CONSTITUENCY FORUM ATTENDED	WHAT WORKED WELL	WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED	GENERAL COMMENT
BOOTLE			
1.	Combining areas and officers	More publicity allowing tenants the opportunity to come forward	Shorter time space and possible in other venues 6 month basis
2.	Good attendance of Members and partners and interaction between them	Improved advertisement of the Forum in the local media to generate better public attendance. Also advertisement of the event on the Town Hall noticeboard	Disappointed that after all the effort put into arranging the Forum there was a poor public attendance. Hopefully this situation could be improved by enhanced advertising.
3.			Only one member from my ward attended. Not many people attended with more officers than public. Good idea maybe future events will be busier
4.	The market style was very refreshing and created an informal and accessible means for the public to engage with officers, colleagues, organisations representatives without the restraints encountered by the old Area Committee arrangements. Plenty of information available	Advanced and more widespread notifications for the dates and times of the meetings (perhaps placed in local community centres etc...) People are still confusing the title with the Area Committee – so it may need efforts to market the new forum in a way that differentiates between the two.	It may be helpful to have the forum held in different locations around South Sefton to allow elderly / vulnerable residents an opportunity to visit in a venue closer to them? Perhaps invite Local groups to come along. All in all, in my opinion it was a successful start to a new era of accessible, open and engaging public relations with Sefton Council and partners etc... I was delighted to see a positive impact from the new framework. Well done to everyone involved with this new initiative- it was a brilliant start and I look forward to attending our next area

			forum.
5.	The format was good, plenty of networking opportunities.	I think even more organisations should be invited to attend.	Although the venue was good, it would not attract people from the far ends of the constituency, so I think this needs to be considered. Publicity for the event was really poor, with press coverage the day before. There should be wider publicity including radio announcement
6.			Unfortunately I was unable to attend the Forum, but I have heard colleagues commenting positively about the forum.
SEFTON CENTRAL			
1.			Three people attended to speak to me about a planning application that had already been passed. They stayed for about 45 mins and I was happy to discuss with them and take away their questions to get an answer but my feelings were that if other people had been waiting to see me this would have been frustrating for those waiting. Also I had to make it clear that as a Ward Councillor I cannot do very much about a planning application that has already been passed. Perhaps it should be made clear to attendees that they have a fixed amount of time e.g. 10 minutes? Also is there any way to provide attendees with info as to what can be achieved through the forum? My fear is that when 'big' issues happen like the closure of a

			service or a housing development the forum may be used to organise protests which may not be particularly constructive. Perhaps ‘terms of reference’ could be published?
2.			I didn't attend the last forum so I am not really poised to comment. I have had some negative feedback from some residents who did attend, but I will reserve judgement!
3.	As a new Councillor, meeting other Councillors and professional bodies and Agencies	More public presence	
4.	Organisation, attendance by officers, other agencies,	The public could attend?	No one came from the public, is that a sign they are happy? Is venue too remote from the Ward? Venue is problematic I appreciate.
5.	It is better than the previous structure but needs better advertising and possibly more frequent meetings otherwise it will become meaningless. Certainly more agencies need to be present but they may say they already consult with public via their own forums.	Input from council officers would be of help especially the Planning Department.	The system will evolve most probably by usage by the public. The atmosphere was easy going and friendly which allowed good interfacing with the public. However there was no way of proper identification of the people who turned up as to where they lived, some people made the complete round of all of the tables
6.			I attended the Bootle and Central forums. I found both very useful for interaction with officers and other Councillors.

			However, I saw only four members of the public, though there may have been more. The Public I recognised were the "Usual Suspects" i.e. those who attended all of the Area Committees. On the whole, I think it is a good idea which would be improved by more intensive event publicity. In Victoria, we had agreed to try a new format. To hold our council business as part of Friends Of meetings. Rotating between the three main groups in Victoria, Coronation & Moorside. The groups were content to try this format as we advised that council business might take no more than ten minutes; TRO's etc. If the Police were able to attend then the FO groups thought that this would be an advantage to them as would the attendance of a Neighbourhoods officer. Sue Ashe agreed to attend under this format. We take the view that the Friends of groups contain people who are highly Valued by the Council and merit extra attention from the Council by this format. We recognise that while the meetings would have to be open to the general public that this could only be a good thing for the FO groups. Keep up the good work
7.	Nice open room layout	• Advertising of forum • Pictures of councillors on	Having not attended under the previous format I am unable to make any meaningful

		tables • Time for agencies to meet together before public arrive	comparison. Three residents attended from Blundellsands ward which is local to the venue. It would be useful to try a weekend rather than a weeknight.
8.	Good representation from services and Councillors	Location – this meeting was at the CLAC which is a bit out of the way. The event was poorly attended by the public but I'm not sure advertising it any wider would make much difference as the Area Committees were never well attended unless there was a specific contentious issue.	Sefton Central is a large and diverse area and I'm not sure this format is appropriate for public engagement. The event required extensive resource to facilitate
SOUTHPORT			
1.			I was absent for the first meeting. My colleagues reported to me that there were more officers and elected members than public - which is not a good start. Colleagues were not impressed with the lack of engagement.
2.	Good representation of Councillors and other organisations that represented important areas of work in both public and voluntary sector	The layout of the room set aside for each ward should have had spaces for Councillors to be able to move in and out without going from one end to the other. The attendance by the public was very poor I believe about 25 people and there were more Councillors and others there than public.	The simple fact that a forum of this nature is no substitute for the Area Committee system. Whilst as an addition to public involvement it could play a part but not as currently constituted. We need a system that allows the public collectively to raise issues and have them dealt with by both Councillors and other bodies i.e. the Police and the system of referring many of the

		There is no mechanism by which town wide issues can be addressed and the sort of query we had as far as I could tell were individual ward issues that could be dealt with by Councillors at surgeries or other methods of direct communication. In speaking to other organisations they were disappointed at the public interest. I am afraid I need to report that council officers in attendance felt that their time had been wasted.	responsibilities previously the remit of the Area Committee to one Cabinet Member in particular has been unhelpful. There is still confusion amongst members over both the criteria and the mechanism for the distribution of previous Area Committee funding which has to be addressed. I appreciate there has only been one meeting and there will be the inevitable reference to "teething problems" but the forum is no substitute for what we had in the past which seemed to have got public support and interest to the benefit of Sefton As far as the venue is concerned I remain of the opinion that this should be Southport Town Hall. I have been concerned to hear from a number of members in private that one of the aims is to downgrade the importance and that some in the south of the Borough were becoming concerned that the Area Committee was being perceived by the public as being the nearest equivalent to an actual Southport Town Council of sorts. The latter has to be encouraged not worked against.
3.	The event has very few unique benefits.	Public Attendance. **Do we have any figures/information from few Public that attended on how they heard of it?**	A very poor substitute to what was a thriving Area Committee where the public could hold the police, members and officers to account. The event had no teeth or power to ensure

		Better promotion of the event is essential. For example, assuming it is going to be in the same location next time (The Atkinson) then signage could be displayed outside (it is a reasonable footfall area) and also inside the Atkinson's foyer. Perhaps something on the lines of pop-up roller banners being displayed for a week or so before the event.	that residents' concerns/issues were being addressed or listened to by the Council.
4.		Ward tables far too close together.	A member of the public was sitting behind and then at one of the tables with the Councillors from that ward. This would give the impression that person was an elected member. This is unacceptable. The tables are only for ward Councillors to sit behind and to meet their residents. Also residents will speak to their ward Councillors about personal and often highly sensitive issues and Councillors therefore are data handling and have to pay £40 a year to the ICO to be able to do so. A member of the public sitting at a table would not be authorised to data handle and would not be covered by the ICO. Legally there is an issue here.
5.	Nothing	Scrap the forum and return to an Area Committee format.	I only spoke to 2 members of the public and I already knew them both well. Other tables had no visitors at all. When Area Committees met the public were able to

			listen to a regular report from senior police officers and they were able to ask questions of the officers. Issues pertinent to Southport were reported on by officers, improvements/changes were discussed in public by Councillors and decisions were made openly and transparently. The new format means that issues once decided at Area Committees are now decided by the Licensing & Regulatory Committee which receives no publicity and where every other meeting is held in Bootle. At the forum members of the public could only ask questions of the officers present. Area Committees were able to request the presence of any officer (including senior officers) who would publicly report on issues that had raised concerns by the residents of Southport. A chat with Councillors and officers over a lukewarm cup of coffee does not improve democracy and transparency, it removes it.
6.	I liked the atmosphere because it was more relaxed and less intimidating for residents than the Area Committee. Residents had access to support services such as the police and council officers (cleansing) to Speak directly. The previous structure was	More publicity of the event would be helpful. More agencies such as Merseytravel could have been present.	I think the format is fine but the frequency, number of agencies and timing may evolve as we learn from experience.

	cumbersome and restrictive for residents who had to bring a question and were allowed one supplementary question.		
7.	The air conditioning worked well. The event itself was (just) fractionally short of being a complete farce. It also cost massively more than Area Committees cost in terms of total officer time - and of course only attempted to replace one aspect of the Area Committee - the powers that be have ensured that the democratic element is completely removed. We can't have ordinary people engaging directly with their elected representatives as they make real decisions, can we? Much of the evening was spent by councillors talking to one another.	It would help if publicly accountable people who were actually concerned about the people of Southport and their expression of their views were used to determine how the views of the people of Southport should be sought and responded to.	This attempt to put a sticking plaster over the removal of a functioning direct democratic interchange has not quite completely failed yet. But give it time and sufficient waste of public funds.
8.	Residents able to have direct contact with service providers including Police and Fire Officers	More structure required. Hall very noisy and was rather like a large Councillor Surgery rather than forum. If attendance increases has the potential to be chaotic. Residents may not get to see who	Needs to be more structured and meeting should take place more often than suggested

		they want.	
9.	There was a welcome informality about the event. There seemed to be a reasonable number of residents attending and they appeared to make the most of speaking to the Councillors and partners and asking questions.	The handout giving the ward spend and balances should have been proof read as the entry for Norwood was a copy and paste of the Ainsdale information. It would be helpful if S106 figures could also be included for each ward as this is in the discretion of the Councillors for each ward. Then the residents would know exactly how much money was available overall for each ward to spend and also know what it had been spent on. I think there could have been more prior advertising of the event. Certainly having a notice on the notice board outside Southport Town Hall and also a notice on the notice board inside the Atkinson. Also I didn't see any notification of the event in the two local free papers – Visiter and Champion – although it may have been there but I didn't notice it.	We saw the partner of one of the Councillors sitting on the same side of the table as the Councillors which we thought was misleading as residents might think that person was also a Councillor. We have been told by Sefton Council's legal team that there is no reason why non-Councillors should not attend Councillor surgeries along with the Councillors as MPs have case workers who provide advice to the public and these people could be regarded in some way as being equivalent to such case workers. However we disagree with this as case workers have an official position and also would be registered under data protection laws.
10.	I liked the way it was set out, easy for constituents to find their Councillor. There was a good number of organisations there, all	I would have liked representation from Merseytravel and Arriva buses. There needs to be more publicity about it, maybe a press presence.	There was a better atmosphere than the old area committee, which sometimes felt as if it was more about point scoring than helping constituents.

	relevant to the area. I liked the informality, much better than the old style grandstanding. It's early days, I like the format and I'm sure that as time goes on more organisations, such as Southport Bid could be persuaded to take part.		
11.	The room was spacious	The intention of these meeting is surely is to give Southport people a voice and access to a decision making process and accountability. So anything that could further these aims would be an improvement. In my opinion the Constituency Forum simply needs changing back to the format that worked for the people. i.e The Area Committee. Or a similar forum.	The evening was a complete waste of time. I received 2 enquiries. The first was from a couple who said they would have rung me but wanted to see what was going on. The second was a lady randomly passing through who knew a friend of mine and wanted to know if she had become a grandmother yet. And that was about the sum total. The old Area committees were productive meetings which is why they were packed. The absence of the Southport residents who previously attended the Area Committee meetings speaks volumes.
12.	It was generally well organised – it's just that the concept may well be flawed.	In terms of the concept, I'm not clear that there is a lot that could be improved – the problem may lie with the concept.	The Constituency Forum concept should certainly be given a fair trial, but serious consideration must be given after the next round of Forum meetings as to whether reverting to Area Committee meetings is a better way to engage with the public. "Public" attendance at the first Southport Constituency Forum appeared to be

			overwhelmingly comprised of political activists. This was in contrast to attendance at Southport Area Committee meetings where the majority of people attending over the years were “ordinary” members of the public. Part of the explanation for this very low public attendance may be that if the public want to speak to a councillor then a Councillors’ Surgery (or direct contact) is more convenient, and if they want to speak to an officer (or, for example, the Police) there are easier ways of doing this.