

**Report of Assistant Chief Executive Customer Access and Performance / Director of Children's Services**

**Report to Member Management Committee**

**Date: 4<sup>th</sup> June 2013**

**Subject: Council Representation on Children and Young People Cluster Partnerships**

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

**Summary of main issues**

1. A recent review of area working arrangements examined the way we work through area committees, Area leadership and support, Directorate/service area working arrangements and local partnerships. The review concluded that the overall structure of 10 area committees, 3 administrative areas and 25 children's services clusters are well established and provide the right building blocks for locality working. However, the review, as endorsed by Executive Board, recommended that in order to strengthen local working arrangements that the appointment of elected member representatives to children service clusters should be considered to be area committee appointment. This would clearly establish a formal link between Area Committees and Clusters and enable and support the building of closer working arrangements to better support the needs children and families across the city.

**Recommendations**

2. It is recommended that Member Management Committee delegates the nomination of Elected Members representatives to local Children's Services Cluster partnerships to Areas Committees from the new municipal year.

## **1 Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 Following the Review of Area Working last year Executive Board agreed a number of recommendations to strengthen, develop and embed locality working across the city. One recommendation was for Member Management Committee to review the mechanism for appointing elected members to children's services clusters and in particular to consider whether these should become area committee appointments.

## **2 Background information**

- 2.1 The Children's cluster partnerships evolved originally in response to the extended schools initiative, then as extended services partnerships but have evolved to be an integral part of the locality model which sit under the Children's Trust Board. They provide an inclusive partnership offer to our universal services in schools and children's centres. Increasingly council services are being re-shaped to strengthen and develop relationships through the cluster model. The purpose of cluster partnerships are to:

- Enable local settings and services to work together effectively to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families, focusing on what will make the biggest difference in that area;
- Build capacity to improve preventative / early help services to meet local needs;
- Promote the ambition of a child friendly city across the locality.

- 2.2 In April 2011 the Children's Trust Board agreed the adoption of a minimum standard for the terms of reference across the cluster partnerships which included elected members as standing members of the governance group for each partnership. Elected Members also sit alongside a senior leader (local authority partner) from the Children's Services Directorate to be part of the Council's representation on each cluster partnership.

- 2.3 In October 2011 Member Management Committee agreed to categorise the cluster partnerships as Strategic and Key Partnerships and appointed a number of representatives to sit on the clusters.

## **3 Main issues**

- 3.1 A review of area working arrangements was commissioned in June 2012 to examine the way we work through area committees, Area leadership and support, Directorate/service area working arrangements and local partnerships. The review took stock of our recent progress, compared this with our aspirations and made a series of recommendations about the next steps in delivering locally responsive and accountable services.
- 3.2 The review concluded that the overall structure of 10 area committees, 3 administrative areas and 25 children's services clusters are well established and

provide the right building blocks for locality working. The majority of views expressed did not advocate major structural change. However, it was agreed that we needed to optimise and make the better use of what we already had through more clearly understanding the relative roles and responsibilities of both individuals, the area committees and other partnership bodies.

3.1 More specifically within the review 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 other cases, elected members felt that there was a lack of understanding of their roles and structures and relationships were less good.

3.2 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, members also expressed concerns 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. In order to further embed this relationship an opportunity exists for these appointments to be made by the respective area committees from the beginning of the new municipal year. This is felt to bring a number of advantages:

- Clearly establishes a formal link between Area Committees and Clusters.
- Encourages joint working and enables opportunities for joint funding of projects/activities by bringing together access to Area Committee budgets and Cluster budgets. The proposed delegation of a local activity budget to Area Committees also provides a further opportunity for area committees to work jointly with work in the clusters in order to meet local needs and improve outcomes for children and families in the local area.
- Enables clusters to link into the wider partnerships and council services where this is needed in order to encourage local problem solving eg where there might be traffic management issues impacting on a local neighbourhood. This in turn supports members in their local leadership role in working across organisational boundaries to champion local needs.

3.3 It should be recognised that Clusters across the city vary in terms of their maturity and effectiveness but this issue is recognised and considerable work is on-going to support and develop the cluster model. It is also recognised that members bring an important contribution in terms of local knowledge, understanding of the needs of the community and that there are clear benefits to clusters of a strengthened link into the area committee structure. Therefore, this proposed change sits within an overall programme of development and support for Clusters, Elected members and Local Authority partners to address key issues and embed effective joint working to meet local needs.

#### **4 Corporate Considerations**

## **4.1 Consultation and Engagement**

- 4.1.1 This recommendation falls directly out of the Review of Area Working which was subject to significant consultation with a range of stakeholders including members and officers. A series of drop in sessions were held for elected members over the summer and their views were influential in shaping the recommendations including the change proposed in this paper. Officer consultation was initiated through discussions with each directorate leadership team but were followed up with further specific discussions as required. The area support teams were a particularly important stakeholder as they are directly involved in the work of area committees and their views were gathered through team meetings and individual discussions.

## **4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration**

- 4.2.1 Equality is clearly represented within a number of the formally stated roles of an area committee. These include: to act as a focal point for community involvement, help members listen to and represent their communities and help members understand the specific needs of the community in their area. The effective development of cluster partnerships also provides an inclusive offer to all schools and children's centres which enables them to work together and with partners.
- 4.2.2 By improving the links at a local level by asking area committees to nominate Cluster representatives this strengthens local working arrangements it means that local needs can be more clearly identified. Solutions can then be developed that suit local circumstances which will in turn address any issues of inequality.

## **4.3 Council policies and City Priorities**

- 4.3.1 In the context of increased autonomy of schools, the clusters are an important vehicle for partnership working with the appointment of elected members onto clusters an opportunity to balance this autonomy with local democratic accountability. The appointment of cluster representatives augments the role of Area Committees with regard to their work on children's services and provides local democratic input to the work of cluster partnerships. It provides an opportunity for members to further develop their community leadership role as set out within the Commission for Local Government and within the developing Council Business Plan.

## **4.4 Resources and value for money**

- 4.4.1 There are no specific resource implications but closer working between clusters and area committees has the potential to improve value for money as more local solutions can be developed to meet local needs.

## **4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

- 4.5.1 It should be noted that in the Brigshaw cluster and Temple Newsam Learning Partnerships governance is through a Co-operative Trust with elected members as trustees. Therefore if changes are made in terms of nominations there is a formal process to undertake to become a trustee. This will issue will need to be

further discussed with the Outer East Area Committee as part of their nomination process. The report is available to the public and is subject to call in.

## **4.6 Risk Management**

4.6.1 The proposal in this report implements a recommendation made by Executive Board and as such there are no direct risks arising from the proposals. Improving governance and accountability of cluster partnerships through challenge and support from Elected Members is critical to improving cluster partnership arrangements and delivering improved outcomes for children and families across the city. There are also clear links to a number of the budget and financial risks and the development and strengthening of our locality working arrangements and local decision making will help to minimise key financial risks going forward.

## **5 Conclusions**

5.1 A recent review of area working arrangements examined the way we work through area committees, Area leadership and support, Directorate/service area working arrangements and local partnerships. The review concluded that the overall structure of 10 area committees, 3 administrative areas and 25 children's services clusters are well established and provide the right building blocks for locality working. However, the review, as endorsed by Executive Board, recommended that in order to strengthen local working arrangements that the appointment of elected member representatives to children service clusters should be considered to be area committee appointment. This would clearly establish a formal link between Area Committees and Clusters and enable and support the building of closer working arrangements to better support the needs of children and families across the city.

## **6 Recommendations**

6.1 It is recommended that Member Management Committee re-categorises the Clusters as Community and Local Engagement partnerships and delegates the nomination of Elected Members representatives to local Children's Services Cluster partnerships to Area Committees from the new municipal year.

## **7 Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

7.1 None

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<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.