Report author: Sarah Gill

Tel: 07712 214 727

Report of Area Leader – South East Leeds

Report to South Leeds (Outer) Area Committee

Date: Monday 15th July 2013

Subject: Strengthening the Relationship between Area Committee and Town and Parish Councils

Are specific electoral Wards affected?	☒	Yes	☐	No
If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	Morley North Morley South			
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	☐	Yes	☒	No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	☐	Yes	☒	No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	☐	Yes	☒	No
If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:				

Summary of main issues

It presents the Safer and Stronger Scrutiny Board Report on strengthening the Council's relationship with Town and Parish Councils.

The Scrutiny Report highlights the role of Area Committees and Area Leaders in strengthening this relationship and makes recommendations on how this can be achieved.

This report outlines options on how the recommendations from the scrutiny report could be achieved in the Outer South.

Recommendations

The Area Committee is asked to note the contents of the report and make comment as appropriate

Members are asked to agree to the establishment of a working group of Area Committee Members and Parish & Town Councils to discuss and agree options for strengthening links and report back to the Area Committee.

Members are asked to nominate at least 2 representatives onto the working group.

1.0   **Purpose of this report**

1.1   This report presents the Safer and Stronger Scrutiny Board Report on strengthening the Councils relationship with Town and Parish Councils.

1.2   The scrutiny report highlights the role of Area Committees and Area Leaders in strengthening this relationship and makes recommendations on how this can be achieved.

1.3   This report outlines options on how the recommendations from the scrutiny report could be achieved in Outer South Area.

2   Background information

2.1   In October 2006 the Leeds Parish and Town Council Charter was agreed. This sets out how Leeds City Council and the local councils work together for benefit of local people and is reviewed annually.

2.2   The Localism Act 2011 reinforces the role of local councils, and represents a clear statement of intent from central government of its plans to devolve power to local communities.

2.3   In June 2012, the Executive Board Member for Neighbourhoods, Planning and Support Services made a request for Scrutiny to conduct a review of the council's relationship with local Parish and Town Councils.

2.4   The report outlining conclusions and recommendations from the review was formally agreed by the Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Board on 16th May 2013 (**Appendix 1**). The implementation of the recommendations will be monitored by the scrutiny board.

3   Main issues

3.1   The following are examples of good links between the Outer South Area Committee and local councils:

- Area Committee Members have a good relationship with Parish and Town Councils in their area. In addition some Leeds City Councillors have been or are members of a Parish or Town Council

- The previous Outer South Area Management Team supported Drighlington Parish Council in the exploration of a Parish Plan

- Outer South Area Committee Participatory Budgeting initiatives delivered in partnership with Drighlington and Gildersome Parish Councils were very successful

- Drighlington Parish Council supported the Area Committees Neighbourhood Improvement Plan in Oakwells and Fairfax

- Gildersome Parish Council supported the Area Committees Neighbourhood Improvement Plan in Springbank and Moorlands

- Area Committee and Drighlington Parish Council worked together to achieve internal improvements to Drighlington Meeting Hall

- Outer South Area Committee established and sponsored Morley Town Centre Management Board, a local partnership group which includes Ward Councillors, Chamber of Trade and Commerce, Morley Town Council and key agencies who work together to enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre

- Wellbeing funding allocated to projects that local councils either manage or involved with e.g. Christmas and other local events, grit bins

- Active coordination of Area Committees and local council funding to achieve more, e.g. Morley Literature Festival, Christmas lights and trees in Morley North and South

- Local councils fund projects that are complimentary to Area Committee priorities e.g. Drighlington Parish Council fund a PCSO and Morley Town Council fund six PCSO's

3.2   The Scrutiny Report recognises that both Area Committees and local councils have a key role in providing strong local leadership. Seven of the twelve recommendations are focus for the Area Committee and Area Leader. These are:

Recommendation 3 – That local councils and Area Committees give a commitment to work closely together to develop clear pathways and protocols that will enable open and meaningful dialogue on matters that have specific impact on their communities.

That Area Leaders take the lead on developing these clear pathways and protocols and report progress back to Scrutiny by December 2013.

Recommendation 4 – That the Council's Assistant Chief Executive (Customer Access and Performance) promotes the following as good practice amongst Area Committees:

- The development of a forward work programme and identification of a major 'theme' or 'topic' for each area committee meeting

- That Area Committee reports include a separate section indicating any potential local impacts or challenges

Recommendation 5 – That Area Leaders ensure that input is sought from local councils as part of any future area based delegation scheme and particularly around the negotiation of Service Level Agreements.

Recommendation 7 – That Area Leaders proactively work with local councils and Area Committees to identify opportunities for maximising available resources to best meet the needs of their local communities.

Recommendation 8

(i)   That local councils are proactive in promoting volunteering initiatives and encouraging people to take an active role within their community.

(ii) That the Council's Assistant Chief Executive (Customer Access and Performance) and Chief Officer Localities and Partnerships lead on actively supporting approaches made by local councils for any advice and assistance directly associated with local voluntary initiatives.

Recommendation 9 – That the three Area Leaders actively promote partnership working with local councils as part of the integrated locality working agenda in the three wedges of East North East, West North West and South East.

Recommendation 11 – That Area Leaders work closely with Area Chairs to ensure that Area Committees continue to monitor their relationships with local councils in order to identify strengths and potential areas for improvement.

3.3   **Implementing the Recommendations**

3.3.1   A number of links have been outlined in 3.1 and it is assumed that where appropriate these would continue to function and be developed and strengthened further. The establishment of a working group by the Area Committee would allow Ward Members and local councillors to meet and consider how both parties would like to see this relationship strengthened. The table below offers ideas for the working group to discuss.

Strategic	- Add targets in the Area Committee Business Plan and AST Service Plan to show commitment to strengthening links. - Area Support Team identify partnership meetings where local councils could contribute. - Area Committee Chair annually meets with each local council and Area Support Team to discuss Area Committee Business Plan and local council priorities and projects. - Identify opportunities for maximising resources to best meet the needs of communities.
Communication	- Area Committees consider local way to develop 'meaningful dialogue' Best practise e.gs: - Area Committee elect representative to attend local council meetings. - Quarterly Forum where Elected Members and local councillors receive presentations, discuss issues of common interest, share information and good practise. - Co-optees from local councils onto Area Committee - Forward Plan of Area Committee reports to be shared with Parish and Town Councils. - Electronic link sent to local council clerks to access Area Committee reports online. - Dates, times and venues of Area Committees circulated to local councils. - Area Committee newsletters be sent to local councils to raise profile of work achieved.

Consultation	• Area Committee to seek views from local councils on annual Environmental Services SLA and other delegations as appropriate.
Supporting	• Continue to support local councils who wish to undertake neighbourhood planning. • Continue to strive for Area Committee reports that are locally focused, especially to ward level. Area Support Team (AST) challenge services to provide this, rather than having a section within the report to look at local impacts or challenges as scrutiny recommendation suggests.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

4.1.1 The review undertaken by the scrutiny board gave an opportunity for all local councils, council officers, Area Leaders, Area Committee Chairs and the Chief Officer and Deputy Chief Officer of the Yorkshire Local Councils Association to share their experiences and opinions with the Scrutiny Board.

4.1.2 Area Leader discussed the scrutiny paper at the South East Chairs Briefing on Friday 24th May where it was agreed for the report to be introduced at Area Committee for discussion.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

4.2.1 Equality and diversity issues were considered throughout the scrutiny review and in the presentation of options to the Area Committee and where appropriate an Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken.

4.3 Council policies and City Priorities

4.3.1 The projects outlined in this report contribute to targets and priorities set out in the following council policies:

- Vision For Leeds
- Children and Young Peoples Plan
- Health and Well being City Priority Plan
- Safer and Stronger Communities Plan
- Regeneration City Priority Plan

4.4 Resources and value for money

4.4.1 There are no resource implications as a result of this report.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

4.5.1 All decisions taken by the Area Committee in relation to the delegated functions from Executive Board are not eligible for Call In.

4.5.2 There are no key or major decisions being made that would be eligible for Call In.

4.5.3 There are no legal implications as a result of this report.

4.6   **Risk Management**

4.6.1   This report provides an update on work in the Outer South and therefore no risks are identifiable.

5   Conclusion

5.1   There are several examples of how the Area Committee and Town and Parish Councils are already working well together to the benefit of the local communities. A working group would allow the options outlined under 3.3 to be considered by both parties and discuss how they would like to further strengthen their relationship.

6   Recommendations

6.1   The Area Committee is asked to note the contents of the report and make comment as appropriate

6.2   Members are asked to agree to the establishment of a working group of Area Committee Members and Parish & Town Councils to discuss and agree options for strengthening links and report back to the Area Committee.

6.3   Members are asked to nominate at least 2 representatives onto the working group.

7   Background documents[1]

7.1   There are no background documents associated with this paper.

---

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