

5th March 2014

REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE WASHINGTON AREA COMMITTEE

Refreshing the Area Committee Priorities

1. Purpose of the report

1.1 To inform Members of Washington Area Committee of the proposed process and timescales to refresh the Area Committee priorities. The outcomes of this process will determine the People and Place Board workplans for 2015/16.

2. Background

2.1 The approach proposed is for a flexible framework to refresh priorities and identify core service areas that members may want to influence either prior to, or during, the municipal year. The aim is to develop a strategic approach to identifying priorities that is flexible enough to link to problem solving at a local level at any time during the year. The principles are to further strengthen area arrangements by adding value through engaging elected members directly in order to plan and influence future service delivery. This should include:

- **Greater coordinating role**, facilitating communities and a broader range of organisations to work together to address local issues (take action).
- **Flexibility** – commitments that can be adapted in the light of changing circumstances and emerging opportunities (influencing future service delivery).
- Services better **matched to demand** in local areas and that services are tailored to meet local need and deliver a tangible impact for local communities

2.2 The focus will also be on further developing and strengthening the Influence of elected members on the commissioning and delivery of services by:

- Understanding the strategic direction and required outcomes from both council, partner and VCS organisations.
- Influencing the integrated working required to get maximum benefit from resources available to the community and public sector.
- Identifying priorities and influence service delivery at a local area level to target resources to ensure that services are responsive to local needs.

This approach supports the 'Altogether Sunderland' approach.

3. Next steps

3.1 Both boards have received this information and the following timeline is proposed. This will enable the Area Committee's and Board's work plans to align with the planning cycle for both the council and partner organisations. This is to ensure that the area priorities are an integral part of the strategic planning cycle and subsequent outcomes take account of the added value that any relevant local perspective can

bring. This will maximise both community benefit and recognition for local action undertaken by elected members.

March

- Area Board discussions (workshops) - Heads of Service, Senior Officers, Partners and Cllrs
- Scene setting, 'big issues' for the area, council and partner priorities to address them
- Cllrs share their local area perspective in terms of their key issues and priorities
- Cllrs discuss adding value / influence & support delivery in their local area

April

- Identified priorities are considered in terms of adding value, supporting strategic direction in each area
- Where similar priorities have been identified across a number of areas this information is coordinated / considered to establish where resources can be targeted to maximise use and community benefit. (e.g. it is more cost effective to pilot some initiatives in one locality that has most need and if successful roll out to other areas)
- **Board proposes priorities unique to each local area solving specific issues or problems – this could be a mixture of both delivery projects and commitments to receive information updates throughout the year.**

June

- Area Committee discusses and agrees priorities
- Workplans established
- Boards commence delivery programme.
- Steps can be repeated for specific themes through the year if additional opportunities arise.

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 Members are requested to consider and approve the timeline and process outlined above and agree the first workshop to be held xxxx **March 2015**

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