

Review of Area Working - Report of Findings and Recommendations

1 Aim of the Review

- 1.1 A review of area working arrangements was commissioned in June 2012 to examine the way we currently work through area committees, Area leadership and support, Directorate/service area working arrangements and local partnerships. The review aimed to take stock of our recent progress, compare this with our aspirations and make recommendations about the next steps in delivering locally responsive and accountable services.
- 1.2 A project brief for the review was agreed (appendix 1) which set out a number of specific objectives ie:
- To consider how joint-working and improved engagement between the council's Executive (e.g. Members of Executive Board) and area committees can be achieved.
 - To review the powers and responsibilities delegated to area committees and other locality based arrangements with a view to assessing their effectiveness; recommending improvements; and, identifying new potential responsibilities and delegations.
 - To consider the effectiveness of community and partner engagement through the existing area committee and Forum based arrangements and make recommendations for improving citizen engagement across the whole of the city.
 - Consider the effectiveness of partnership working at the local level and the ability of local councillors and their communities to hold local services to account and influence decision makers to deliver improved local services.
 - Consider the geography of our current locality based working arrangements and make recommendations to ensure such arrangements are coherent and well understood.
 - Consider locality based funding arrangements and make recommendations where required to provide for equity in funding allocations and arrangements across the city.

2 Background and Context

History of Area Working in the Council

- 2.1 The Council's existing area management and locality working arrangements have been in place since 1999 when Community Involvement Teams were created across the city. Since then they have been developed over time as we have striven to be more local in our understanding, thinking, decision making and service delivery arrangements. In 2011, new locality working arrangements were introduced which brought about changes to area management teams, with the appointment of three Area Leaders and Area

Leadership Teams and the creation of new area-based support teams. The key milestones in this development are set out in appendix 2.

Policy Context

- 2.2 Alongside our own locality working ambitions, the Government is also driving a policy agenda around localism. This is being implemented through a number of government initiatives set out in the Localism Act 2011 and through the Open Public Services agenda. These cover a number of new approaches including neighbourhood planning, community right to challenge, community asset transfer, a scheme of delegation for neighbourhood councils (including Parish and Town councils), community budgets and neighbourhood commissioning. More detail on these can be found in appendix 3.
- 2.3 Building on this, and as a response to the significant challenges facing local government, Leeds initiated and led a Commission on the Future of Local Government 2012 which sought to examine the role of local government in the 21st century. Central to the work of the commission was the concept of 'civic enterprise'. This is a new leadership style for local government where councils become more innovative and enterprising, business and other partners becomes more civic and communities become more engaged. The [Commission report](#) outlines 5 propositions for encouraging civic enterprise and ten characteristics of an enterprising council. Particularly resonant for the review is one of its ten suggested characteristics of an enterprising council *"there is clear evidence of direct empowerment of local ward members and citizens on specific policy issues or outcome areas, supported by strong local relationships."* The commission's focus on the critical importance of local democratic leadership in driving the way in which local government responds to a changing and ever more challenging environment appeared to resonate with many people.
- 2.4 The findings of the commission are being used to further develop and shape our best council ambition in line with becoming a more enterprising council, which although smaller in size will be bigger in influence by having:
- Strong democratic city-wide and local leadership
 - Commissioned and directly provided public services achieving our city priorities
 - Locally responsive, integrated front line services
 - An enabling corporate centre
 - Values based, enterprising culture

3 Delivery of the Review

- 3.1 The review was undertaken from June to November 2012 and has focused on gathering the views and feedback from across a range of stakeholders including members, area leaders and their teams, directorates and service managers and the Trade Unions. At the review stage the consultation has

been primarily concentrated within the council, as it has been focused on our own locality working arrangements; however a number of partner views were forthcoming and these have been included as appropriate. The officer consultation sought both to gather general views as well as considering some of the specific issues identified by members. A summary of the key points raised in the member and officer consultations are set out in more detail in appendices 4 and 5. In developing and implementing many of the actions recommended by the review further consultation will be undertaken particularly to ensure the views of partners are included and can shape the next steps.

- 3.2 The review was been overseen by an All Party Working Group as well as an officer project team. The key findings, conclusions and recommendations have been discussed and agreed by both groups. Recommendations have been further debated and shaped by senior officers and members.

4 Key Findings and Conclusions

- 4.1 The key findings of the review are set out below against each of the specific objectives:

Joint-working between Members of Executive Board and Area Committees

- 4.2 Some concerns were expressed as to the lack of real clarity about the explicit role of area committees in relation to executive members and Scrutiny. A clear view was expressed by members that the profile and importance of area committees needs to be raised so that they can provide the strong local leadership role as set out within the locality working design principles and best city and best council ambitions. The role was felt to be clearly articulated within the constitution and is summarised as – influencing / shaping council service delivery at a local level including both a focus on functions formally delegated to them and influencing other service outcomes of significance to individual localities. The role of area committees as defined in the constitution is as follows:

- improve co-ordinate and influence services at a local level;
- act as a focal point for community involvement;
- take locally based decisions that deal with local issues;
- provide for accountability at a local level;
- help elected members to listen to and represent their communities;
- help elected members to understand the specific needs of the community in their area;
- promote community engagement in the democratic process;
- promote working relationships with parish and town councils; and
- promote the well being of their area.

4.3 However, this role is perhaps not clearly enough understood across the organisation. An important element of this was felt to be engaging with, and influencing, executive members to ensure key local issues in terms of service delivery or local needs are represented at this level. It was also acknowledged that the local elected members' role goes beyond area committees as local democratic leaders and that this is exercised through other partnership arrangements and networks. This is further explored in paragraphs 4.24 – 4.30.

4.4 The relationship between area committees and the Executive Board was discussed in some detail. The review identified a potential solution to improve and develop this link (as well as resolving some other issues) by developing the current member champion role. This role was felt to be important in providing a local “lead” perspective on various issues and had great potential to do more in driving democratic accountability. Including supporting the executive members in policy development and challenging services to be more locally focused. The “champion” title was not seen as helpful with “area lead” felt to better articulate the role eg “Area Lead for Health and Wellbeing”. It was felt that further work is needed to define the role, consider the concerns raised within the review eg time pressures on members and develop the training and support arrangements needed. As a starting point for this work the discussions held as part of the review proposed that the role should include the following:

- Working closely with area committee chairs to identify and lead relevant debates at area committees supported by officers as required.
- Representing the area committee at local project or partnership meetings, and in the commissioning process to ensure the needs and interest of the area are represented. Where required, issues may be brought back to the area committee for further consultation/discussion and/or formal decision making.
- Developing informal opportunities and networks with council services and key partners to build understanding, drive closer partnership working, provide challenge and bring a local democratic perspective to a wider range of service delivery.
- Supporting the relevant executive portfolio holder and officer lead(s) to ensure a locality dimension to policy development, highlight any service issues/failures, drive service improvement, to share best practice and capture and learn from innovative approaches developed through area committees. To be effective this does require executive members to meet regularly with area leads and/or area committee chairs.
- Working with officers to ensure local needs are well understood and progress is monitored through regular performance updates especially for any delegated functions.

- 4.5 The All Party Working Group felt it important that a standard set of area lead roles were nominated by every area committee. These should be focused on the delegated functions as this is where the role can have the greatest impact. But it was agreed that there were also some other important areas where a local lead was needed. Over and above this minimum others could be nominated by area committees to reflect key local issues and that the appointment may also be time limited in response to a specific issue eg implementation of new legislation with a significant local impact eg welfare reform. The list of essential portfolios needs to be considered and developed through the implementation phase, in close consultation with area committee chairs, with a view to having these in place from the new municipal year.
- 4.6 A key success factor for the area lead role is that we actively consult and engage with them. In the past we have nominated champions but then not used them effectively or they haven't been fully aware of the requirements upon them.
- 4.7 Some area committees have reported difficulties in appointing to the current champion roles. Officers also felt that consideration should be given to appointing area leads for a minimum of two years to enable the development of the relevant expertise (subject of course to election outcomes). It will require members to take on a wider role across the geography of the area committee and for other area committee members to endorse/support the area lead in representing the area committees views. Key to this will be the area lead keeping the committee apprised of debates/actions from partnership bodies, bringing back key issues for debate and formal decision by the area committee as required. The area leads will also need to work closely with the area committee chairs in scheduling debates and to ensure appropriate time is set aside on agendas. Finally, this is essentially replacing an existing role, is not necessarily resource intensive rather a sensible way to divide up work between members of the area committee with an expectation that each member would take on a lead role. Therefore this is not seen to be a post that is subject to remuneration.

Powers and responsibilities delegated to Area Committees - Delegations

- 4.8 Elected members wanted to be able to do more in terms of local decision-making and influencing services locally. But the effectiveness of area committees in influencing service outcomes was questioned by both officers and members. One person likened area committees to a "toothless tiger". Both members and area leaders/teams identified a small number of service areas where they found it difficult to make progress in developing a more local focus to delivery. There are a number of reasons for this including a lack of understanding of the role of members and area committees, ways of working that have continued over time and have not been challenged, lack of experience of many officers in working with members, quality of debate and negative experiences of attending some area committees. Clearly reports/presentations which do not sufficiently address local issues cause frustration with some members which is sometimes very clearly expressed

in the meetings. This is not helpful or productive. Broadly, most officers recognised the need for closer working with members especially in finding the best ways to deal with the financial challenges at a local level.

- 4.9 The environmental services delegation was universally seen as a successful model with a number of key factors identified. It has been based upon an open and honest discussion with members which, over time, has led to a common understanding and clear expectations. It has also enabled clearer accountability with the service directly accountable to the area committee via the relevant sub-committee and members are accountable for setting the priorities for the service. It was accompanied by a significant change in the service itself which has enabled it to structure itself in a way that supports more locally responsive service delivery although the teams are mostly run at an administrative area level in order to make most efficient use of resources. On the downside it did take significant time and effort to implement and it has been difficult to clearly track improvements due to a lack of local level data – although this is improving. However, this does provide a good model for the delivery of more responsive local services and provides platform upon which to develop our ambition of strong local democratic leadership. It is also worth emphasising that this delegation did not involve a direct budget delegation but focused on delivering a locally responsive service.
- 4.10 That said, the review also concluded that formal delegations are not the only way for achieving influence and we need to consider other ways to do this depending upon circumstances eg where a service is commissioned. This will depend upon the actual service in question but other options include devolving budgets directly, service level agreements (SLAs)/service standards, influencing commissioning or simply having better on-going communication/liaison arrangements. Members were broadly relaxed about the “how” and more concerned about the outcome of locally responsive and accountable services.
- 4.11 The consultation identified a number of areas where members want more locally responsive services whether they be true delegations or alternative forms of local influence on delivery. The All Party Working Group identified 3 priorities for action in the first phase on implementation from this list:
- a) Youth services – especially activities for children and young people in the local area. At the time of the review proposals were in development for a greater role for area committees which is likely to be in place for the new municipal year.
 - b) Neighbourhood planning – this is a complex area with relatively new legislation that devolves some planning powers to parish/town councils or designated neighbourhood forums. Significant work is already underway and the role for the area committees was set out in a paper to Executive Board in June. That is, area committees have a key consultative role to play in all aspects of the neighbourhood planning process. They will be able to advise, signpost, empower and provide mediation if needed. Prior to a decision being made on the designation

of neighbourhood areas or the designation of neighbourhood forums, the Chief Planning Officer will consult the relevant area committee(s) on timescales, issues and the boundary to be adopted. Area committees can also contribute to the examiners advisory report, consultation and engagement issues, referendum arrangements, the implementation of neighbourhood plans and linking to the wider localism agenda. Work already underway to implement the new legislation needs to continue with area chairs and area committees continuing to be closely involved in shaping this agenda.

- c) Employment and skills – responsibility for this area is currently shared across a number of partners with a range of services both directly provided and commissioned. This fragmentation, is clearly a source of frustration to members and there is an opportunity for area committees play a key role in drawing this together, providing leadership at the local level and forging links with local businesses. Indeed there are already good examples of this happening eg The Point (White Rose Learning Centre) which has brought existing partnership activity together to better meet local needs and link these to local employment opportunities. The nomination of an Area Lead for Employment and Skills with strong links back to the Executive Member for Leisure and Skills will be important in identifying and developing these bottom up opportunities that help to bring more focus to partnership activity in a way that works for the local community. Further work is needed to define and shape this role in the implementation phase.

4.12 Other potential services identified by members and officers for more local determination were local parks and open space and local highways maintenance. The recent move of the Parks and Countryside Service into Environment and Neighbourhoods Directorate provides an opportunity to develop/expand the current environmental service delegation to include all or some aspects of these services rather than develop a new delegation from scratch. There is also potential for further links and integration with some housing estate management functions depending upon the outcome of the ALMO review. In terms of highways discussions are on-going to identify more effective ways for members to influence the development and agreement of the annual programme for local highways maintenance. New arrangements have been agreed for raising and dealing with issues that arise during the year. Discussions need to continue with these services, area leaders, portfolio holders and area chairs to develop these arrangements and ensure that they are working effectively.

4.13 Increasingly services are being commissioning rather than directly provided and an important gap identified by the review was the mechanism for members to ensure local needs can influence specifications and feedback can form part of contract/service monitoring processes. The council is currently undertaking a fundamental review of its commissioning and procurement processes through the “Transforming Procurement” Programme. A significant part of this is the introduction of a category management approach as well as ensuring that we adopt a flexible and proportionate approach to commissioning in line with our civic enterprise

ambitions. In light of this significant programme of work which is already underway it is proposed the this be tasked with considering this issue in more detail and making proposals for the ways in which local members can influence – with a focus on local commissioning decisions.

- 4.14 The review also identified that there are some existing delegations (community centres & CCTV) which are not working and need review. It was noted that work is already underway in terms of community centres as set out below. The issue for CCTV is that the service relies on wellbeing funding but in reality it is a fixed asset that cannot really be influenced by members on an on-going basis.
- 4.15 In terms of the community centre review it is useful to note that this is a comprehensive piece of work which is aiming to ensure community centres are safe accessible and well-used neighbourhood assets and introduce a new model of community centre delivery. In many ways the approach being pursued has a complimentary direction of travel to the recommendations of the review in terms of seeking more local determination. It is examining new and innovative ways of managing centres, considering such issues as governance and accountability, outcomes and impact, marketing, rental levels, and property and facilities management. Alongside the city wide modelling work, a review of community centre provision and usage is taking place across three identified areas of the city (one in each administrative area). This has involved detailed consultation with users (organisations and individuals) and a detailed analysis of usage rates, running costs, income and subsidies. This work is overseen by a Community Centre Advisory Board with a wide range of stakeholders including an area committee chair, third sector organisations and various council services.

Powers and responsibilities delegated to Area Committees - Local Assets

- 4.16 Linked to this the council is also at the early stages of developing a new approach to asset management which combines asset rationalisation in line with reducing budgets and service transformation with investment in improving those assets we are keeping. Whilst this is still at an early stage an important principle has been agreed in line with the review for there to be more local determination through area committees particularly in relation to any potential asset rationalisation decision. This debate will also include the consideration of incentives eg a share of capital receipts that can then be re-invested in the local area.

Powers and responsibilities delegated to Area Committees – Reporting to Area Committees

- 4.17 Elected members expressed some frustration about what, and how, reports were put before area committees. Issues were raised about their lack of focus on local issues and challenges and with too many reports just “to note”. It was also felt that area committee agendas are often too full and too paper heavy. There was a sense that reports being brought to area committees were often seen as a “tick box” exercise sometimes presented too late to shape decisions. This is an issue that area chairs and area

leaders need to address jointly and with individual services in a way that works for their own committee. Area committees should also consider if they currently make the most of the options open to them in terms of co-optees, deputations and open forums. Options discussed as part of the review for consideration include, but are not limited to:

- A forward work programme for each area committee to be agreed along with the Committees' annual business plan. The forward work programme to be updated, in consultation with the chair, before each area committee meeting and reported to the area committee.
- The forward work programme will identify a major 'theme' or 'topic' for each area committee meeting and the associated area lead. The relevant area lead will take the political lead for their topic at the area committee meeting. Universal and targeted publicity will be undertaken to promote the themed debates to the public and stakeholder groups. Opportunities are being explored to use social media and new technology better in this area. Themed meeting will require services to support and enable this.
- Area leaders to develop a clearance process for city wide reports seeking area committee views. Area leaders will work with colleagues to ensure that all reports to area committees have a relevance to the locality.
- Area leaders, working with Governance Services to identify suitable ways by which information items can be provided to members and the public without the need to be on the agenda for area committees.

4.18 The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods, Planning and Support Services working with area committee chairs will continue to review these arrangements and ensure regular discussions to identify and capture best practice.

Effectiveness of community and partner engagement through Area Committees.

4.19 Members described a range of arrangements in relation to encouraging community engagement including through open forums, public meetings, having co-opted public representatives on the area committees themselves as well as having links to residents' and other community groups. Elected members felt that this was working reasonably well with locally defined arrangements. There was a general sense that a "one size fits all" approach to this and other aspects of the locality working approach needed to be avoided. However, conversely, it was recognised that a considerable amount of officer time is consumed in supporting a huge range of local forums, many of which do not attract significant audiences and do not necessarily provide a representative view.

4.20 Members' role in consulting/engaging the public might also be seen as empowering, advocating and championing. It was felt that there needed to be clearer pathways to connect people and services with area committees

and area support teams having a key role to play in brokering, advising and guiding without this being a “one size fits all” approach. There is an opportunity to strengthen the area committee role as the local hub for community engagement. The Citizen’s Panel and other local intelligence are important tools and area committees and area support teams felt they needed to be better linked into these arrangements.

- 4.21 Members felt the real gap was in involving communities much more directly in designing and commissioning services i.e. a more restorative approach of doing “with” not “to”. This includes the consideration of other models that move beyond engagement for those communities who are ready for this eg Community Development Trusts.
- 4.22 The review identified that there is currently a range of parallel community engagement processes run separately by partners eg Police community liaison meetings. Many officers suggested the need for a more joined up approach to community engagement with partners in the future with area committees having a key role to play in leading and shaping these. The creation of the new clinical commissioning groups who have yet to identify their approach presents an opportunity to pilot an approach in this area.
- 4.23 Work is already underway to review and develop a “Way Forward on Consultation and Engagement” and bearing in mind the breadth and complexity of this issue it is suggested that the challenges identified are taken forward through this work. So that those with more expertise in the council and across the partnership are tasked with bringing forward specific proposals in this area, including supporting members in gaining representative views and joining up with partners.

Effectiveness of partnership working at the local level

- 4.24 As discussed above the area committee role is clarified to be influencing/shaping council service delivery on a local level. Local elected members’ role goes beyond this as local democratic leaders. With a leadership of place role exercised through, and within, partnership arrangements and formal and informal networks. The review identified a number of barriers to this not least significant confusion on behalf of officers and members about the relative role of the various partnership bodies including area leadership teams, area health and wellbeing boards, ALMO area panels, children’s clusters etc. There are some concerns that the same issues are discussed in several places but it remains unclear where the true leadership or accountability sits. It is also important that discussions are two way, action-focused and where barriers or blockages are encountered these go to the right place to be resolved. It was felt that further clarification needed to be given in terms of roles and relationships which would maximise resources, improve joint working, improve outcomes and reduce duplication. There is a specific opportunity at the current time to forge effective links with the new clinical commissioning groups as these become established across the city. This “mapping work” will require further consultation and discussion with the relevant boards/bodies in agreeing roles and responsibility and joint working arrangements. This work

also needs to consider and ensure that all partners have an active role in these arrangements.

- 4.25 Elected members identified particular concerns with area committees' links to children's clusters. Some elected members expressed the view that the clusters were working well and there were productive links through jointly funded projects and activities. In more cases, elected members felt that there was a lack of understanding of their roles and structures and relationships were less good. But at its worst members felt they were deliberately frozen out and excluded from the decision making. It is acknowledged that the clusters are still variable in terms of their maturity and approach and Children's Services has a programme of support and development to address this. This includes working collectively with all elected member cluster representatives and the local authority partners who represent the council on the clusters. However, in the context of increased autonomy of schools, they are an important vehicle for partnership working and it is acknowledged that their funding is through an agreed top-slice of schools budgets. The more recent appointment of elected members onto clusters provides an opportunity to balance this autonomy with local democratic accountability. It is acknowledged that at the time of the consultation, many members had only just been appointed to clusters and there was little experience of joint working to draw upon. Members on clusters need to continue to raise any key issues with the Executive Member for Children's Services or the local authority partner.
- 4.26 It was noted by the review that the appointments to clusters were made by Member Management Committee in order to secure cross party member representation. However, concerns were expressed about the fact that elected member representatives on the clusters had not been nominated directly by area committees and therefore, the relationship between the two had not been clearly established. To further embed this relationship an opportunity exists for those appointments to be made by the respective area committees. The proposed youth service delegation also provides an opportunity for area committees and clusters to work together to forge better links and focus on outcomes for children and families in the local area.
- 4.27 A wide range of views were expressed by elected members around links to parish and town councils, some unaffected who had no view either way, some where relationships were poor and others where links were deemed to be good. Within the council's constitution, area committees have a designated role to promote working relationships; with a similar role for parish and town councils set out within the parish and town council charter. The views of parish and town councillor were captured as part of the review and are summarised in appendix 6. These were similarly varied. A scrutiny inquiry has commenced to further examine this issue and views gathered as part of this review have been used to scope and inform this work. It is proposed that this inquiry brings forward specific proposals and recommendations once completed which can be included in the implementation of the review.

4.28 Another key aspect in effective partnership working is how well members are supported and equipped to make the most of all the opportunities they have to influence both within, and beyond, the council. The Member Development Working Group, led by the Member Development Officer, is currently working on a new framework for the community leader role, which emphasises the potential for councillors to fulfil the role of ‘civic entrepreneur’ as promoted in the Commission report (see 2.3). A new style of community leadership would see councillors using all the tools at their disposal to engage communities in making their own difference. Potential skills to be developed could include:

- Negotiating and influencing
- Community engagement, using new methods such as social media
- Facilitation
- Community development.

4.29 These skills will be addressed through practical learning opportunities such as action learning sets, coaching and joint programmes with partners and officers. Emphasis will be placed on sharing good practice and expertise amongst members, as well as learning from the experiences of other local authorities.

4.30 Another key element in the success of partnership-working is addressing the lack of understanding of members’ and area committees’ roles as noted in 4.24. In order to promote empathy, increase contact and develop successful routes to communication. A political awareness programme is now being delivered to officers across the authority in conjunction with executive members.

Consider geography of our current locality based working arrangements

4.31 The current geography of our area based arrangements consists of 10 area committees, 3 administrative areas/area leadership teams, and 25 children’s clusters. All of which have evolved over time alongside partners structures like the housing ALMOs, neighbourhood policing teams and more recently clinical commissioning groups. These arrangements were acknowledged to be complex, but there are many good reasons for them and there was little appetite for changing these at the current time. It was felt that the achievement of a coherent set of boundaries across the partnership would cause a huge amount of disruption when many of the area committees/partnership bodies are well established and good relationships exist. It is also important to reflect that it is dynamic and effective working relationships that matter more than boundaries and structures.

4.32 The review did explore our existing area committee boundaries with the consensus that there was no rationale for major change at this time; and indeed that the disruption in making changes to boundaries would potentially detract focus from improving outcomes in the local area. However, a number of members expressed the view that the one 2 ward

area committee (Inner West) was difficult to make work in terms of identifying members for sub groups and champion roles, dealing with the work in general and being quorate at meetings.

- 4.33 A number of possible solutions were debated by the All Party Working Group but it has not been possible to agree a solution that was acceptable to all stakeholders. Therefore, other practical options are being explored with Inner West Area Committee including bringing additional capacity to the committee through co-optees, combining sub-groups into a single general purposes group and exploring options for cross boundary working with other wards/area committees on some issues.

Area Committees – funding and resource allocation

- 4.34 The review considered the existing wellbeing budget allocation and the current formula for distributing funds to area committees on the formula of 50% per capita and 50% on deprivation indices. There was an agreement that the current formula was appropriate at this moment in time.
- 4.35 It was noted that wellbeing funding was being used for a wide variety of purposes in line with the considerable flexibility area committees have in deciding what to fund. Some is used to support innovative bottom up and grass-roots ways of working in line with civic enterprise ambitions compared with other more routine activities like extra litter picking or Christmas lights. In some areas this was split into ward pots with others commissioning jointly. In some cases the value of the funding is increased/maximised through being used to lever in additional funding which requires match funding or pooled with other resources like ALMO area panel and cluster funding. The All Party Working Group were clear that area committees should retain their autonomy in identifying appropriate projects for spending wellbeing funds but that they should aim to use well-being funding to lever in additional funding wherever possible through match funding or pooling budgets. They felt that this would be facilitated by the development/maintenance of database of funding sources within area teams. But it was also acknowledged that often outer areas find it more difficult to access additional funding streams where these are focused on deprived areas.
- 4.36 There will be significant changes to local funding streams in the near future as Community Infrastructure Levy and other sources of funding come on line and with S 106 being significantly scaled back. Further discussions are needed to consider how best to administer and spend these funds and how they should be split between city-wide and within localities to deliver the city priorities. Within the on-going discussions on the development of our new medium term financial strategy the ambition of directly devolving budgets to local level to enable local discretion between different area of spend has been identified as important. However, it is too early to include specific recommendations at this time.
- 4.37 The review identified that an important role for area committees, particularly through their wellbeing fund, is in developing innovative, community/third

sector led bottom up approaches to solving entrenched problems. However, there are limited ways to mainstream these innovative grass-roots solutions that develop through locality working. We need to be better at developing these bottom up approaches and knitting these with top down and clearly area committees are well placed to play a key role. Linked to this the council and partners need to be able to respond and reshape services where necessary moving away from direct provision and towards commissioning the most suitable provider. One of the particular challenges for the council in doing this is how quickly we can re-direct mainstream resources which are too often tied up in buildings or staff. A small civic enterprise fund is also currently being piloted to help to unlock and bring to life civic enterprise in the city.

- 4.38 The issue of “fair share” in terms of resource allocation came through very strongly in the consultation and it is important that we are able to balance members desire to get the best service for their ward with the ability to target resources to address and prioritise inequalities across the city. This is a challenge that needs to be resolved on a case-by-case basis through a mature and open debate, as we have seen in environmental services. This needs to shift the focus from “resources in” to outcomes supported by local data and evidence including the views of local people. Further work is needed to identify and develop better local intelligence for area committees with a particularly focus on delegated functions. Again strong links to the executive members with oversight for a particular service area are key to finding the right solutions for this issue. Services will also need to develop locally based solutions where appropriate to support and enable effective local determination.
- 4.39 In particular, strengthening the role of area committees and enabling them more influence on local service delivery; will in turn result in more locally responsive service delivery. But also in the current climate of shrinking resources a number of difficult decisions will be required on where to focus spending in the future. By having strong local decision making it will also ensure local members are able to make the most efficient use of resources in line with what the public in their area needs and wants. However, where services are to be delegated to area committees with a reduction in funding then this needs to be clearly communicated and transparent.

Conclusion

- 4.40 The review concluded that the overall structure of 10 area committees, 3 administrative areas and 25 children’s clusters are well established and provide the right building blocks for locality working. The majority of views expressed were not advocating major structural change. But there is definitely a need to optimise and make the better use of what we already have. Part of this is about more clearly understanding the relative roles and responsibilities of both individuals, the area committees and other partnership bodies and ensuring that members are equipped to make the most of all the opportunities they have to influence within, and beyond, the council.

4.41 The review has identified a number of opportunities to enable members to better influence council services in their local area. But in some cases more work is needed to understand and agree the best mechanisms to achieve this for the range of directly provided services. In particular, recognising that formal delegations/service level agreements (SLA) are just one way to achieve this but that there might be different ways to achieve this goal. The review has identified two significant gaps and a number of the recommendations seek to address these gaps:

- mechanism for members to influence services which are commissioned locally (both by the council alone, and with partners) which is likely to become a more significant gap over time. The approach proposed is for nominated area leads to fulfil this role but further work is needed to develop the practical mechanisms for achieving this that fit with the variety of commissioning process. This will be further considered within the Transforming Procurement programme
- there is a need to mainstream the innovative grass-roots solutions that develop through locality working often supported by area committees through their wellbeing funds.

4.42 This review has identified a diverse range of recommendations, and as the continued development and implementation of area working is so important to our stated ambitions, it is proposed that Executive Board receives an annual report on this issue. This will bring together progress updates in implementing our locality design principles which will ensure continued focus and challenge in this important area. The report could be jointly developed by area chairs and area leaders.

Recommendations

4.43 The recommendations below set out a range of improvements but we need to acknowledge that these build upon a huge range of actions/improvement work which is already underway. It is important that the review moves swiftly from the fact finding and investigation toward delivery so the recommendations below are a mixture of both short term/quick wins and longer term developments that will require further investigation and consultation to properly scope and shape. A comprehensive implementation plan will be developed over the coming months to drive forward progress. It is recommended that Executive Board:

- endorses and supports the commitment and ambition to drive forward a step change in locality working with the role of area committees being key to ensuring more locally responsive and accountable services.
- endorse and supports the development of more locally responsive and accountable services generally and agree priority action in the following areas with further reports being prepared on how these services can be more locally focused or delegated:
 - Youth services

- Neighbourhood planning
 - Employment and skills
 - Local parks and green space
 - Local highways maintenance
- supports the principle of area committee members taking an "area lead" approach on a specific area of council policy or business to provide area committee based leadership on key issues.
 - further supports that area lead members work closely with the relevant executive portfolio holder and the relevant director on issues to better align city wide and local policy making, share best practice and help embed the locality working design principles.
 - requests that a detailed proposal for the introduction of the area lead member role be prepared for agreement and implementation in the new municipal year.
 - partnership structures are mapped in each of the three administrative areas with roles, responsibilities and links documented, discussed and agreed with area committees and area leadership teams. Each area committee to agree who represents them on each partnership body.
 - supports the proposal for area committees to forge links and develop good working relationship with the new clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) to exploit opportunities for collaboration within the health and well-being agenda.
 - requests that Member Management Committee reviews the mechanism for appointing elected members to children's clusters.
 - notes the outcome of the review of locality-based funding arrangements and commits to the continued allocation of the well-being grant as per existing arrangements (a ratio of 50:50 in terms of population and deprivation) and give further thought to how new funding regimes can be locally provided/influenced as they come on-stream.
 - supports the proposal to look at delegating more funding to local decision making in support of the developing council's budget strategy 2013-2017.
 - notes that the review has concluded that no changes are necessary to the area committee boundaries at this time.
 - also notes the concerns expressed regarding the Inner West Area Committee and it consisting of only two wards and in order to help respond to the capacity issue requests that consideration be given to utilising the current option of co-optees to enhance the membership of the Area Committee.

- requests that the issue of how area committees operate relative to officers attending; for what purpose and their general administration be looked at further (e.g. agreeing agendas, papers and other similar issues) with new arrangements being developed and proposed in time for the new municipal year.
- requests that a further report be prepared on options for improving locality based consultation and engagement activities.

Project Brief: Review of Area Working – Next Steps

Context:

The Council's existing area management and locality working arrangements have been in place for a number of years. Since their introduction much has been achieved as we strive to be more local in our understanding, thinking, decision making and service delivery arrangements. In 2011 new locality working arrangements were introduced which brought about changes to area management teams, with the appointment of Area Leaders and Area Leadership Teams and the creation of new area based support teams. These changes were underpinned by a set of locality working design principles that were agreed by Members of Executive Board in December 2010 and which are appended at annex 1.

Whilst Elected Members have generally been positive about the role and function of Area Committee arrangements, and recognise their importance in delivering a locality focussed agenda, many Members are also keen to stress that in terms of delegation of responsibilities and true local accountability, there is great potential to achieve much more and become true custodians of place. The introduction on new area based delegations in regard to a range of environmental services in 2011, where Members have identified significant improvements in terms of responsiveness of services; their ability to influence priorities; and improved cleanliness in their local communities, has identified a new approach to service delegations to local areas that does indeed work. Work is now needed to see what more can be done to ensure a wider group of services are responsive and accountable to local areas. Some suggestions that have already been highlighted include the potential for Area Committees to be a formal consultee on land use planning and the extent to which local housing policy/allocations could be delegated to Area Committees. It is anticipated that there will be many more suggestions that are identified through this review.

Linked to delegation and accountability is the issue of funding. This can be considered in two parts. First, whether local Members and local areas have sufficient control, where appropriate, and influence where required, on funding allocations, local spending decisions and funding prioritisation. The second issue relates to city-wide funding allocations and the question of equity across the city, particularly where funding is allocated on a geographic basis. This review will look into both of these issues.

The current geography of our area based arrangements consisting of 10 Area Committees, 3 Administrative Areas, 3 Area Leadership Teams, various Community Forums and 25 Children's Services Clusters has evolved over time. Many people struggle with understanding the overall geography and working arrangements and question whether we have a coherent set of working arrangements in place. Work is now needed to consider the current geography and layering of locality based working arrangements with a view to determining whether any changes are necessary to ensure coherence and equity across the city.

There is also a need to look to strengthen joint-working and engagement between the council's Executive arrangements (e.g. Members of Executive Board) and Area Committees. The need for joint working has been given added impetus by the work of the commission on the future of local government and the increasing activity in the city on civic enterprise and civic pride.

Many of these issues are fundamental to delivering on our localism agenda and a review at this time is considered appropriate to ensure our arrangements are: fit for purpose; effective at engaging with local people; and, really do work to deliver improved outcomes for local people.

Outcome:

Delivery of locality based working arrangements that:

- effectively engage with local people and local partners;
- empower local people and local communities to do more for themselves;
- hold local services to account;
- influence decision makers to deliver improved local services;
- are coherent and understood;
- provide for equity in funding allocations and arrangements.

Objectives:

- a) To review the powers and responsibilities delegated to Area Committees and other locality based arrangements with a view to assessing their effectiveness; recommending improvements; and, identifying new potential responsibilities and delegations.
- b) To consider the effectiveness of community and partner engagement through the existing Area Committee and Forum based arrangements and make recommendations for improving citizen engagement across the whole of the city.
- c) Consider the effectiveness of partnership working at the local level and the ability of local councillors and their communities to hold local services to account and influence decision makers to deliver improved local services.
- d) Consider the geography of our current locality based working arrangements and make recommendations to ensure such arrangements are coherent and well understood.
- e) Consider locality based funding arrangements and make recommendations where required to provide for equity in funding allocations and arrangements across the city.
- f) To consider how joint-working and improved engagement between the council's Executive (e.g. Members of Executive Board) and Area Committees can be achieved.

Timetable and Output:

The initial review work will be progressed over a three month period from June to August 2012 with a report setting out high level changes being prepared for consideration by Members of Executive Board and, if necessary, Full Council, in the Autumn. Implementation work will need to follow over subsequent months depending upon the scale and complexity of the changes agreed

Project Management Arrangements:

Sponsor: The Assistant Chief Executive (Customer Access and Performance)

Lead Executive Member: Executive Member for Planning, Neighbourhoods and Support Services

Project Manager: Heather Pinches, supported by Beth Logan, Alex Hannant and Sarn Warbis

Project Team: James Rogers (Chair), Kathy Kudelnitzky, Mariana Pexton, Lorraine Hallam, Andy Hodson, Tim Pouncey, Rory Barke, Shaid Mahmood, Jane Maxwell, Helen Freeman

All-Party Working Group:

This review will be overseen by an all-party group of Elected Members meeting on a monthly basis.

Cllr Peter Gruen, Cllr Graham Hyde, Cllr Angela Gabriel, Cllr James McKenna, Cllr Andrea McKenna, Cllr Rebecca Charlwood, Cllr Robert Finnigan, Cllr Andrew Carter, Cllr Stewart Golton, Cllr David Blackburn.

Consultees:

- Area Committees, Area Chairs and Area Leadership Teams and Area Support Teams
- Partners
- CLT and Chief Officers
- Local people via the Citizens Panel and local Forums

Locality Working Design Principles

1. Strong and effective **governance** arrangements that are responsive to the needs and aspirations of local communities.
2. Strong **local leadership** (political, council officers and partners) that champions the needs of residents, leads across service boundaries and can be held accountable for the delivery of improved outcomes for local people.
3. **Engage communities** in a way that supports residents in developing local priorities, holding services to account, enabling them to do more for themselves and developing a sense of pride and belonging in their local neighbourhood.
4. Maximise the **use of local intelligence** to prioritise and shape services to local people.
5. Integrate and organise **front line service delivery** to deliver responsive services and support at the right time and in the right place.
6. Maximise the use of **public sector assets** in local communities delivering more integrated and effective services and realising efficiencies wherever possible.
7. Provide a skilled, committed and effective **local workforce** that puts the needs of residents at the centre of service provision.
8. Clearly define the geography and typology of a **neighbourhood** to understand its characteristics so that services are tailored and targeted to meet need effectively and efficiently.
9. **Share good practice** to help improve outcomes for residents across the city.
10. The delivery of positive results for local residents, improving the resilience and **sustainability** of neighbourhoods and reducing the dependency on public services.

Review of Area Working – History of Area Working in Leeds

Key milestones in the development of area working are set out below:

- The city first introduced locally based arrangements in 1999 as it moved towards political modernisation with a new democratic structure (Leader and Executive Board). This created the need to clarify and develop the representative and influential role of local elected members. Sixteen **community involvement teams (CITs)** were subsequently established as a vehicle through which members could take greater responsibility and influence matters in their local areas.
- In 2004, the CIT arrangements evolved into ten **Area Committees** grouped into five administrative areas commonly known as “wedges”. At the same time five **district partnerships** were established to align partnership structures at a local level under the umbrella of the Leeds Initiative. To support this new infrastructure, five **area management teams** were established by the council’s then Department of Neighbourhoods and Housing to improve closer working and local responsiveness of services. At this stage, a number of functions were delegated to Area Committees together with relevant annual revenue and capital budget for the Area Committees to allocate to help to deliver local priorities
- In 2007, the number of wedges reduced from **five to three** and area management teams supporting the Area Committee structure also reduced from five to three. This was in response to changing administrative boundaries of major partners, notably again, the Police, ALMOs and NHS. Also in 2007, the district partnerships were wound up and replaced by three **advisory groups of partner leads** supporting the work of the Area Committees. At a similar time, the need for **service-led locality roles** for Children’s and Adult Services was identified. To this end, senior officer roles were created within Children’s Services and Adult Social Care Directorates to promote the integration of services in complementary professional areas. Children’s Services opted for a five “wedge” option because this model best supported integration mainly for safeguarding and preventative services as well as school-based structures and developments.
- In 2010, the Executive Board agreed further changes to the locality working arrangements informed by a **Pathfinder pilot** project which had been developed in the South East wedge of the city. The Pathfinder recognised the need for more work to improve further joint public service delivery; improve its efficiency and effectiveness through collaborative working; and to promote cultural change within the organisation and within localities. A number of pieces of exploratory and development work trialled new ways of working in areas focussing on people and places through initiatives such as Think Family, Total Place, asset mapping, neighbourhood typologies, integrated environmental services and service re-design amongst others. It was agreed that a new **locality leadership** model be established comprising three Area Leader roles reporting to the Assistant Chief Executive (Customer Access and Performance) to lead the integrated locality working agenda in the three wedges of East North East, West North West and South East. This included the agreement of a set of locality design principles which included at appendix 1 (within the project brief). At this same time, it was agreed that **locality leadership teams** be established, one for each of the three wedge areas to bring together key partners, elected members, third and community sector representatives to drive forward improvements in localities. The proposal that three locality leadership teams should be chaired by directors of the council was also agreed and implemented.

- Most recently **new area based delegations** in regard to a range of street cleansing and environmental enforcement services were introduced in 2011. This delegation and the negotiation of **Service Level Agreements** (SLA) with each Area Committee has been universally regarded as a success. Members have identified significant improvements in terms of responsiveness of services; their ability to influence priorities; and improved cleanliness in their local communities. Officers have similarly cited better working relationships with members, clear democratic accountability of their service and a clear focus for their resources.

Policy Context for the Review of Area Working

1. Financial and Economic

The scale of the funding challenge for local government is well known and indications are that further reductions are expected in 2015/16 and 2016/17. More of our future funding will be tied to the ability to grow our local economy with the proportion of funding from central government reducing over time.

2. Central Government Policy – the Overall Agenda

The current Government policy is aimed at transforming the role of the public sector with 5 underlying themes which run through all of the major policy announcements over the past two years:

- **Choice and control;** evident in key policies around education and to a greater extent in the health and social care act, passing funding powers to local GP commissioning groups and potentially opening the NHS up to much wider competition. Empowering local communities so that they can have more say in developments within their local area and in the provision of local services is also key.
- **Decentralisation** - public services should be decentralised to the “lowest appropriate level”; this is particularly evident in the Police and Social Responsibility Act, the Localism Act, Health and Social Care Act and the Open Public Services White Paper.
- **Diversity of provision** - public services should be open to a range of providers including business, third sector and community groups.
- **Fairness and Accountability** - public services should be fair and accessible to all, but above all accountable to users and taxpayers, with an emphasis on local democratic accountability. The role of elected members is vital here as reflected in much of government policy, as they provide the local democratic accountability that is vital to this agenda.
- **Personal responsibility** – people should take responsibility for themselves and rely less on the state. This is perhaps most evident in the Welfare reforms where personal responsibility and cutting back the role of the state is clearly the driving force. This problem is compounded by the fact that, because of the wider cuts in public services and the impact of the recession, the demand for many services provided by the sector is on the rise.

As a result, radical change is a necessity for many local authorities and will require creative thinking about how and what services should be provided. There is widespread recognition that local government will have to do less and the things that it continues to do will need to be done more efficiently and effectively. This will mean a different role and relationship with the private and third sectors.

3. Central Government Policy – Specific Initiatives

In addition to the overall direction of travel in terms of central government policy there are a number of specific areas of recent legislation and future proposals which could impact very directly on this review including:

- **Neighbourhood Planning** - the Localism Act 2011 devolves powers to parish and town councils or neighbourhood forums to lead on the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans. The aim is for neighbourhood planning to provide an opportunity for local communities to be better engaged in the future of their communities. The Council has a duty to support communities who come forward with requests to set-up neighbourhood forums and designate areas where they

would like to see a neighbourhood plan. A report is going to Executive Board in June setting out our approach in this area which also proposes a role for Area Committees to advise, signpost, empower and provide mediation if needed. Prior to a decision being made on the designation of neighbourhood areas or the designation of neighbourhood forums, the Chief Planning Officer will consult Area Committee on timescales, issues and the boundary to be adopted. Area Committees can also contribute to the examiners advisory report, consultation and engagement issues, referendum arrangements, the implementation of neighbourhood plans and linking to the wider localism agenda.

- **Community Right to Challenge** – This is the power for community groups to challenge for the right to run services although this would then trigger an open procurement process. Regulations setting out the right to challenge have recently been issued and work is underway to develop our approach for receiving and considering expressions of interest and how these would link to existing procurement processes. Informal discussion has highlighted interest in using this power across the city in areas such as Youth Services, Housing Management, Libraries and Community Centres.
- **Community Asset Transfer** - The right to nominate assets to be considered as “assets of community value” has sparked some interest locally and will result in increased interest in community asset transfer. Council’s will be under pressure to support community groups to buy private assets or for the council to bid for private assets on their behalf. Again, these regulation have recently been issued.
- **Neighbourhood Councils (i.e. parish, town and community councils)** – the government is intending to consult over the summer on detailed proposals to make it easier to establish new Neighbourhood Councils. This will include looking at how Neighbourhood Forums (for example, those set up to put together neighbourhood plans under our planning reforms) can easily and straightforwardly form Neighbourhood Councils, should they wish. They are also looking to develop model schemes of delegation for Neighbourhood Councils making clear what powers can be devolved to neighbourhoods, the kinds of assets that can best be managed at community level, and the roles and responsibilities of Neighbourhood Councils and local authorities.
- **Community budgets/Neighbourhood Commissioning** – a range of pilots are underway including implementing neighbourhood-level Community Budgets in 10 areas to develop new ways of giving citizens control over local public services. In nine local areas the Government is supporting neighbourhoods in developing community commissioning models, such as Local Integrated Services (LIS). Government is intending to review the implementation of these policies in 2013, and consider the need for further action (including legislation) to help communities realise their local ambitions.

Review of Area Working – Summary of Member Consultation Inputs

The review of area working aims to take stock of our progress, as well as, identifying the next steps in taking this agenda forward; with the overall aim of implementing the agreed locality design principles. An important element of the review has been seeking views from key stakeholders including elected members. This paper summarises the key issues identified through the initial member consultation.

A series of drop in sessions were held over July and August 2012 where members were asked for their views on area committees, area working, engagement of the public, local service provision and priorities for change. Overall 35 members attended one of the sessions or provided views in other ways. On some issues the views expressed varied considerably. This appendix summarises the main points. In particular, it highlights areas where opinions were consistent, as well as, those areas where opinions were more divided. Therefore, it is worth pointing out that within this appendix where it references the “majority” of members this is the majority of those who participated - which in fact was only about a third of all members. These views were further discussed and shaped by the All Party Working Group at their meeting on 6th September. Their specific comments are also included below.

1) General issues

- a) Many felt that we needed to be cautious about too much central imposition of ways of working and felt that a one size fits all approach needed to be avoided. Each area committee needs to be free to develop working arrangements that suit their needs but there was some recognition of the need for clearer parameters or frameworks in some areas.
- b) Several members felt that there was a gap around how we identify and share best practice both between area committees, across localities and across the city but also looking to other local authorities. The All Party Working Group agreed improvement were needed in this area and that it was important.

2) Area committees – their role and operation

- a) Many members expressed a range of frustration with area committees in terms of their lack of focus on local issues; being too paper heavy with long reports which were not focused enough on local issues; and agenda that are too full. The result being that proper discussions on key issues were not always possible. The All Party Working Group felt this was an issue that Area Chairs needed to lead on in removing reports that were not relevant or not sufficiently tailored to local issues and/or are asking for reports to be re-drafted.
- b) Many felt that issues that were brought to area committees for consultation were too often a “tick box” exercise as it was often done too late to shape the actual decision. Also some felt that not all papers for consultation needed to go to all area committees but should be considered more on a case by case basis.
- c) Majority of members agreed that area committees should do more in terms local decision making and most thought that this could be achieved through more direct delegations. But a number were concerned about the capacity of the committees to do this, as well as, the officer support required to achieve this. Particularly, if further delegations may require the area committees to meet more frequently.
- d) Opinion was divided about whether area committee meetings were a vehicle for community engagement – some felt they needed to be promoted to the public

with others suggesting other ways were better like forums, public meeting etc. Although most did agree that the current format was not conducive to public involvement. A range of views were expressed about the location of area committee meetings and the influence that this might have on public attendance. The All Party Working Group were keen to emphasise that different approaches are needed in different areas but that the Area Committee needs to remain the key vehicle for community engagement.

- e) A few members felt that the area committees needed to move towards a local leadership role and felt they need to do more to influence others. This was a minority view as was the view that area committees were fine as they were.
- f) A number of members expressed the view that the 2 ward area committee was difficult to make work in terms of being quorate at meetings, identifying sub groups and champions and dealing with the work in general. Members from 4 wards area committees did express a few concerns about decision making and that this sometimes resulted in a more parochial approach but equally others felt their 4 ward area committees worked well. Concerns were raised that there would be disruption in making changes to boundaries which could detract focus from improving outcomes in the local area.

3) Champions

- a) Broadly these roles were felt to be important but needed to be developed in order to maximise benefit especially in terms of sharing best practise, inputting into policy development and supporting Executive members and officers in developing and delivering key agendas.
- b) There was some concern about how well supported members were in these roles and that it can be hard to find volunteers in amongst all the other time pressures on members.

4) Resource mapping and division

- a) A number of members expressed frustration about how difficult it is to get information on what particular service budgets are spent on, how is it divided across the city and the rationale for this. There was a view that this was not influenced enough by local priorities/issues. Many felt that this created some difficulties in member-officer relationships and it would be more useful to have a more mature conversation. However, many members did express their view that through area committees it was important for them to make sure that they got their "fair share" of any resources in their ward.

5) Communication and trust

- a) A lack of communication was seen as a key issue by some members with a view that their opinions are not listened to, or not trusted, but also that officers do not give them the information they need to make, or indeed, to challenge decisions. They also felt that their contacts and local knowledge could be used more effectively. All Party Work Group felt that this issue had perhaps been overstated within the consultation and did not reflect their experience. They cited good communication and trust between Area Chairs and officers and also felt that the Environmental Services delegation had really supported an improvement in discussions between committees over common issues and sharing of resources.
- b) A minority of members felt that member-officer trust and relationships are deteriorating with some fault acknowledged on both sides. This was seen as

detrimental to delivering change and improvements. But there were some notable exceptions where relationships were cited as good including the locality managers in environmental services and the Area Leaders and their teams. Again the All Party Work Group felt that this issue was overstated within the consultation and did not reflect their experience. They did recognise that Area Chairs and portfolio holders did work more closely with officers and, therefore, perhaps had a better experience than other members. The encouragement of closer working between officers and members was seen as important especially Area Support Teams but the culture of some services was felt to be a barrier that needed to be resolved.

6) Engagement/empowerment of the public

- a) Most members felt this was a key challenge as the public were not interested unless there was a particular local issue but that often this resulted in those with the loudest voices having their opinions heard but that this did not necessarily provide a representative view. Many felt the public need to be more directly involved in designing services (doing with not to) and finding ways to prevent problems. Some members felt that the support and development of “bottom up” approaches was a gap with too much focus on city-wide “top down” solutions.
- b) Members described a range of arrangements across the different areas including forums, public meetings, co-opted public representatives on the committee itself and links to residents and other groups. Member opinion was generally that this was OK and that a one size fit all approach was to be avoided. The use of the committed and passionate community activists and representatives through Neighbourhood Improvement Boards and alike was cited as working well where they exist.

7) Service Provision/Delegations/Priorities for Change

- a) The majority of members felt that the environmental service delegation was good and had resulted in more responsive local service delivery. Some concerns were expressed that there was a lack of resources overall for this area of work. As a result members were being asked to make impossible decisions.
- b) In general, many members were frustrated that some services were not responsive when they raised specific concerns. In some cases they felt that there was no clear route for members to raise service failure issues. In other cases the issues had to be escalated to directors or executive members in order for their concerns to be resolved.
- c) Opinion was divided about whether delegations were the right way to achieve more locally responsive service – some felt that the budget should be more directly transferred but the majority view was that this would not be a good idea and that delegations or SLAs were enough. Many expressed the view that the presumption should be for everything to be delegated unless there was a good reason not to. But that this will inevitably result in a patchwork of services/approaches which those who suggested this seemed happy to accept. Concerns were also raised about the impact this might have on our ability to effect change where needed on a coherent and city wide basis. The All Party Working Group emphasised that any service that is to be delegated needs to be fit for purpose and operationally sound before delegation.
- d) The areas that were consistently highlighted as priorities for delegation or for more local determination/influence in other ways were:

- Youth service – although a range of view were expressed about which parts of the youth services should be delegated.
 - Local parks and sports pitches
 - Jobs and skills – programmes for NEETs and apprenticeships and how some of the city wide approaches are translating into jobs for local people. The All Party Working Group were keen to stress the key role of Area Committees in linking across the range of service provision in this area particularly NEETs, Youth provision and broader jobs and skills agenda.
 - Local (neighbourhood) planning – this was raised as a issue for more local influence and/or accountability but there was a lack of detail on what this would mean exactly as a delegation, also some areas felt this was not a priority for their area.
 - Local transport – especially local buses and many expressed frustration with Metro but the potential of quality bus contracts was discussed and this was seen as a possibility for the future.
 - Highways – several members expressed frustration in influencing highways especially local highways issues although this was not necessarily seen as an area for delegation. Some felt a strategic (city wide) / local split would work with area committees able to influence/prioritise local schemes and maintenance of non main roads.
 - Community centres – members felt that this was a delegation that does not work with the budget and local decision making separated. It was acknowledged that this was subject to review but that this seemed to be moving slowly
- e) The All Party Working group highlighted their top 3 priorities for more local determination as Youth services, Jobs and skills and Neighbourhood Planning.
- f) There was some discussion at the All Party Working Group about key role for Area Committees in encouraging local groups and voluntary organisations to have a bigger role in influencing/organising local community assets such as community centres and parks.

8) Partnerships/links to other bodies

- a) A wide range of views were expressed around links to parish and town councils from those who were unaffected, those that had good links and felt they worked well in their area and those that felt that were not effective. In some areas they are seen as an important vehicle for gathering public views and opinions. It was noted that within the Constitution area committees have a designated role to promote working relationships with Parish and Town Councils.
- b) Some members felt they wanted to influence beyond the council to develop a local leadership role but were not clear how area committees helped them to do this. Others were keen to bring a wider range of organisations into area committees to “hold them to account” and/or to make sure that the services were right, particularly, where they needed to be tailored for the diverse communities across the city.
- c) School clusters was an issue raised by a number of members. A few members did express the view that the clusters in their area were working well and they had good links eg jointly funding some projects. But many members felt that this was an area of concern with a range of views including a lack of understanding of their role, concerns they are too school dominated with some heads seen as

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having “too much power”. The links to area committees was generally felt to be poor; not helped by the fact that member representatives on the clusters were not nominated by the area committees which might have helped to establish clearer links. It was acknowledged that the clusters very variable in terms of their approach. The All Party Working Group were keen to emphasise the need to establish clearer accountability arrangements between school clusters and area committees

Review of Area Working - Summary of Officer Consultation

The review of area working aims to take stock of our progress, as well as, identifying the next steps in taking this agenda forward; with the overall aim of implementing the agreed locality design principles. An important element of the review has been seeking views from council officers and members. This paper summarises the key issues identified through the officer consultation. Whilst this was focused mainly council officers and number of partner view were also captured and are included.

Initially views were gather from a series of meetings with Directorate Managements Teams, Project team members and Area Support Team. At these meetings a number of other officers were identified for further discussions including the Trade Unions who were consulted through the Corporate JCC. As expected view did vary but this report summaries the main points only. In particular, it highlights areas where opinions were consistent , as well as, those areas where opinions were more divided. This report does not include everything that was said but these broader views have been captured and will be used to inform the final recommendations.

1) General Issues

- a) A number of concerns were raised around capacity issues particularly around performance reporting and supporting change in the organisation in developing and implementing any new delegations.
- b) Some concerns were raised about the community development role which some felt had been lost in the evolution from CITs to Area Support teams but felt that building community capacity as vital.

2) Area Committees

- a) There was a clear view that area committees and local members could have a greater role as change agents and solving entrenched local problems. Their local view looking across services and partner organisation was seen as vital in identifying and challenging areas of duplication, disconnection and ineffective working. They are also uniquely positioned to lead, enable and support change by bringing organisations and the public together.
- b) Officers expressed a wide variety of views about area committees and their experiences of attending. Many spoke about how variable their experiences were both between different committees and in taking different subject areas. The quality of debate was not always what officers were seeking and they found some area committees to be a difficult environment. Officers reported that items were sometimes diverted onto other issues that they were not necessarily able to comment on. This was felt to be counter productive to an open and honest debate and to building trust. The view was also expressed that area committee should be more delivery focused and that their delivery plans do need to better reflect the city priorities. The capacity issues of 21 meeting to bring a single item to area committees was also difficult to manage for small services.
- c) Several officers felt that the Member Champion role could be developed and needed to be defined better. Ideas put forward included the champion role in supporting Executive Members to ensure locality/area dimension is well reflected in policy making. Officers felt that where possible it would help if champions

could be appointed for at least 2 years to enable them to develop expertise in the subject areas and links to key services/partners.

- d) The Area Chairs role was seen as key and could be developed more eg to enable more collaboration between areas. Similar to the champions role it would benefit from some continuity in post although officers recognised the difficulties here.
- e) Member training and development was felt to be important so that members can make the most of the informal and formal opportunities to influence and are equipped to step out of their ward role when required. Area teams felt that through their close working they could perhaps help to shape the member development programme.
- f) The issues of communication was highlighted and particularly that email is not always effective for all members but that for services this is often the default.

3) Delegations/Service Delivery

- a) In terms of delegation Officers felt there was some confusion between the role of Executive members and Area Committees which needed clarifying.
- b) A number of officers spoke about the environmental delegation and SLA which was felt to be a successful model to build upon. Key to its success was that it enabled an open and honest discussion with members which has developed a common understanding and clarified expectations. On the downside it did take significant time and effort implement and it has been difficult to clearly track improvements due to a lack of local level data. It was accompanied by a significant change in the service itself which has supported more locally responsive service delivery although the teams are mostly run at a wedge level in order to make most efficient use of resources. Also for value for money and operational reasons some remain on a city wide level. But this is managed by the 3 locality managers who work with members to ensure their focus remains on the outcomes achieved. It has also enabled clearer accountability with the service directly accountable to the area committee and members accountable for the priorities. A key issue which continues has been balancing members desire for a “fair share” in their ward with differing needs across the city at different times of the year. Some compromise has had to be made but equally some area committees have responded by providing additional wellbeing funding to supplement services.
- c) The model of having a senior officer whose role is to ensure the service has a locality focus works successfully in both community safety and environmental services. Especially having these officers co-located with the Area Leaders and Area Support Teams. Members also have a clear point of contact to resolve issues. Some officer felt that this matrix management approach that should help services to be more locally responsive but retain a professional lead might mean that further delegations were not needed. Fairness would remain an issue to be resolved on a service by service basis but provided area committees were part of this conversation in establishing a core offer it could be as effective.

Appendix 5

- d) Discussions included some debate about what services are best delivered more locally and one view was for this to be those services that people are most interested in and are universal to enabling a strong community. Several officers suggested those service around the clean, green, crime and grime agenda. It was suggested we should move toward more flexible, multi-skilled teams working under a neighbourhood manager type role and that this may also yield efficiencies.
- e) Some services remain sceptical of delegations and engaging more with local members with concerns about losing day to day management. This has not been the case in environmental services with the locality manager clearly responsible for this. The other issue raised is that by prioritising members requests these might not always reflect the greatest need but again this has to be managed through on-going open and honest conversations. Officers do not always know best but neither do members.
- f) The CCTV and Community centre delegations were raised by a number of officer concerned that these do not work as they are currently defined. In developing and bringing forward any new delegation officers were keen that those things that are best commissioned or delivered on a city wide basis continue to be – not everything is suitable. Also we need to recognise that in some areas council provision is the minority, eg jobs and skills, with other organisations with greater resources eg DWP.
- g) Many officers felt the pace of change is an issue and we need to be more dynamic.

4) Partnerships

- a) Many officers were concerned about the complex set of partnership operating at different levels and did not understand roles and responsibilities and how these actually link together. Also the impact of the on-going health reforms especially the creation of Clinical Commissioning Groups, increasing autonomy of schools and Police and Crime Commissioners on this. There is a real tension and challenge in these changes.

5) Area Leaders/Area Support Teams

- a) There was some confusion from services on the role of the Area Leaders and Area Support Teams with support provided inconsistent. It was not clear whether their role was to gate-keep or to enable/support in helping services to work with local members. Equally the Area teams felt they sometimes struggled to get an “in” with some services particularly those that are more centrally run and less locality focused. The area teams felt they could be better used by services, could help to prevent issues escalating if they were in the loop and involved at an early stage and could help identify and broker local solutions. Their role was likened to key account management at a local level in building relationships with and between individuals and organisations, facilitating and signposting. But the teams are often caught between members and services neither of which want to move and they are not always enabled/empowered by the organisation to resolve this although the move of the service into the corporate centre has helped this. The co-location of key service representatives with Area Teams is a successful

model and where this exists there is a much more locally focused approach to service delivery. An issue highlighted by the area teams is getting drawn into casework through their close working with members and they identified a grey area between their role and that of the group offices which can be difficult to manage.

6) Wellbeing Funds

- a) Officers felt this funding was important to Area Committees and were clear that decisions about wellbeing funding is, and should remain, with members. However, a number expressed opinions that perhaps more could be achieved through match funding and perhaps some clearer criteria about which organisations should and should not be funded. Some wellbeing funding was felt to be very well spent investing in local capacity like grassroots 3rd sector organisations with other spending supporting more routine activities like extra litter picking or Christmas lights. Some felt that it would help to have a better way to demonstrate the impact of this local spending. They identified some practical issues like slow recharging from internal services which made it difficult to manage spend and having to manage ward based pots where area committees had decided to split their funding in wards.
- b) A number of officers raised the issue of the gap in being able to mainstream some of the good ideas and different approaches that build from the bottom up in localities.

7) Community Engagement

- a) Many officers felt that Area Committee meetings were not really the place for community engagement although some worked better than others in terms of attracting audiences and making use of the open forum part of the meetings. Some officers felt that this opportunity to gather views from members and the public at the same time were very helpful in shaping proposed changes. However, within the 3 wedges of the city a wide range of other forums exist but again these were felt to take a lot of officer time but not all were effective in terms of numbers attending and representation of views. The overlaps with other organisations were also questioned with Police running community liaison meetings separately and the new CCG yet to identify their approach. Many suggested more joined up approaches with partners in the future as well as the consideration of other model that move beyond engagement where communities were ready for this like Community Development Trusts. It was felt that Members role in consulting/engaging the public might be worth clarifying perhaps as empowering, advocating and championing. It was felt that there needed to be clearer pathways to connect people and services with area committees and area support teams having a key role to play in brokering, advising and guiding without a one size fits all approach.

8) Geography/Boundaries

- a) Officers did not express many views on boundaries as they felt this was primarily a political issue. A few questioned whether we needed, or had the capacity, to manage 10 area committees in the current climate.

Review of Area Working Summary of Responses to Parish and Town Council Questionnaire

The review of area working aims to take stock of our progress, as well as, identifying the next steps in taking this agenda forward; with the overall aim of implementing the agreed locality design principles. During the period of the review a Parish and Town Council seminar was planned and the opportunity was taken to seek views from attendees on their relationship with Area Committees. Attendee were invited to complete a short questionnaire. This built upon perspectives provided by Leeds City Council Elected members through their consultation. 27 questionnaire were returned from the following Parish and Town Councils:

East Keswick	2	Aberford	2
Ledsham	3	Barwick and Scholes	1
Pool in Wharfedale	1	Scarcroft	1
Horsforth	4	Morley	2
Shadwell	1	Kippax and Methley	6
Clifford	1	Anonymous	3

A summary of the responses received for each questions is set out below:

1. Do you know what an Area Committee is/what powers it has/ who sits on it?

Yes	15
No	4
Some/little	3
Not sure	2

- Know of them not really what they do
- Links via the Parish Council Chair only
- An avenue for funding
- Know the Ward Councillors
- Know the Area Team officers only

2. How often do you interact with your Area Committee/do you ever attend its meetings/ do they seek your views on issues?

Never/No Interaction	10
Yes	5
Not sure	2
Rarely	5

- Not aware could attend/no information about the AC meetings
- Local members are willing to listen and exchange views
- Minutes are shared
- Quarterly forum held with Parish and Town Councils is where link occurs
- Views only sought after decision has been made
- LCC Cllr attend Parish Council and provides the link
- Have meetings with the area team officers

3. What services are currently managed locally in your area/ what services would you like to see managed locally (delegated to your Area Committee)?

Not many responders were aware of what was managed/influenced more locally by area committees. Of those that specified the following were listed:

- Grants
- Activities
- Tenants and resident meetings
- High Street services
- Events
- PCSOs
- Traffic calming
- Extra street cleaning
- Hanging baskets and planters
- Benches/Street furniture

Services like to see managed more locally

- Car parks
- All pathways currently Town Council is responsible for 21 and not others which causes confusion

4. Which services work well with you and your residents/which services could do more to be responsive to local needs?

Good Service

- Street cleansing
- Environmental services
- Grass cutting
- Litter picking
- Free parking
- Improvement of parks
- Planning

More Responsive

- Highways/Road repairs
- Interaction with local residents seems to be getting worse
- Directing policing to where residents
- Refuge service in town centre
- Bin collection esp brown bins
- Planning for affordable Homes
- Bus services
- Litter collections

Appendix 6

5. Do you know how much money your area committee spends/do you know about/understand the grants the area committee has responsibility for giving out/ Have you applied for grants from your Area Committee?

Yes - know about the grants 10

No - not aware of grants 10

Some of the comments suggested this was MICE money not necessarily wellbeing grants.

6. Additional Comments/Suggestions for Improvements:

- Quarterly Forum meeting is useful and is a good opportunity to meet LCC Councillors and interact with other parishes
- Parish Council Chairs are invited to Area Committee meetings
- LCC Cllrs to attend P&TC meetings
- AC have meetings in local area
- More information about AC
- Keen to understand better how Parish Council can work better with the AC
- Area Teams have local clinics
- Parish Council chair is the key link
- Briefing/Presentation on role of AC to P&TC
- Need to work more closely and be more open
- More liaison needed between the two