevant officers, reviewing existing and initiating new local programmes of work, providing support to Community Champions in terms of local knowledge and raising the profile of the role. Whilst we welcome the additional resource being offered by the Communities Teams, we also acknowledge that



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this resource is limited, with approximately only 36 staff across the ten Community Committees.

25. As part of our inquiry, we questioned the level of support also provided to Community Committee Champions across directorates. There are clear mutual benefits in terms of services advising Champions based on their professional understanding of issues affecting localities and the Champions sharing their local intelligence and experience. However, it was evident that levels of support varied across directorates. As such, we recognise the need to ensure that all directorates are committed to providing a dedicated resource in supporting Community Committee Champions to undertake their role effectively.
26. As well as sharing local intelligence, we also recognise the important role of Community Committee Champions undertaking an appropriate level of challenge towards their relevant service areas on behalf of the full Committee. Utilising key tools, such as the newly developed performance management framework (detailed in paragraph 45), would assist Champions in measuring and monitoring levels of success against identified local priorities. It was evident during our inquiry that services would welcome such democratic accountability and felt that this element of the Champions role needed to be strengthened.

Recommendation 1

That the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) takes the lead in working with Directors to secure a dedicated resource across directorates in supporting Community Committee Champions to undertake their role effectively.

Recommendation 2

That the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) takes the lead in working closely with Area Leaders in providing key tools that will assist in encouraging and supporting Community Committee Champions to undertake an appropriate level of challenge towards their relevant service areas.

Financial management and local commissioning.

27. Community Committees are allocated resources on an annual basis and are required to commission local projects which improve local outcomes in relation to community wellbeing and local priorities.
28. At the start of each year, each committee is allocated dedicated sums known as wellbeing funding and youth activities funding. This funding, provided to local projects and activities, can increase significantly, as it allows grant recipients the opportunity to lever in matched funding from other sources, as well as attract volunteers.



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29. We acknowledge that the following major benefits have been identified from funding delegated to Community Committees:
- Developing community capacity and pride – generating a sense of belonging and often involving volunteering by local residents to make things happen.
 - Sealing the deal – funding projects where the work would not otherwise be taken forward.
 - Leverage – acting as a catalyst to lever in funding from other sources.
 - Implementing planned local actions – focussing on specific local priorities.
30. The total value of projects approved and funded through the wellbeing fund across Leeds in 2014 to 2015 was almost £1.75 million, with match funding of almost £2 million more than doubling the original amount, bringing the total figure to almost £3.75 million. This supported 427 projects across the city and generated almost 90,000 volunteer hours.
31. In discharging their responsibilities to distribute these funds, each Community Committee also has the opportunity to set out arrangements to delegate decisions to the relevant Area Leader in accordance with agreed conditions. Each Community Committee formally acknowledged that sometimes decisions will need to be made between formal meetings of the Community Committee and therefore the Area Leaders will have delegated authority from the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities).
32. The Communities Team has responsibility for the management of effective processes to allocate, monitor and evaluate expenditure. Through 2015, a single office support team has been developed and procedures set up to deal with funding in a common way. The application forms, project delivery statement, and funding agreement are used city wide. A Wellbeing Manual is maintained which guides staff through the process, and compliance with these processes is ensured. Financial monitoring is also supported by the Citizens and Communities finance officer, who provides regular reports to senior managers and also to the Executive Member.
33. We noted that approaches towards commissioning work or receiving open applications varies across the Committees. The work of Community Committees has aimed to be more precise and clear in identifying local priorities reflected in the Community Plan. A commissioning approach therefore sets out the outcomes which Elected Members wish to see addressed, and applications are sought to a timetable which is set.
34. Commissioning ensures a fair opportunity for all providers to be considered, with the usual benefits of competition and fair evaluation. On the other hand it concentrates activity in a short time, and therefore there are also benefits of having resources available to respond to new approaches, or for Elected Members and the Communities Team staff to work together with local organisations to develop new projects. Linked to this, whilst we appreciate the key role of Community Committees in terms of bringing key partners together, the commissioning of major projects and funding bids are often led by other



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sponsoring bodies. As such, we believe there would be merit in exploring the feasibility of Community Committees taking a lead sponsoring role for commissioning projects and funding bids.

Recommendation 3

That the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) explores the feasibility of extending the authority of Community Committees to take a lead sponsoring role for commissioning projects and funding bids.

35. Later in our report we address the importance of transparency and accountability in relation to the work of Community Committees. This very much relates to demonstrating the outcomes of funding investments made by Community Committees in line with identified priorities. As such, we believe there should be a transparent auditing process of the Community Plan by Community Committees, which shows mid-year and end of year progress.

Recommendation 4

That the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) ensures that a mid-year and end of year audit of the funding allocated by Community Committees against the priorities set out the Community Plan is undertaken at a formal meeting of the Community Committees.

36. During our inquiry, we also discussed the management of ward based initiative funding and acknowledged that this funding is not managed by Communities Teams as the relationship is directly between Finance and the

relevant Ward Members. However, in terms of transparency we believe that details surrounding ward based initiatives funding should also be shared with Community Committees as well as details surrounding the expenditure of capital monies, including clear guidance on how this funding can be used.

Recommendation 5

That the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) develops a reporting mechanism which allows Community Committees to be kept fully aware of how relevant ward based initiative funding and capital monies are being spent within their localities.

Reviewing the administration of Youth Activity Funding.

37. In May 2013 the delivery of the Youth Activity Fund for children and young people was delegated to Area Committees. The task was to promote commission and evaluate local opportunities for children and young people aged 8-17 years in line with the needs and priorities of the area with support from Children's Services. "Activity" is defined as play, sports, arts and cultural opportunities.
38. The budget for 2013/14 was £250,000, increased to £500,000 for 2014/15 and £500,000 again for 2015/16. Each Community Committee has an allocation based on population of young people, creating a variation of budget



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and a fair allocation to each committee. The delegated budget is 'ring fenced' to be spent on youth activities and to include the involvement of children and young people in the decision making process and shaping the needs of community activity.

39. At the time of our inquiry, we acknowledged that the Youth Activity Fund and its application through the new Community Committees was being monitored and reviewed in more detail by the Children's Services Scrutiny Board. During its December 2015 meeting, we noted that the following key issues had been raised:

- An acknowledgement that the application process for youth activity funding was complex and in need of simplifying.
- The need to clearly distinguish between universal and targeted youth activities.
- The need to improve partnership working and consultation with young people by developing links with schools and the Youth Council.
- The need to ensure that children and young people influence the provision of activities at the outset and commission appropriately.
- The need to develop and share good practice across Community Committees and the large variations in participating children and young people in Community Committee areas.
- Further clarification needed in terms of monitoring, outcomes, quality and value for money.

40. In February 2016, the Children's Services Scrutiny Board considered a further update and formally endorsed

that a cross directorate steering group be convened by the new Chief Officer (Communities) to further improve and develop Community Committees funding and support of youth activities through:

- A critical examination and dissemination of best practice with regard to the engagement of children and young people in the decision making processes of Committees on youth activity funding;
- A review of the monitoring requirements of activity providers through the Breeze Culture Network and the insistence of Breeze cards; and
- Simplifying the process and bringing the applications for Youth Activity Funding and Community Committee Wellbeing funding together and removing the need for duplication of applications for each area for City wide providers.
- Ensuring the steering group had school and elected member representatives
- A review of engagement and marketing techniques to ensure that the maximum number of children and young people are made aware of activities and participate.

41. As part of our own monitoring processes linked to this inquiry, we will continue to liaise closely with the Children's Services Scrutiny Board regarding the application of the Youth Activity Fund by Community Committees.



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Service delegations.

42. Integral to the success of Community Committees is also their ability to influence service delivery through direct budget/service responsibility, Service Level Agreements and/or other appropriate mechanisms.

43. The Constitution sets out areas of Leeds City Council service delivery where there is a concurrent delegation of responsibility to the relevant service director and the Community Committees. These are:

Service	Director
Community Centres	Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities)
CCTV	Director of Environment and Housing
Neighbourhood Management Coordination	Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities)
Street cleansing & Environmental Enforcement Services	Director of Environment and Housing
Parks and Countryside	Director of Environment and Housing

44. The delivery of these delegations is taken forward in line with the design principles for Community Committees, which set out the need for services to be locally led or influenced, and that local Councillor and stakeholder

improvements can support the improved delivery of services.

45. In these delegated arrangements the service retains the budget and accountability to Executive Councillors, but the local Community Committee led arrangements allow elected members to influence the delivery of services in their localities.

46. In practical terms specific local arrangements are put in place to deliver the delegation which include:

- Service Level Agreements, setting out specific local outputs which members task the service with delivering.
- Sub Group oversight of service delivery. This approach allows direct dialogue by the local members and those delivering the service. It can set local priorities and direction and it is linked to the role of Community Committee Champion.
- Direct decision making by elected members on an aspect of the service e.g. the decisions on the application for free lets at community centres.

47. In acknowledging the success of existing delegations, we agreed during our inquiry to explore potential opportunities to extend the delegation of other service areas to Community Committees. We focused our attention on Highways and Transportation service areas within City Development as such services are generally of high public interest across the localities. We therefore welcomed the contribution of the Chief Highways Officer and Executive Member for Regeneration,



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Transport and Planning in undertaking a detailed service analysis exercise whereby we discussed the feasibility of particular services being delegated to Community Committees with the aim of improving service delivery and achieving better local outcomes.

48. In conclusion, we found that there were a number of constraints linked to the administration of many of the service areas within Highways and Transportation. This was primarily due to a significant number of funding streams being ring-fenced to deliver citywide projects and services in accordance with agreed Council policy. As such, the scope for service delegation to Community Committees appeared limited.
49. However, we did acknowledge that there is already direct dialogue between Highways and Transportation officers and local Elected Members in relation to particular service areas, such as traffic management when developing minor schemes within localities.
50. Reference was also made to Highways and Transportation officers engaging closely with Area Leaders and contributing to Neighbourhood Improvement Boards to help raise confidence in local service delivery. In particular, this approach proved very successful in relation to flood risk management services following the devastating effects of Storm Eva in December 2015.
51. However, it was also accepted that there needed to be greater consistency across the city in relation to such engagement processes, with the recognition that Community Committees

and the role of their Community Committee Champions could provide that formal engagement mechanism for seeking Member intelligence and experience in helping to inform local service delivery. In particular, in relation to local traffic management schemes and the development of local flood management schemes.

Recommendation 6

That the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) works closely with the Director of City Development to promote the mutual benefits of engaging closely with Community Committees and Community Committee Champions in gathering local Member intelligence and experience to help inform service delivery within Highways and Transportation. In particular, the development and delivery of local traffic management schemes and the development of local flood management schemes.

Accountability of Community Committees.

52. Community Committees are an important part of the Council's decision-making process and therefore it is vital that we track actions arising from the work of Community Committees to ensure that progress against our local priorities are understood, monitored, reviewed, timely, challenged and have clear accountability.
53. As part of our inquiry, we were therefore pleased to note the introduction of a new performance management framework. In



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accordance with this, a report is produced detailing the discussions and actions agreed from the Community Committee. An action tracker for each area is also populated by the relevant service locality lead officer in discussion with Community Committee portfolio Champion and Chair. It is then the responsibility of the service lead to follow up on actions and routinely update the tracker using red, amber, green (RAG) rating approach, and highlighting progress against key actions, what the impact / difference this has made. These updates are carried out within the agreed timescales so the tracker is available for discussion at relevant meetings and forums.

54. The action tracker will also be used to inform Area Update reports for Community Committees and Champions and whilst the local Communities Teams have a role in overseeing the tracker, reviewing and challenging entries, we also recognise the need to ensure that relevant service areas and external partners are also made accountable for actions too. As such, there also needs to be robust monitoring of their actions as part of this tracking process.

Recommendation 7

That the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) ensures that relevant service areas and external partners are also made accountable for actions agreed by Community Committees through robust monitoring of their actions as part of the new action tracker and performance management framework.

55. We also recognise that Community Committee members need to be in charge of their own improvement agenda and sensitive to their local circumstances. We recognise that 'one size does not fit all' and therefore acknowledge that the improvement agenda for each Community Committee will be bespoke and relevant to its own pace of development and circumstances. In this context we understand that each Area Leader is developing, with their staff and the Community Committee chairs, an improvement agenda for each Community Committee to consider and approve.

56. We also acknowledge that the best and most comprehensive reporting mechanism regarding good practice across the Community Committees is contained in the Community Committees' Annual Report. The latest 2014 – 2015 Annual Report was considered during our inquiry ([Click to access report](#)).

57. During our inquiry, we were also pleased to learn about the development of a new Leadership Forum introduced by the Chief Officer for Communities, with the aim of bringing together staff across the Communities Teams.

Embracing partnership working.

58. The Community Committees largely adopted the partnership arrangements inherited from the former Area Committees and have adapted and /or added to these arrangements in the light of changing circumstances and priorities.



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59. During our inquiry we considered an overview of all the various partnership arrangements operating in conjunction with the Community Committees. We found that detailed examples of the effectiveness of the Community Committee partnership arrangements are also set out in the Leeds Community Committees Annual Report.
60. The partnerships that Community Committees are involved in largely fall into two categories. They are either:
- Strategic partnerships that cover the wider geography of the ENE, the WNW or SE of the city such as the Area Leadership Teams and thematic partnerships on issues such as community safety or health and wellbeing. Membership of these strategic partnerships is made up of local decision makers from services, partner agencies and the voluntary sector. Members of the Community Committees attend either in their role as Chair or champion portfolio holders.
 - Action/delivery focussed partnerships such as local neighbourhood business forums, neighbourhood partnerships and 'tasking' groups. Membership consists of multi-agency frontline delivery officers often with a ward member chairing or leading. Much of the facilitation and servicing of such partnerships is undertaken by the community teams.
61. Community Committees have also identified priority neighbourhoods where they wish to see community outcomes improved. In order to achieve this, various neighbourhood improvement approaches have been used across the city led by the Communities Teams.
62. More recently this has seen the introduction of Neighbourhood Improvement Partnerships and Neighbourhood Improvement Boards in those areas of significant challenge.
63. The local neighbourhood improvement partnerships models may differ but the key functions performed by the Communities Teams include: leading and managing neighbourhood improvement partnerships across the city, data analysis, defining local priorities in conjunction with local stakeholders, collaboratively developing bespoke improvement plans, delivering key improvement projects, implementing community engagement activity in a neighbourhood.
64. We believe that Community Committees have very much embraced partnership working in addressing local priorities; however it is important for Committees to be vigilant that partners are also sharing resources and undertaking robust performance monitoring to demonstrate accountability of agreed shared outcomes.
65. During our inquiry, particular reference was made to the relationship between Community Committees and Cluster Partnerships and the recognition that there is currently no formal reporting mechanism between the Cluster Partnerships and the Community Committees. In particular, Elected Members would welcome a greater understanding of the key issues facing children and families within their localities and of the future funding



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arrangements of schools as they move towards greater autonomy in the form of academies.

66. Cluster Partnerships and Community Committees also have much in common in addressing the improvement agenda for local communities and therefore it would be mutually beneficial to strengthen joint commissioning of services aimed at addressing the key obsessions set out within the Children and Young Peoples Plan. We therefore recognised the need to explore further opportunities for strengthening links between the Cluster Partnerships and Community Committees.

Recommendation 8

That the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) works closely with the Director of Children's Services to explore opportunities for strengthening links between the Cluster Partnerships and Community Committees.

Strengthening links with Parish and Town Councils.

67. There are 32 parish and town councils in the Leeds Metropolitan District, which play an important role in maintaining and improving local services and facilities, supporting local voluntary organisations and activities, and influencing and lobbying on local development. Good partnership working between the Community Committees and parish and town councils therefore presents an additional opportunity to achieve the council's ambition to achieve a substantial and lasting shift towards local democracy. By working closely together, the Community Committees and parish and town councils make a vital contribution to the wellbeing of the communities they serve.
68. To reflect this relationship, the current Parish and Town Council Charter stipulate that each Community Committee will establish a mutually acceptable consultative and/or liaison arrangement with the local councils in its area.
69. The Charter also states that, as appropriate, local councils will be consulted on the draft Community Committee Plans, as it may affect their community, and their comments reported to the relevant Community Committee.
70. During our inquiry, we welcomed the contribution of local Parish and Town Council representatives in sharing their views from an external partnership perspective. Particular reference was made to the productive working relationships through the Outer North East Parish and Town Council Forum which provides a mechanism for regular engagement and opportunities for discussion and collaborative working on issues of common interest to the parishes. We note that this forum was highlighted as a model of good practice by the former Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Board following its review into the council's relationships with Parish and Town Councils in 2013.
71. However, we were concerned to learn that direct communication links between the parish and town councils and their respective Community Committees still require improvement, with references



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made to some parish and town councils not receiving any information, including minutes of meetings, in relation to the work of their respective Community Committees. This clearly needs addressing to ensure that robust communication mechanisms are put in place in accordance with recommendations made previously by Scrutiny and in ensuring that Community Committees are complying with the Parish and Town Council Charter.

Recommendation 9

That the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) works with the Area Leaders to ensure that robust communication mechanisms between Community Committees and local Parish and Town Councils are put in place in accordance with recommendations made previously by Scrutiny and in ensuring that Community Committees are complying with the Parish and Town Council Charter.

Engaging effectively with local communities.

72. It is vital that local residents are fully engaged in the work of Community Committees and this is linked to the ability of Community Committees to identify key areas of priority within their localities that will encourage greater interest and involvement of local communities.

73. We acknowledge that the Communities Teams also have a lead role in this regard in terms of publicising the work of

the Community Committee. This involves providing information, campaigns and member briefings for a range of media including: utilising social media platforms, consistent use of logos and branding, facilitating media opportunities including radio, TV, online and print, attending and organising events, Community Committee newsletters.

74. However, during our inquiry we emphasised the importance of ensuring that basic practices are also carried out effectively, such as publicising details of events and meetings and responding to requests from residents to receive feedback from such events or to be kept regularly updated on the work of their Community Committee. In doing so, this will assist in building confidence in the role and work of Community Committees.

Recommendation 10

That the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) works with the Area Leaders to ensure there are consistent processes in place for publicising details of Community Committee events and meetings and responding to public requests for feedback or to be kept regularly updated on the work of their Community Committee.



Evidence

Monitoring arrangements

Standard arrangements for monitoring the outcome of the Board's recommendations will apply.

The decision-makers to whom the recommendations are addressed will be asked to submit a formal response to the recommendations, including an action plan and timetable, normally within two months.

Following this the Scrutiny Board will determine any further detailed monitoring, over and above the standard quarterly monitoring of all scrutiny recommendations.

Reports and Publications Submitted

- Report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) to the Citizens & Communities Scrutiny Board on the Development of Community Committees – Session 1 Report. 18th January 2016.
- Report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) to the Citizens & Communities Scrutiny Board on the development of Community Committees – Session 2 Report (Partnerships). 15th February 2016.
- Report of Chief Officer Communities to the Scrutiny Board Working Group on funding and decision making responsibilities of community committees. 15th March 2016.
- Highways and Transportation Service Analysis 2016/17.



Evidence

Dates of Scrutiny

Scrutiny Working Group – Scoping exercise - 19th August 2015
Scrutiny Board Meeting – Agreeing terms of reference – 14th September 2015
Scrutiny Board Meeting – Session 1 of the inquiry – 18th January 2016
Scrutiny Board Meeting – Session 2 of the inquiry – 15th February 2016
Scrutiny Working Group – Sessions 3 of the inquiry – 15th March 2016

Witnesses Heard

- James Rogers, Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities)
- Councillor Debra Coupar, Executive Member for Communities
- Councillor Richard Lewis – Executive Member for Regeneration, Transport and Planning
- Shaid Mahmood, Chief Officer for Communities
- Rory Barke, Area Leader (Corporate)
- Martin Dean, Area Leader
- Baksho Uppal, Area Leader
- Lucy Jackson, Consultant in Public Health
- Joanne Davis, Health Improvement Principal, Public Health
- Tim Taylor, Health and Wellbeing Improvement Manager, Public Health
- Sue Rumbold, Chief Officer Partnership Development and Business Support, Children's Services
- Mary Armitage, Targeted Services Area Lead, Children's Services
- Mick Ward, Interim Chief Officer, Commissioning, Adult Social Care
- Helen Freeman, Chief Officer Environmental Action
- Paul Maney, Head of Strategy, City Development
- Martyn Stenton, Area Head of Targeted Services
- Gary Bartlett, Chief Highways Officer
- Graham Fisher, Principal Financial Manager, Strategy and Resources
- Councillor Claire Hassell, Barwick & Scholes Parish Council
- Councillor Nick Fawcett, Clifford Parish Council



Appendix 1

Leeds City Council's Community Committees

Inner East Community Committee

Burmantofts and Richmond Hill
Gipton and Harehills
Killingbeck and Seacroft

Outer West Community Committee

Calverley and Farsley
Farnley and Wortley
Pudsey

Inner North East Community Committee

Chapel Allerton
Moortown
Roundhay

Outer North East Community Committee

Alwoodley
Harewood
Wetherby

Outer East Community Committee

Cross Gates and Whinmoor
Garforth and Swillington
Kippax and Methley
Temple Newsam

Inner South Community Committee

Beeston and Holbeck
City and Hunslet
Middleton Park

Outer South Community Committee

Ardsley and Robin Hood
Morley North
Morley South
Rothwell

Inner North West Community Committee

Headingley
Hyde Park and Woodhouse
Weetwood

Outer North West Community Committee

Adel and Wharfedale
Guiseley and Rawdon
Horsforth
Otley and Yeadon

Inner West Community Committee

Armley
Bramley and Stanningley
Kirkstall

Scrutiny Board (Citizens and Communities)
The development of Community Committees
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Report author: Angela Brogden



www.scrutiny.unit@leeds.gov.uk