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Report of: **Cllr Peter Gruen, Chair, Safer and Stronger Communities Board**
Report to: **Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Board**
Date: **9th September 2013**
Subject: **Working with Communities in Leeds**

Update on the Scrutiny Board Report

The report of the Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Board was received discussed at a joint meeting of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board and the Stronger Communities Partnership on the 24 May 2013, and the following actions have been taken as a consequence:

Recommendation 1

That the Safer and Stronger Communities Partnership Board actively pursues the development of more partner involvement in delivering the city's cleaner-greener priorities.

It was agreed at the joint meeting that there is room to engage more with partners on the city's cleaner-greener priorities. That there is excellent scope for looking at more localised third sector and community involvement particularly in rest to Council delegations and the application of the localism agenda.

As currently the vast majority of the delivery of the cleaner-greener agenda is in Council control, at different levels, it was agreed that the most sensible course of action is for the Director of Environment and Housing to look at how partner involvement can be developed in the current action plan – rather than looking to develop a separate partnership. This work is now underway.

Recommendation 2

That the Safer and Stronger Communities Partnership Board ensures the involvement of communities and the third sector in the cleaner-greener and the Safer Leeds agendas.

The Safer and Stronger Communities Board aims to ensure the views and priorities of local communities are heard throughout the Board's agenda. Recently, work has been developed

to include representation of the third sector on the Safer Leeds executive and outreach work on the impact of the new Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner in local communities has been led by Voluntary Action Leeds.

Work to include the views of the third sector in the Cleaner-Greener agenda citywide is being discussed with the Director of Environment and Housing. Good practice is also noted on locality involvement taking place in the South and East Area Leadership Forum through the involvement of Groundwork.

Recommendation 3

That the Safer and Stronger Communities Partnership Board also undertakes work which underpins the locality working design principles and considers the needs of particular localities as well as maintaining a strategic overview citywide.

At the May meeting of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board it was agreed to explore reconfiguring the partnership arrangements for this Board. From September 2013 the overarching Board will be known as the Communities Board to more accurately reflect its role in delivering the strategic direction required for Leeds to become the best city for communities.

The Board will take the lead in ensuring the right balance between city wide, strategic overview and putting in place the right conditions for communities to thrive locally across the city. The Board will work on the basis of subsidiarity – ensuring decision making is taken at the right level, as close as possible and practical to where its impact will be most felt.

Recommendation 4

That the Stronger Communities Partnership ensures that the composition and strands of work undertaken by the supporting partnerships are also reflective of the move towards developing a ‘best city for communities’ framework to improve stronger communities working in Leeds.

The decision to move towards a Communities Board has also prompted a review of the support strands of work and supporting partnerships and to review its priority actions. To date (August 2013) the suggestion is to retain the existing Migration Partnership, and strengthen its relationship to the Cross Council working group on migration and to continue to support the work of the Leeds Poverty Challenge and focus on its emerging agenda. There is an aim to review work on the Gypsy, Traveller and Roma Strategy Group and to review work on our approach to Good Community Relations (including tensions monitoring and community mediation). There is a commitment to developing an improvement programme to establishing the building blocks for the best city for communities framework and to embed this at both local and city wide levels.

The contents of Recommendation 4 are being discussed both in the planning for the emerging Communities Board, and its support from the new Citizens and Communities directorate as well as existing relations with the Environment and Housing directorate.

Recommendation 5

That the Chair of the Safer and Stronger Communities Partnership Board ensures that all Elected Members are kept informed of progress relating to the Leeds Poverty Challenge.

There have so far been 2 quarterly briefings sent to elected members from Cllr Gruen and a third briefing is due to be sent to councillors in September. These briefings outline progress to date as well as highlighting the work of the Challenge.

Also to note is that the support team for the Challenge have begun work on a communications strategy for Phase 2 of the Challenge when it goes from being 'under the radar' in the preparatory phase, to being a public Challenge for the city.

Recommendation 6

That once confirmed, the accountability arrangements in place for the Safer and Stronger Communities Partnership Board are set out clearly in the Partnership's terms of reference.

The decision to move towards a new Communities Board was discussed at the May joint meeting, and a draft terms of reference was discussed. A sub group is currently working on the final terms of reference, action plan and performance measures, to be further discussed at a joint planning session in September 2013.

The change of Accountable Director from Environment and Housing to Citizens and Communities will also be clearly set out and the transition arrangements of accountability, including ongoing accountability for the Safer Leeds agenda in Environments and Housing is being taken into account, and will be set out clearly in the final terms of reference and communicated to the Scrutiny Board as well as more generally.

Conclusions

The Safer and Stronger Communities Board welcomed the comments made by the Scrutiny Committee and is pleased to note its recommendations in the planning for the emerging Communities Board.

A verbal report to update Scrutiny on the planning for the Communities Board will be given by Cllr Gruen and supported by both accountable directors, James Rogers (Citizens and Communities) and Neil Evans at the September Scrutiny meeting.

Communities Board

DRAFT Terms of Reference

Purpose

The purpose of the Communities Board is to provide strong and effective leadership, to support partnership work that takes action to deliver the aspirations of the Vision for Leeds. In particular, its key objectives are to join up activities to maximise outcomes, and to create a culture where partnership work in the interests of local people is built into the way all agencies, sectors and organisations act.

Strategic Leadership

The board will lead the long-term strategy for the city for communities and co-ordinate the partnership actions to achieve the priorities in the city priority plan, the partner's business plans, in particular the propositions for the Citizens and communities directorate.

Accountability

The Communities Board is not a separate legal entity. Each partner on the Board retains its own functions and responsibilities, for example for Leeds City Council – its role in the Board is accountable to the Leeds City Council Executive Board.

Strategic direction for the Board will be derived from the Vision for Leeds 2030. The Board provides a focus for the agreement of shared action between partners and constructive challenge to make sure that the partnership work improves outcomes for local people. To meet this objective this board will also have a role to performance manage the delivery of its priorities.

Roles

The chair will be the Executive Board Member for Neighbourhoods, Planning & Support Services

The vice-chairs will be selected from the third sector members.

Executive accountability will be with Leeds City Council via the Assistant Chief Executive, Citizens and Communities.

Servicing and support will be the responsibility of Leeds City Council

Responsibilities

The Communities Board will:

- § lead the delivery of the communities themes in the Vision for Leeds and the City Priority Plan the partner's business plans, in particular the propositions for the Citizens and communities directorate;
- § develop, deliver and report on an action plan to deliver those objectives;
- § provide a framework within which partners may agree to commission services together, with pooled or aligned budgets;
- § act as an advocate for the contribution which these themes make to public policy and partnership working in the city, and support the culture and practice of partnership working;

- § develop and sponsor new activities, which support the aspirations of the Vision for Leeds for communities
- § tackle underperformance against the priorities and targets;
- § identify opportunities for greater efficiency, effectiveness and economy of delivery through a common approach and innovative solutions to areas of policy, planning, performance management, consultation, reporting and communication, resource allocation and delivery of services in the city and take action as appropriate;
- § evaluate the impact of interventions, capture learning and disseminate good practice across partners; and
- § influence local, regional and national government policy initiatives linked to these themes.

The Communities Board will have specific oversight of workstreams on (*under review*)

- § The “Best City for Communities” development programme
- § Links to the Area Leadership Teams to cement locality working to the working with communities agenda
- § Work on a citywide approach to community relations including maintaining links with the Safeguarding Communities work
- § The work of the Leeds Migration Partnership
- § Work with the Leeds Poverty Truth Challenge
- § Agreement on the development of the current strands of work of the BME Challenge Forum and the work of the Gypsy Traveller and Roma Strategy Group

Linkages

This group is one of five Strategic Partnership Boards and together these bodies are responsible for the entire Vision for Leeds and the City Priority Plan. It has links to a wider network of partnerships, some of which it will commission to deliver areas of its agenda, and it will link with the agendas of other partnership boards.

Equality and community engagement

The board will have due regard to equality in all its activities, and will take steps to demonstrate it has consulted with communities appropriately in all its decisions.

Membership

The membership of the group will be chosen to reflect a cross sector balance of expertise and knowledge in the following areas:

- § Black and minority ethnic communities
- § Community Development
- § Community participation
- § Community relations
- § Community safeguarding
- § Criminal justice or anti-social behaviour
- § Equalities law and practice
- § Faith communities
- § Giving or philanthropy

- § Gypsy or Traveller or Roma communities
- § Intercultural working
- § Intergenerational working
- § Local community action
- § Migrant communities
- § Public communications
- § Public health
- § Volunteering

The cross sector balance will reflect all relevant sectors to the agenda, specifically including:

- § Elected members
- § Community sector
- § Further or Higher education sector
- § Health and wellbeing
- § Housing
- § Locality working
- § Police
- § Third sector

Officers in attendance

Officers from Leeds City Council and other partners will be invited to attend the board at the discretion of the Chair. Their role will include advising the group, preparing agendas, minutes, reports and briefings for the Board, and following up actions arising from discussions and decisions made by the board.

Openness

Meetings are not open to the public, but papers, agendas and minutes will be published on the Leeds City Council website. A forward plan of meetings will be published on the Leeds City Council website.

These Terms of Reference were agreed:

Date:

Signed:

XXX Chair, Communities Board