

REPORT TO: CABINET MEMBER – COMMUNITIES

DATE: 31 March 2010

SUBJECT: Encouraging Participation in Area Committees

WARDS All

AFFECTED:

REPORT OF: Caroline Elwood, Legal Director
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Investment Programmes

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EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL: No

PURPOSE/SUMMARY:

To outline proposed mechanisms for encouraging greater resident engagement in Area Committees

To request that the Committee agrees progress of work with Members and Area Committees to explore the best approaches for their areas

REASON WHY DECISION REQUIRED:

To allow progress to be made in further developing Area Committees and making them relevant to local people

RECOMMENDATION(S):

It is recommended that the Cabinet Member:

- (i) Approve the proposed mechanisms
- (ii) Agree that further work can progress with Area Committees around their development in relation to the engagement of residents

KEY DECISION: No

FORWARD PLAN: No

IMPLEMENTATION DATE: 1st April 2010

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:**To continue with current approaches****IMPLICATIONS:****Budget/Policy Framework:** No Implications.**Financial:** There are no additional financial implications of this work**Legal:** No implications**Risk Assessment:****Asset Management:** No implications**CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN/VIEWS**

Consultation has been undertaken with Members around Area Committees within the context of Area Management and Governance and further is planned to explore the further development of Area Committees

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Cabinet and Council - Governance Review – Workstreams on the Sefton Borough Partnership and Area Management, 4 March 2010

Performance Cabinet - Governance Review – Workstreams on the Sefton Borough Partnership and Area Management, 17 February 2010

CORPORATE OBJECTIVE MONITORING:

<u>Corporate Objective</u>		<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1	Creating a Learning Community	√		
2	Creating Safe Communities	√		
3	Jobs and Prosperity	√		
4	Improving Health and Well-Being	√		
5	Environmental Sustainability	√		
6	Creating Inclusive Communities	√		
7	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening local Democracy	√		
8	Children and Young People	√		

1.0 BACKGROUND:

1.1 Cabinet and Council agreed to a move towards area based governance structures at their meetings on 4 March 2010

1.2 The issue of resident engagement in Area Committees has been consistently raised in consultation with Members about developing potential models of area management.

1.3 Cabinet Member for Communities has picked up this issue and requested a response for how the Council can encourage greater resident engagement within our Area Committees

2.0 INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

2.1 As part of the Governance Review Workstream for Area Management a key task is to look at the role and function of Area Committees, including its role in engaging with residents and promoting the role of residents in decision making.

2.2 Each Area Committee varies in its level of resident attendance and the level of participation of residents in Area Committee business.

2.3 All Area Committees have Advisory Group representatives who represent a resident perspective in relation to Area Committee business, however, it is widely accepted that Area Committees need to do be supported to promote positive resident engagement. It is widely felt that Area Committees are seen as somewhere residents can raise issues or complaints and work needs to be undertaken to change this view.

3.0 PROPOSED MECHANISMS FOR ENCOURAGING GREATER INVOLVEMENT

3.1 A series of stages is proposed for taking forward this piece of work in order to make it effective and deliver long standing benefits in terms of resident engagement

3.2 Stage one is a comprehensive review of Area Committees looking at how they are structured, how they operate and how they are currently promoted to residents. The background work to this has begun but needs to be progressed further with Members in individual Area Committees

3.3 Stage two is to explore the gaps in resident attendance at Area Committees and look at the various groups within the community that the Area Committee need to engage with more strongly. A model for doing this is already in progress with Young Advisors who are currently looking at how the Area Committee can better engage young people in its business.

3.4 Once completed these stages will inform a series of recommendations about how the Area Committees can develop to offer a better route for engagement of local people. Plus there will be a range of approaches devised for specific targeting of groups to promote their engagement

3.5 All this work will be carried out in conjunction with Members to ensure it reflects the needs of their Area Committees and provides appropriate responses to their individual circumstances

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet Member:

- Approve the proposed mechanisms
- Agree that further work can progress with Area Committees around their development in relation to the engagement of residents