



## Joint Report of the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods and Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Governance)

### General Purposes Committee

Date: 8<sup>th</sup> February 2010

Subject: Appointment of Chairs to Ward Based Community Forums

<p><b>Electoral Wards Affected:</b> All Wards</p>          <input type="checkbox"/> Ward Members consulted (referred to in report)	<p><b>Specific Implications For:</b></p> <p>Equality and Diversity <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Community Cohesion <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Narrowing the Gap <input type="checkbox"/></p>
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### Executive Summary

1. This report recommends an amendment to the Area Committee Procedure Rules concerning the appointment of Chairs to Ward Based Community Forums.
2. Where Area Committees have established Ward Based Community Forums, the Chairs of those Forums are appointed differently dependant upon the area in the city:
  - **Outer East & Inner East** – the Chair is appointed by the Area Committee.
  - **Outer West** – no reference is made to the election of the Chair in the Terms of Reference.
  - **Inner West & Outer North West** – the Chair is elected by the Forum.
  - **Inner North West** - Forum meetings should be chaired by a ward member representing the ward in which the forum is being held; however the meeting can be chaired by any member of the North West (Inner) Area Committee.
  - **Inner & Outer North East** – there are no ward based forums.
3. The Area Committee must ensure that Chairs are appointed with regard to the political balance of the ward to which a forum relates. Where a political group has the majority of members within a ward, the chair will be appointed from those Members. Where no political group has a majority, the chair will be appointed by the Area Committee from Members of the ward to which the forum relates.

## **1.0 Purpose Of This Report**

- 1.1 This report has been brought to the General Purposes Committee at the request of the Executive Member (Neighbourhoods and Housing) and seeks the Committee's support to making a recommendation to Full Council to agree an amendment to the Area Committee Procedure Rules concerning the appointment of Chairs to Ward Based Community Forums.

## **2.0 Background Information**

- 2.1 In 2004 Area Committees were established in Leeds. As part of its community engagement strategy Outer East Area Committee agreed to establish Community Forums across its 4 Wards. Some of the Forums were new; others had been set up under previous Community Involvement Team (CIT) arrangements.
- 2.2 Where the Forum had been established under previous CIT arrangements the meeting took into account ward boundary changes when considering the geographic area it covered.
- 2.3 It was also agreed that the Forum meetings would be held quarterly at venues convenient to the local communities they served. The Terms of Reference of the forums vary across the city but in Inner and Outer East state that the Chairs of each forum are elected annually by the Area Committee.

## **3.0 Main Issues**

- 3.1 Whilst the terms of reference for area forums in these two areas state that the chair of the forums should be appointed by the Area Committee, there are no provisions which provide for representation on ward forums to be based upon the political balance of the ward in question. Rather, the appointment of the chair was dictated by the majority vote of the Area Committee.
- 3.2 This issue became apparent in relation to the appointment of the chair for the Halton Forum in 2009, the result of which has prompted the Executive Member (Neighbourhoods and Housing) to seek to formalise the appointment arrangements for chairs of ward forums within the Area Committee Procedure Rules. The proposed amendments to the procedure rules will help ensure that the chairs of ward forums more accurately reflect the political balance of the wards to which they relate.
- 3.3 General Purposes Committee is therefore requested to consider and recommend to Full Council the agreement to, the following amendment to Section 7 of the Area Committee Procedure Rules;
- 'that where Area Committees have established ward based Community Forums, the Chairs of those Forums must be appointed by the Area Committee. In making that appointment however the Area Committee must ensure that Chairs are appointed with regard to the political balance of the ward to which a forum relates. Where a political group has the majority of members within a ward, the chair will be appointed from those Members. Where no political group has a majority, the chair will be appointed by the Area Committee from Members of the ward to which the forum relates.'
- 3.4 Attached at Appendix 1 are the Area Committee Procedure Rules including, by way of tracked changes, the amendments proposed in paragraph 3.3 above. It is

proposed that these amendments be effective from appointments made from May 2010 onwards.

#### **4.0 Implications For Council Policy And Governance**

4.1 Amendments to the Area Committee Procedure Rules may be made by the Leader, in relation to functions set out in Sections 3.1-3.5 and Section 8<sup>1</sup> and by Full Council in relation to all other changes.

4.2 The amendments proposed in this report fall to Full Council to agree.

#### **5.0 Legal And Resource Implications**

5.1 There are no legal or resource implications arising from this report.

#### **6.0 Conclusions**

6.1 This report recommends that an amendment is made to Area Committee Procedure Rules concerning the appointment of Chairs to Ward Based Community Forums.

#### **7.0 Recommendations**

7.1 The General Purposes Committee is asked to recommend to Full Council an amendment to section 7 of the Area Committee Procedure Rules as outlined in Appendix 1, and for the amendment to be effective from May 2010.

### **Background Papers**

Area Committee Procedure Rules

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<sup>1</sup> Of the Area Committee Procedure Rules