



Report of the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods

Executive Board

Date: 16 July 2008

Subject: Area Committee Roles for 2008/09

Electoral Wards Affected:

All

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call In

Not Eligible for Call In

(Details contained in the report)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Area Management Review, agreed by Executive Board in November 2007 proposed to further develop the responsibilities of the Area Committees during 2008/09, using this year as a period of transition to allow for dialogue between Area Committees and Services in advance of service planning for 2009-10.

This report outlines the proposed new responsibilities for the Area Committees in 2008/09. These include changes to the Area Function Schedule and new consultative responsibilities relating to Council and Well Being Functions.

Executive Board is asked to agree the amended Area Functions Schedule for 2008/09 and endorse the development of Area Committee roles in relation to Council and Well Being Functions

1.0 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To seek Executive Board agreement to the development of Area Committees' responsibilities for 2008/09.

2.0 Background information

- 2.1 As part of the Area Management Review, presented to Executive Board in November 2007, it was agreed to extend and enhance the roles of the Area Committees with 2008/09 being a development/transition year. The review report was subsequently placed on the agendas of all the Area Committees and feedback on the proposals was used to inform the development of information about the roles for 2008/09. Each year the Executive Board agrees the functions delegated to the Area Committees. The Area Functions Schedule section in the Council's Constitution (Part 3., section 3C) is then amended accordingly and this information is presented to each of the Committees.
- 2.2 The Constitution also sets out the role of Area Committees in the governance framework of the Council. The Terms of Reference for Area Committees are set out in the Council's Constitution (Part 3, section 2B). They include Council Functions and Executive Functions. Executive Functions in turn include Area Functions and the promotion and improvement of the economic, social and environmental well being of the Committee's area or Well Being Function. Executive Functions are exercised concurrently by the Executive Board and in accordance with the officer delegation scheme (executive functions) by Directors; and decisions flowing from them are subject to call in.
- 2.3 This report does not propose any changes to the Terms of Reference for Area Committees or to their relationship to the Executive Board and its Members. Whilst a key function of the Area Committees is to champion the concerns of their local communities the appropriate channel for that role is in their ability to make representations to the Council as set out in their Terms of Reference. Area Committees cannot make Area Function or Well Being decisions which contradict the policies and priorities agreed by the Executive Board. Officers will ensure that proper advice and support is available to Area Committees and their Chairs to ensure that delegated Executive Functions continue to be exercised in accordance with this principle.
- 2.4 In responding to the conclusions of the Area Management review, the report does propose alterations to the number of Area Functions delegated to Area Committees. For these, the detail about the function is proposed for inclusion in the Council's Constitution. In addition the report sets out a more detailed framework for the exercise of the Well Being Function and delegated Council Functions set out in the Constitution (Part 3, section 2B) relating to the representation of community interest and the consideration of the performance, targeting, frequency and co-ordination of services.
- 2.4 It is proposed to further develop the roles for Area Committees in relation to a number of services where they will have increased influencing, developmental and consultative responsibilities. Key points for each of the proposed roles are highlighted in sections 3 and 4 below. These set out the formal Area Functions and other roles which are being enhanced. Full schedules for both sets of responsibilities are attached in the appendices which accompany the report.

3.0 Proposed Area Functions for 2008/09

3.1 The table below highlights the proposed Area Functions for 2008/09. Further detail is covered in Appendix One in relation to these functions.

| Role | Summary |
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| Area Well Being Budgets | This covers the annual capital and revenue allocation to each Committee to support the promotion and improvement of the economic, social and environmental well being of the Committee's area. Area Committees are responsible for taking decisions and monitoring activity relating to the use of well being budgets. |
| Community Centres | This covers responsibility for a portfolio of 65 community centres now vested with the Regeneration Service, 48 directly managed by the Council and 17 currently managed by community organisations. This covers overseeing revenue budgets, operational arrangements and the use of the centres, agreeing and implementing a schedule of charges and discounts for directly managed centres and making asset management and investment proposals to ensure the portfolio is sustainable and meets local needs. |
| Neighbourhood Wardens | This covers responsibility for a team of 30 Neighbourhood Wardens deployed in specific areas which provide a local patrolling function, assistance in dealing with anti-social behaviour, co-ordination to maintain the physical appearance of areas and offer support to local residents with environmental and community safety issues. Area Committees will continue to oversee local budgets and operational arrangements and links to area delivery plan priorities. The function schedule reflects the current deployment of wardens across the City. |
| CCTV | This covers 129 fixed cameras across the city and CCTV operators who are employed to carry out 24/7 monitoring operations. Area Committees will maintain an overview of the service in their area and receive regular information about it. The function schedule reflects the current deployment of cameras across the City. |
| Neighbourhood Management Co-ordination | This covers the identification of priority neighbourhoods across Leeds that require more intensive resources to drive service improvements and better local outcomes. This includes improving the co-ordination of key services across the council and local partners and piloting new ways of working. Area Committees will be responsible for agreeing priority neighbourhoods through Area Delivery Plans and will agree and monitor Neighbourhood Improvement Plans for each individual area. Area Committees will approve plans for the use of locally targeted budgets for neighbourhood improvement work (e.g. SSCF, Area Committee Well Being). |

3.2 The Authority to exercise Area Functions will be held concurrently by the Executive Board, Area Committees and relevant Directors/Chief Officers (within their scheme of delegated authority). Any proposed changes to resources relating to these functions would need to be made in consultation with the relevant service Director/ Chief Officer(s) and with the agreement of the Area Committee and Executive Board where appropriate.

4.0 Other Area Committee Roles for 2008/09

4.1 The table below highlights a number of new proposed enhanced roles for Area Committees in relation to a number of services where they will have increased influencing, developmental and consultative responsibilities. Further detail is covered in Appendix Two in relation to these roles.

| Role | Summary |
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| Community Engagement | This is proposed as a specific function and requirement of the Area Committees, flowing from the Area Committees' delegated Council Function 'to advise or make representations to the Council, the Executive Board, Scrutiny Boards or Regulatory Panels on all matters affecting community interests'. It is proposed that each Committee agrees a local community engagement plan based on an agreed template to ensure consistency across the city and that there is an annual report to each Committee and Executive Board on progress and future proposals. |
| Community Greenspace | This covers 73 community parks vested with the Parks and Countryside Service. These include a wide variety of recreation facilities, sports pitches, play areas, formal and informal horticultural features. Area Committees will influence the development and use of community parks and be consulted about proposals for the development and use of them, for example proposals for refurbishment and installation of new play equipment. |
| PCSOs, Neighbourhood Policing Teams and Multi Agency Crime and Grime Operations | This covers the deployment of PCSOs, the work of Neighbourhood Policing Teams (which are now aligned to ward and Area Committee boundaries) and multi agency crime and grime initiatives to tackle local priorities and hot spots. The new arrangements will allow staff to work more closely together on the ground and improve consultation with and reporting arrangements to the Area Committees. |
| Environmental Action Teams | This newly created service, with around 60 staff in total across the City in three area based teams, will be responsible for a range of neighbourhood related enforcement activities including noise nuisance, waste in gardens, overgrown vegetation, littering, placards, A-boards, graffiti, waste from domestic and commercial bins, drainage, pest control. The teams will carry out the |

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| | <p>enforcement and preventative work, rather than the litter picking, waste collection role which is done by other staff. Area Committees will receive regular reports about this new combined service and be able to influence service planning and local priorities for action based on local knowledge about issues and hotspots. Operational policies will be created for Leeds, but the priority afforded these could be influenced by local issues, such as littering and bin yards. Close working arrangements will be developed with neighbourhood wardens.</p> |
| Street Cleansing | <p>This covers teams of staff and specialist equipment to provide mechanical sweeping of adopted carriageways and footpaths, manual litter picking and litter bin emptying. Area Committees would be regularly presented with information about the services in their area and given opportunities to influence service planning and local priorities and hotspots. This would be primarily based on ward level discussions with Elected Members.</p> |
| Highways Maintenance | <p>This covers the annual and forward programme of planned maintenance on local roads, traffic management schemes and minor maintenance schemes to keep highways safe. Current arrangements would be retained whereby ward members are consulted on and informed about the progress of schemes in their ward.</p> |
| Grounds Maintenance | <p>This covers various elements of maintenance work including grass cutting, shrub and rose bed maintenance and hedge maintenance. The current Ground Maintenance Contract runs to February 2010. Environmental Services currently has the contract administration function for this contract which it carries out on behalf of the three ALMO's and Highways Services. An annual Service Improvement Plan is produced and ways to engage local members in this will be considered over the course of 2008/09. A procurement timetable is in place for a new Grounds Maintenance Contract from March 2010. Work on this will include details on the contract package, contract administration and opportunities for the involvement of local Members in service planning, prioritisation and monitoring. There is currently, therefore, no detailed information prepared for this role at present.</p> |
| Local Children and Young People Plans | <p>Development and review of local area (wedge) Children and Young People's Plans (CYPP), as an integral part of the area delivery plan, which will identify and drive local priorities, and inform and influence the citywide Children and Young People's Plan. Area Committees will continue to take part in the development and review of the local plan thereby influencing the strategic direction of the plan in relation to the 5 Every Child Matters outcomes and local need. The committees will have a local democratic oversight, demonstrated by endorsing the plan and local priorities identified</p> |

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| | within it. Committees will have an additional monitoring function, ensuring the 5 Every Child Matters outcomes and the improved integration of children's services e.g. as with the Breeze Youth Promise, are embedded as part of the delivery objectives of the wedge based Children Leeds Partnership and Area Delivery plans. |
| Health and Well Being. (including Adult Social Care) | As part of their responsibility to promote local well being Area Committees have an important role in helping to improve health and tackling health inequalities by ensuring coordinated and focused activity across Council services and with key partners such as the Leeds PCT at the local level. Adult Services and the PCT are organising their resources to work more effectively at a local level helping Area Committees through regular reporting arrangements to influence local priorities and action, and monitor the health and well-being targets linked to the Leeds Strategic Plan. |
| Area Based Regeneration Schemes and Town and District Centre Projects | Also consistent with the promotion of well-being, Area Committees will have responsibility for formal consultation and monitoring of area based regeneration schemes and town and district centre projects. They will be supported in this by officers in the Regeneration Service. Future new capital funding availability would be subject to a process to be agreed by Executive Board. |
| Conservation Area Reviews | This covers an initial programme of reviews in 16 designated conservation areas; in each case to assess its special character, to propose any changes to its boundary and to make proposals for its management. Area Committees have agreed reviews in these areas and ward members will be directly involved in consultation work. |
| Advertising on Lampposts | The council has agreed a 15 year contract for the installation of advertising on lamp posts. This will generate income for each site and may eventually result in advertising on around 800 sites across the City. Area Committees will receive a 20% share of the annual income for every lamp post site which has planning consent to spend on local priorities. |

4.2 Briefing sessions for Officers and Members will be arranged to provide clarity on this extended range of roles for the Area Committees.

5.0 Implications for council policy and governance

5.1 The work described in this report and the recommendation fits with existing Council policy and governance arrangements.

6.0 Legal and resource implications

6.1 There are no new resource or legal implications arising from the proposed extended roles of the Area Committees.

7.0 Recommendations

7.1 The Executive Board is asked to:

7.1.1 Agree the Area Functions to be delegated to Area Committees for 2008/09 as summarised above and detailed in Appendix 1

7.1.2 Endorse the enhanced roles of Area Committees as summarised above and detailed in Appendix 2

7.1.3 Request that this information is reported to the Area Committees at the next cycle of meetings

7.1.4 Request that the Area Functions referred to are incorporated into the Council's Constitution at the next available opportunity