

Developing the role of Elected Members in Tasking Meetings

Background

A review of Tasking Meetings across the city has been undertaken by the DCSP to seek to strengthen the process. One of the agreed actions was to engage more closely with Ward Members directly on targeted areas of work.

The Inner South Area Committee has nominated an Elected Member to be the Community Safety Champion. The Community Safety Champion attends DCSP meetings in order to create and develop links between the Area Committee and the DCSP. The DCSP is a strategic group and so the Members are involved in delivering and monitoring the Community Safety Action Plan for the areas they serve.

Local Tasking meetings exist to problem solve crime issues in local communities. There are two Tasking meetings in Inner South in Beeston/Holbeck/Hunslet and Belle Isle/Middleton. There is an opportunity to improve the way that community safety is addressed by supporting Members to be involved in Tasking meetings.

The role of the Community Safety Champion in Tasking meetings

It is proposed that a pilot is developed in order to:

- Provide a more direct link between Area Committee and Tasking Meetings across the Inner South
- Support the direct input and feedback at Tasking, from Ward Members via the nominated Area Committee representative
- Contribute funding resources for Tasking representatives to support targeted, additional provision.

The Area Committee Community Safety Champion is well placed to develop their role to include a responsibility for Member involvement in Tasking. The Champion has an understanding of the south wide community safety agenda in addition to a knowledge of local issues. S/he will be able to bring this perspective to discussions about local issues. Clearly the Community Safety Champion will be more familiar with the problems and solutions that have arisen in their own ward. However, for the majority of community safety issues similar responses can be applied irrespective of which neighbourhood they are in. The Chair of the Tasking meeting will work with the Community Safety Champion to ensure that the issues they raise are indicative of the issues raised by partners across the area. By developing Member involvement through the Community Safety Champion will help to ensure that their input retains a wider perspective than could be brought by individual ward member.

The key tasks that the Community Safety Champion will fulfil in Tasking are as follows:

1. To improve communication with residents

Members have dialogue with residents who raise issues with them directly rather than or sometimes as well as requesting a service from an agency. Their involvement in the Tasking process gives the Member a better understanding of what's involved in addressing these issues. It also gives an insight and up to date knowledge of what's being done which they can then share with the community. In turn, this will enhance Elected Members accountability to their constituents.

2. To give a different perspective

Local people have a relationship with Councillors that is different than the one they have with agencies. Councillors therefore represent a different perspective when working out ways to tackle issues affecting local people. Bringing this to the table can help find new ways of tackling old problems.

3. To encourage engagement and involvement of partner agencies

Councillors have a role to play in ensuring the quality of the service that's being delivered. They can help to get the right people around the table and also to ensure that action is being carried out.

The Community Safety Champion would be expected to link in with/attend both the Tasking meetings in the Area Committee area they serve. A communication mechanism will be established so that the Champion is able to raise issues on behalf of other Elected Members at the Tasking meetings. The nature of issues raised would need to be monitored in order to ensure they are appropriate for Tasking rather than straightforward requests for service or information that should be dealt with through the usual channels.

It is proposed that this approach is piloted in the Inner South area for a period of six months and subject to ongoing review/discussion. This proposal has been developed in consultation with the NPT Inspectors who chair the Tasking meetings in Inner South. They have confirmed their support for this pilot.