

Report to: Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services) **Date of Meeting:** 11 September 2018

Subject: Area Committees Working Group Final Report – Update on Recommendations **Wards Affected:** (All Wards);

Report of: Head of Regulation and Compliance

Cabinet Portfolio; Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services

Is this a Key Decision? No **Is it included in the Forward Plan?** No
Exempt/Confidential No

Purpose/Summary

To provide a monitoring report setting out progress made in respect of the recommendations formulated by the Area Committees Working Group and approved by Cabinet.

Recommendation:

That the report setting out progress made against the recommendations formulated by the Area Committees Working Group and approved by Cabinet be noted.

Reasons for the Recommendation:

To comply with a decision of Cabinet to submit monitoring reports on a six monthly basis setting out progress made against each of the recommendations.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

No alternative options were considered. Cabinet has requested the submission of monitoring reports.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

There are no financial implications arising for the Council as a direct result of this report. The implementation of recommendations that result in efficiency savings and any necessary financial investment will be the subject of separate reports.

(B) Capital Costs

There are no financial implications arising for the Council as a direct result of this report. The implementation of recommendations that result in efficiency savings and any necessary financial investment will be the subject of separate reports.

Implications:

The following implications of this proposal have been considered and where there are specific implications, these are set out below:

Financial		
Legal		
Human Resources		
Equality		
1.	No Equality Implication	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.	Equality Implications identified and mitigated	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	Equality Implication identified and risk remains	<input type="checkbox"/>

Contribution to the Council’s Core Purpose

Protect the most vulnerable: Not applicable
Facilitate confident and resilient communities: Not applicable
Commission, broker and provide core services: Not applicable
<p>Place – leadership and influencer: The proposal agreed by Cabinet established three Constituency Fora covering the Bootle, Sefton Central and Southport Constituencies to enable Members to:-</p> <p>A. engage with local residents, community groups, partners, businesses, private sector organisations, the voluntary, community and faith sector and Parish Councils particularly in relation to the Sefton 2030 vision for the borough; and</p> <p>B. in areas covered by Parish Councils, to work closely with such Parish Councils and the Sefton Area Partnership of Local Councils by promoting and enhancing the Parish and Town Council Charter for Sefton</p> <p>This would aim to make sure what the Council and what others do are in the best interests of Sefton and its residents and has a contributing role to the 2030 vision of the borough</p>
<p>Drivers of change and reform: The implementation of the suggestions by Members will play a key role in leading change and reform to improve outcomes for Sefton residents and continuously improve</p>

the borough through the engagement of local residents, community groups, partners, businesses, private sector organisations, the voluntary, community and faith sector and Parish Councils in relation to the Sefton 2030 vision for the borough
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: Not applicable
Greater income for social investment: Not applicable
Cleaner Greener: Not applicable

Impact of the Proposals on Service Delivery:

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

The Head of Corporate Resources (FD5249/18) has been consulted and has no comment.

The Head of Regulation and Compliance (LD4473/18) is the author of this report

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

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Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection

1. Introduction/Background

1.1 At its meeting held on 13 September 2016 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services) approved the establishment of an Area Committees Working Group with the following Terms of Reference and Objectives:-

1.2 Review the findings of the public consultation exercise undertaken on the role of Area Committees, and the other issues set out in the report submitted to the Cabinet on 23 June 2016

Review modern methods of engagement between councils and their councillors and councillors and their communities, including the operation of community forums by other local authorities, the use of social media and guidance on its use

To consider whether a programme of communication training for members should be developed with particular emphasis on the social media aspects of modern communication in their role as 'Community Champions'

Review ways of communicating information about councillors' expenditure in their

wards and associated decision making processes

To consider whether a system of escalation for the public where a councillor cannot be contacted, does not respond to contact or does not make themselves available for surgeries etc. can be developed

To consider whether methods for citizens to formally engage with its Council are made as simple and effective as possible through the provisions within the Council Constitution for petitions, questions attendance at meetings etc.

To consider how section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy funding would be spent in a revised Area Committee structure

To consider the remit of Area Committees

2. Final Report Recommendations

2.1 Accordingly, the Working Group met on numerous occasions to gather evidence and produce its Final Report with associated recommendations. Cabinet approved the Final Report at its meeting held on 5 October 2017. However, Cabinet's decision was "called-in" and the "called-in" decision was considered at a Special Meeting of this Committee held on 21 November 2017. The Committee accepted the decision made by Cabinet and the approved recommendations are as follows:-

2.2 That:-

- (1) that the current Area Committee system in Sefton cease;
- (2) that the current responsibilities of Area Committees be transferred to the Committees as detailed in [Appendix 1](#) attached to the report of the Head of Regulation and Compliance considered by the three Area Committees during the December 2015/January 2016 cycle;
- (3) that three Constituency Fora be established covering the Bootle, Sefton Central and Southport Constituencies with the following terms of reference:
 - A. To engage with local residents, community groups, partners, businesses, private sector organisations, the voluntary, community and faith sector and Parish Councils particularly in relation to the Sefton 2030 vision for the borough;
 - B. In areas covered by Parish Councils, to work closely with such Parish Councils and the Sefton Area Partnership of Local Councils by promoting and enhancing the [Parish and Town Council Charter for Sefton](#)
 - C. To consider complaints from constituents if it can be demonstrated that none of their Ward Councillor(s) has responded at all to a request for action;
 - D. To meet a minimum of twice per year ; and

E. To determine, with the consent of the three Ward Councillors, the devolved allocation of Ward funds on local priorities that would not otherwise be funded by Council budgets; that this funding continue to be administered by the Head of Communities; and any Ward budget over £10,000 not allocated at the end of the Municipal Year be transferred to the Cabinet Member – Communities and Housing for inclusion in the Community Transition Fund;

- (4) that the Head of Communities to support the operation of the Constituency Fora;
- (5) that the Head of Strategic Support to provide support on public engagement and consultation issues to the Constituency Fora;
- (6) that subject to operational requirements the use of Council buildings be allowed to host the Constituency Fora; and
- (7) that to assist the role of Constituency Fora Operational Groups be established if deemed necessary by local Ward Members (in those areas where currently none exist) to work with partner agencies in their localities.

2.3 An update [report](#) was considered by this Committee at its meeting held on 6 March 2018. Attached to the report was a table setting out progress made against each of the recommendations

3. First Round of Constituency Forum Meetings

3.1 The Head of Communities supports the operation of the Constituency Fora. The first round of meetings were held at 6.30 p.m. on the dates set out below and were advertised on the Council's website and via press releases to local news websites and newspapers.

Bootle - 21 June 2018 – Bootle Town Hall
Sefton Central – 28 June 2018 – Crosby Lakeside Adventure Centre
Southport – 5 July 2018 – The Atkinson

3.2 The Head of Communities has provided information, set out below in paragraphs 3.3 and 3.4 on the first round of meetings:-

3.3 The Table below shows the number of visitors to the Forum and the partner agencies and Council Departments that attended.

Forum Location	Public	Partner Agencies and Departments
Bootle	12	Merseyside Police, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service, Sefton CVS, Sefton@Work, Cleansing, Prima Housing, Youth Service, Green Sefton, Anti-Social Behaviour team, Litherland Youth and Community Centre, Netherton Park Neighbourhood Centre, L21 Network, Christ Church Youth and Community Centre, South Sefton and Crosby Foodbank, Hate Crime, British Transport Police
Central	8	Merseyside Police, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service, Sefton CVS, Sefton@Work, Cleansing, Environmental Health, Youth Service, Green Sefton, Anti-Social Behaviour team, Thornton Parish, Aintree Parish, Hate Crime, British Transport Police
Southport	23	MP's Office, Merseyside Police, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service, Sefton CVS, Sefton@Work, Cleansing, Environmental Health, Light for Life, Housing Standards, Green Sefton, Anti-Social Behaviour team, HumanKind, Ainsdale Lunch and Leisure, Hate Crime, British Transport Police.

3.4 Feedback

Elected Member feedback

- Cllr at Central Forum felt that the setup is too similar to a regular surgery.
- Cllr in Southport commented that the idea needs more work to be successful.
- Cllr in Southport was concerned about the level of Council Officers and Partners v members of the public.
- Cllr in Southport was very supporting and gave positive feedback.
- Cllr in Southport felt that a fellow Councillors family member sitting behind the desk was inappropriate.
- Bootle and Southport are townships in their own right and as such can sustain forums as contained geographical areas however, Central is presenting similar issues that were stated in the Area Committee review.
- Crosby, Formby and Maghull are separate and need to hold the forums in separate locations in the three areas.
- We need to find accessible places; The Atkinson in Southport was fine but

could look at alternative venues in Bootle and Central.

- We need to change the name as its not clear to people what the event is about.
- We need much greater publicity.
- The time could be changed to 4 – 6 or during the day or at half term and we might get a better response.

Resident feedback

- Residents liked the setup and the informal way that they could talk face to face with Councillors and Agencies.
- It was seen as a great opportunity to put names to faces and build relationships.
- A resident commented that the Forum was better than area committee because you don't have to submit a question and you may get an answer on the night
- There were many comments that the Forums had not been very well advertised/promoted.
- Residents felt that the time the forum was held did not fit in well with family life.
- Having the press there.
- A resident was concerned that no decision could be made at the forum, and they were also concerned that their question hadn't been formally and publicly noted anywhere.

Partner feedback

- Partners were very happy with the opportunity to network with other agencies and build new relationships.
- Partners commented that it was refreshing to be able to work directly with residents, face to face and have the possibility to solve their issue there and then.

4. Consultation with Elected Members

4.1 The Head of Regulation and Compliance sought the views of all Members of the Council on the first round of Constituency Forum meetings.

4.2 In total, 26 responses were received, 6 from Bootle, 8 from Sefton Central and 12 from Southport. The table attached to the report sets out Members' verbatim comments which are self-explanatory; and these have been shared with the Head of Communities as the officer responsible for servicing Constituency Forum meetings.

4.3 In general it appears that Members support the operation of the new arrangements more in Bootle and Sefton Central than in Southport; that it would be desirable if

more Members of the public attended the Fora; and that to achieve this aim enhanced advertisement and marketing of the Fora should be undertaken.