



**Report of The Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods Directorate**

**Meeting: Outer East Area Committee**

**Date: 8<sup>th</sup> July 2008**

**Subject: Future plans for partnership working**

**Electoral Wards Affected:**  
**Cross Gates and Whinmoor**  
**Garforth and Swillington**  
**Killingbeck and Seacroft**  
**Kippax and Methley**

Ward Members consulted  
(referred to in report)

**Specific Implications For:**

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Council Function  Delegated Executive Function available for Call In  Delegated Executive Function not available for Call In Details set out in the report

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 This report brings together current thinking on the future of area based partnership working in Leeds, and makes proposals for changing the structure of partnership working, to reflect changes that are taking place across organisational boundaries and to reflect concerns about the governance arrangements that apply to interagency partnership arrangements.

**2.0 BACKGROUND**

2.1 Following the introduction of Area Management Teams and Area Committees early in 2004, District Partnerships (DP) were established to coordinate partnership working in the 5 areas, and to develop a regeneration plan for each area in effect localising the Vision for Leeds. On the whole, the boundaries of these five partnerships reflected fairly accurately partner boundaries at the time with almost exact mapping of Council (Area Management), PCT, ALMO and Police boundaries.

2.2 Across the city much has been achieved by the District Partnerships. However several organisational boundaries have now changed. This is particularly so for Aire Valley Homes, Leeds PCT, West Yorkshire Police Force and Leeds City Council Environments and Neighbourhoods Directorate. In addition, as the devolution debate moves forward, there has been concern from some elected members that they have felt relatively marginalised by the DP arrangements. Linked to this is the fact that as most of the Cities deprivation is found within the inner city the activity of

DP has largely by passed outer Leeds areas. This has inevitably meant that Members representing outlying areas see the partnership agenda as lacking in focus on their issues.

- 2.3 A further issue from a member perspective has been the feeling that decisions were being made which could have important impacts on local interests without a sufficient input from members themselves. Whilst Area Committee Chairs were DP members, the view of many ward members was that not enough of them were engaged. In addition there has also been some confusion over planning frameworks as each area has had two– one through the District Partnership Action Plan and one through the Area Committee’s Delivery Plan.

### **3.0 FUTURE PROPOSALS FOR PARTNERSHIP WORKING**

- 3.1 The Council’s new corporate planning framework aims to link the Vision for Leeds themes and the Local Area Agreement to strategic outcomes in a single Leeds Strategic Plan. As part of this framework the Area Committees’ Area Delivery Plans will become one of the main means of achieving these strategic outcomes at a locality level. To be effective, this needs to involve autonomous partners such as the Police, ALMO and the PCT as well as ensuring that the views and priorities of local people and stakeholders are taken into account.
- 3.2 Consequently Area Committees will play a central role in partnership working. This can be achieved in various ways. The Councils preferred position would see Area Committees provide a local governance and accountability framework for agreed partnership collaboration through their new Area Delivery Plans. The expectation would be that the Council and local agencies would give accountability for their actions to local people through the Area Committees. A draft of this plan will be found elsewhere on today’s agenda. It is proposed that they will be three year planning documents with annual reviews.
- 3.3 To address the issue of governance and oversight of the partnership agenda, so far as it pertains to the Strategic Plan, it is proposed that the Area Committee takes on a greater role in monitoring partnership activity. To achieve this, subject to the agreement of all three Area Committees within the new ‘South East Area’ and key partners, it is proposed to nominate elected members to act as thematic champions for key issues. Members could then take a key role in facilitating the interface between the thematic area based partnerships and the Area Committees. Area Committees will be asked to nominate one member to attend (where possible) each of the sub group meetings and act as a ‘champion’ of that theme. It is understood that in some instances with already busy workloads members may struggle to attend such meetings, in which case other forms of briefing could be used to ensure that the nominated member is fully aware of the work taking place in the sub group and has opportunity to influence it.
- 3.4 In addition it is proposed to explore ways in which the committee can contribute to and oversee this aspect of partnership working. It is suggested that area committee could develop into 2 part meetings; in the first half the committee could oversee and review the work of the sub group in its efforts to deliver the strategic outcome. This could be done in such a way as to promote attendance and community involvement in this work, making the committee potentially a more open and accessible meeting. A forward plan would be required to manage the agendas of the committees and the attendance of the sub groups. Given the number of subgroups and issues covered, it is likely that each would come on an annual basis. The second part of the

committee will be the formal work of the committee discharging the delegated responsibilities as present. In addition it is intended, subject to guidance from the Corporate Governance Unit, to include notes of district partnership sub group meetings on the agenda of the Area Committee for information and to allow an opportunity for members to raise issues if required. These ideas are in line with the key issues raised in a report to the Executive Board at the end of 2007.

- 3.5 This offers the potential for significant community engagement activity taking place within the format of the area committee, but will require further consideration of the practical implications. A separate report on this agenda deals with the issue of other methods for promoting community engagement. Whilst always important, under the new proposals relating to the development of Comprehensive Area Assessments (which will replace the existing Comprehensive Performance Assessment process), the performance of Local Authorities will in part be judged on the way in which authorities engage with their citizens and the authorities ability to demonstrate how this engagement has led to changes in services.
- 3.6 It is intended that these new arrangement will reduce any duplication and tension between Area Delivery Plans and District Partnership Action Plans and acknowledge that in the new corporate planning and LAA environment the Council will have the lead responsibility for ensuring the delivery of agreed LAA outcomes.
- 3.7 Alongside this new role for the Area Committees, it is proposed that officers from different agencies e.g. Council, PCT, Police, ALMOs, Education Leeds would continue to co-operate and meet together based on the three areas with periodic meetings involving other local stakeholders such as business and voluntary sector representatives as appropriate and as required.
- 3.8 Leeds Initiative structures are also undergoing some changes, however it is intended that District based arrangement will still report to the Narrowing the Gap Executive Group who will retain the responsibility for oversight of these arrangements, ensuring the close alignment of area based plans and the new strategic outcomes framework. It is intended that further work will be done by the Leeds Initiative so that clear proposals and operational arrangements can be reported to the Narrowing the Gap Executive in the next month or so.
- 3.9 The Leeds Initiative have proposed that DP arrangements are conducted on the basis of the three new wedge boundaries. Unfortunately due to the differing organisational boundaries that now exist it will not be possible to achieve co-terminosity between all agencies. The new area management boundaries will be built up from the Area Committee boundaries, hence the new 'South East Area' will comprise of those areas falling within the geographical boundaries for the Outer East, South Inner and South Outer Area Committees. Boundaries for Aire Valley Homes will differ from this, and the proposed divisional boundaries for West Yorkshire Police will also differ. In view of the linkage between the area committees and the partnership agenda, it is proposed that the new partnership boundaries should so far as practicable reflect the new area management boundaries. The main difficulty that this presents is that, the entire Outer East Area Committee boundary will be served by the North East Police Division whilst the former South Area is served by the City and Holbeck Division.
- 3.10 It is proposed that existing satellite groups (Health and Wellbeing, Community Cohesion, Community Safety Partnership, Employment and Training Group, Children's Leeds (further negotiation required), District Housing Partnership)

continue to meet, but consider the possibility of mirroring the proposed area management boundaries. Pragmatic decisions will need to be found which promote the most effective partnership working. There will also be a need to consider this issue in conjunction with agencies representatives responsible for other areas. The satellite groups will, where they have not already done so already, need to consider including an elected member from each of the area committees within the area.

3.11 It is proposed that in its present guise the District Partnership board ceases to meet. However it is proposed that there is still a need for senior officers from all key agencies to meet, perhaps on a quarterly basis, the key purpose of which would be to:

- (a) Promote effective co-ordinated working at a neighbourhood level within their district;
- (b) Co-ordinate programmes and activities at a district level which contribute to 'narrowing the gap';
- (c) Contribute to the development of local targets and delivery of improvement priorities within the Leeds Strategic Plan (incorporating the Local Area Agreement);
- (d) Develop, with the relevant area committees, appropriate working arrangements which facilitate the construction and implementation of area plans

#### **4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.1 The Area Committee is asked to consider this report and make suggestions to promote effective partnership working.

4.2 The Area Committee is asked to endorse the principle of utilising Area Committee meetings to improve partnership working so far as it relates to the Strategic Plan, and indicate support for the development of two part meetings, or suggest an alternative approach.

4.3 The Area committee is asked to identify members with an interest and the availability to act as champions for the specific themes dealt with by the sub groups (see 3.10 above)

4.4 The Area Committee is asked to support the idea of bringing together partnership working on the basis of the geography covered by the new 'South East Area' (in so far as this is seen as the best solution on an operational basis).