

Report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Customer Access & Performance)

Report to West (Inner) Area Committee

Date: 27th June 2012

Subject: Area Committee Community Engagement Plan

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): Armley, Bramley and Stanningley	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

This report sets out a community engagement plan for the West (Inner)Area Committee. It describes the delegated responsibility for community engagement and highlights the corporate context for this area work. It outlines the work being undertaken to improve community forums and undertake consultation in support of the Business Plan.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Note the content of this report and comment on any of the matters raised
- Agree to receive a further report in the Autumn to review progress made in relation to community engagement

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report describes a community engagement plan for the West (Inner)Area Committee and sets out how the Area Committee will fulfil its delegated responsibility for engagement
- 1.2 The report asks members to consider plans to improve the functioning of community forums and consider the proposed engagement activity in support of the Business Plan.

2 Background information

2.1 A Delegated Responsibility for Engagement:

Area Committees have a responsibility for community engagement delegated by Executive Board as follows:

Each Committee will agree a local community engagement plan based on an agreed template to ensure consistency across the city. Information on how Area Committees have delivered on their community engagement plans, will be included in an annual report to the Executive Board, which outlines achievements from the previous year to deliver the (Area Business Plan), and future priorities.

2011/12 Function Schedule,
Council's Constitution (Part 3, section 3c)

- 2.2 This report describes a Community Engagement Plan for the West (Inner)Area Committee that will fulfil this requirement.
- 2.3 Leeds City Council Spectrum of Engagement

The Leeds City Council Framework for Community Engagement provides a useful context for the West (Inner)community engagement plan. This is broken down into the following strands of activity.

- **Inform** – we tell people what we have decided is going to happen
- **Consult** – we present options and ask for views, but we decide what to do
- **Involve** – we invite communities to develop options with us and jointly decide what to do, but the community aren't necessarily involved in doing anything or taking responsibility or leadership on it
- **Collaborate** – we work with communities in deciding what to do and everyone has a role to play delivering, we are sharing responsibility
- **Empower** – we encourage and support communities to get on and do it for themselves

3 Main issues

This section of the report sets out the key issues affecting the West (Inner)Area Committee community engagement plan.

3.1 **Leeds Citizens Panel**

The development of the Leeds Citizens Panel provides new opportunities for community engagement, particularly at the Area Committee level. The demographic representation and the efficiency with which responses are able to be received and analysed should make it a valuable component of the Area Support Team's community engagement strategy.

The Area Committee has received information on the Leeds Citizens Panel, and work is now progressing to begin its use with the first set of surveys to panel members beginning in May 2012. It is proposed that the results of Citizens Panel consultations be presented to Area Committees in an annual report in the Autumn.

3.2 **Community Forums**

Forum meetings are the primary method for holding public meetings by the Area Support Team and are offered to all four Area Committees in the West North West. There are some variations in how the meetings are delivered, but for the most part they are offered at the Ward level and follow a similar pattern:

- Chaired by an elected member (except Bramley Forum)
- Open to the public to attend
- Held during the evening in locally accessible venues
- A set agenda with speakers from local services
- Administered by Area Support Team
- Accountable to Area Committees but operates in an advisory capacity only

3.3 A recent review of community forum meetings has identified a number changes that can be introduced to improve their value as a community engagement tool. These include:

- Developing an agenda forward plan so that more time is available to get partners involved and a dialogue with the public can be managed over the year.
- A programme of Forum publicity should be developed which seeks to increase public attendance.
- Services should be encouraged to attend and contribute more to forum meetings.
- Building on the value of the Police PACT meetings, opportunities for merging other public meetings with Forums should be considered.
- A wider range of meeting formats should be developed which improve the quality of the engagement.
- The content of Forum meetings should link to Area Committee Business Plan consultation
- The equality impact of forum meetings should be considered

3.4 The West (Inner)Area Committee currently supports two community forums as follows:

- Armley Community Forum
The Armley Forum meets 10 times a year and is chaired by Cllr Harper

- Bramley Community Forum
The Bramley Forum meets 6 times a year and is chaired by Steve McBarron who was elected by the forum.

3.5 **Priority Neighbourhoods**

Where Area Committees have identified individual neighbourhoods which should be targeted to address service improvement and deprivation issues, additional consultation will be undertaken. This will normally take the form of public meetings where the attending public will be asked to identify neighbourhood improvement priorities and give comment on proposed actions by services.

For the Inner West Area Committee, New Wortley, Wythers, Broadleas and Fairfields have been identified as priority neighbourhoods. The suggested arrangements for supporting this neighbourhood working is discussed in a report elsewhere on the agenda, however further work is needed to clarify the thematic priorities for each neighbourhood.

3.6 **Area Committee Business Plan Consultation**

The Area Committee Business Plans set out each committee's priorities for service integration and improvement against the themes of the Leeds Strategic Plan.

The Area Support Team will continue to take a lead role in supporting the Area Committees to revise and refresh the Business Plans each year to ensure the priorities and outcomes are still relevant and reflect the views of local people.

An annual programme of Business Plan consultation will be developed which provides information on how of proposed changes to services will be implemented and how these changes will impact people locally. Further work is needed to clarify how this activity will be undertaken and what should be done to ensure consistency across the service.

4.0 **Corporate Considerations**

4.1 **Consultation and Engagement**

Area Committees have a delegated responsibility for community engagement. This report sets out how the West (Inner)Area Committee will seek to meet this requirement.

4.2 **Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration**

Each of the elements of the Area Committee Community Engagement Plan has been reviewed individually in relation to equality and diversity.

4.3 **Council policies and City Priorities**

Community engagement is one of the cross-cutting themes that underpins the delivery of the city and council plans, and links to a wide range of existing or developing agendas, including the Customer Access Strategy, Equalities,

Research and intelligence, Commissioning and is a key aspect of The Commission on the Future of Local Government.

4.4 Resources and value for money

Area Support Team will provide the officer support to the Inner West Area Committee community engagement plan. The team will work to ensure that community forums and business plan consultation activities are supported efficiently and that they offer good value to the Area Committee.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

There are no legal implications associated with this report. In line with the Council's Executive and Decision Making Procedure Rules, all decisions taken by Area Committees are not eligible for Call In

4.6 Risk Management

This report describes a community engagement plan which will help the Area Committee to understand community needs and priorities and reduce the risk of legal challenge to decisions on the basis of weak or flawed consultation evidence.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 Community engagement fulfils a key function of the Area Committee. The Area Support Team will continue to offer support to the Area Committee to deliver community forums and undertake engagement activity in support of the Business Plan.

6 Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Note the content of this report and comment on any of the matters raised
- Agree to receive a further report in the Autumn to review progress made in relation to community engagement

7 Background documents¹

- June 2011 Area Committee Roles report to West (Inner)Area Committee
- July 2011 Report to Corporate Leadership Team, A New Citizens Panel for Leeds
- October 2011 Business Plan Report to North West (Outer) Area Committee
- December 2011 Citizens Panel Report to West (Inner)Area Committee

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available for inspection on request for a period of four years following the date of the relevant meeting. Accordingly this list does not include documents containing exempt or confidential information, or any published works. Requests to inspect any background documents should be submitted to the report author.