

26TH JUNE 2012

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Setting the Scene - Strengthening the Area Governance Arrangements

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To outline improved changes to the City Council's area governance arrangements and supporting practices, as part of the wider review of the Executive and Committee arrangements agreed by Annual Council on 16 May 2012.

2.0 Background

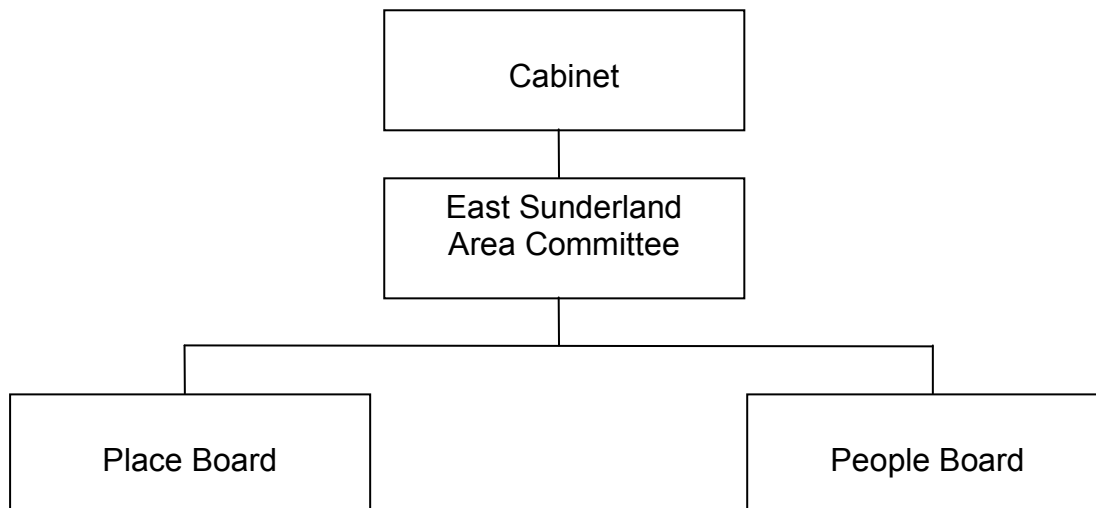
- 2.1 As Members are aware, the Area Committees were established to ensure improved service delivery at a local level in the context of value for money and more efficient, transparent and accountable decision making.
- 2.2 For a number of years the Area Committees have achieved this through taking the lead on the development and delivery of Local Area Plans. By working closely with council officers, partners and actively encouraging the participation of local residents the Area Committees have identified all main priorities for the improvement of the area and monitored the quality and effectiveness of services delivered by the council and other main providers in the area.
- 2.3 More recently and as part of the restructuring arrangements in the Council the Responsive Local Services Street Scene Service was set up which introduced the delivery of services including graffiti removal, fly tipping, litter, dog fouling, grass cutting and refuse and recycling at a local level and in a way that is responsive to local needs. The Area Committees have worked effectively to date with Street Scene staff to help to influence service delivery in their areas.
- 2.4 It is intended to increase the range of services delivered at a local level and in doing so develop further the role and capacity of Area Committees to support this devolution.
- 2.5 In practice, the Area Committees will have greater influence in the design, delivery and review of services delivered in, and on behalf, of their communities. The Area Committees will be placed at the heart of decision making and improved practical governance arrangements are being introduced, including the introduction of Area Boards for Place and People in each area.
- 2.6 In doing so, the Area Committees will have real, direct influence over local services and clearer, more direct local accountability, with a focus on action to ensure better outcomes for local people.

3.0 Area Governance Arrangements – An Enhanced Governance Structure and Improved Ways of Working

- 3.1 The Area Committees are part of the Council's Executive Function and have two key roles:-
- (a) Influencing decisions on services delivered at a local level; and

(b) Identification of key priorities for their areas, in the context of supporting the delivery of the Council's Corporate Outcomes Framework at a local level and ensure maximum impact where necessary through utilising its own resources.

3.2 The establishment of Place and People Boards in each of the five areas has been introduced to support the Area Committees in delivering against agreed priorities, as illustrated below:-



3.3 Each Board will be chaired by one of the Area Committee's two Vice Chairs and have elected member representation from each of the Area's wards. Members will work alongside key officers in what will be practical action orientated groups. It should be noted that these boards are not decision making bodies and the work / recommendations of the boards will be presented to the Area Committees for final endorsement. Elected member representation on those boards for this Area Committee is as follows:-

Ward	Place Board Membership	People Board Membership
Doxford	Cllr Errington	Cllrs Gibson and Marshall
Hendon	Cllr Mordey	Cllrs Martin and McClennan
Millfield	Cllrs Scanlan and Kay	Cllr Price
Ryhope	Cllrs Farr and Ball	Cllrs Emerson and Ball
St Michaels	Cllr Maddison	Cllr Wood

3.4 It is intended, however, that the boards are inclusive and open to any members to attend in a non-voting capacity.

4.0 Influencing the Delivery of Public Services at an Area level

4.1 Wherever possible the Area Committees will take decisions, shape and influence the delivery of public sector services at a very local level. In utilising elected members unique understanding of the communities in which they serve and putting the needs of residents at the forefront of decisions made, the Area Committees will continue to ensure that services delivered at a local level meet the needs of communities and quality standards are maintained.

4.2 There are a number of place based services currently delivered at a local level through 'Responsive Local Services – Street Scene' as identified earlier in paragraph 2.3 of this report, which include graffiti removal, fly tipping, litter, dog fouling and grass cutting, refuse collection and recycling, with the addition of parks, repairs and play inspection this year, 80% of place services will be delivered at a local level. The Area Committees will

now have much more of an influential role in determining how those services are now delivered through the work of the Place Board.

4.3 This change in approach will ensure that the Area Committees are continuing to engage with communities on their behalf and influence decisions on services to meet their needs at a local level, achieving better outcomes for local people with a more responsive approach to service delivery.

4.4 The role of People Boards is currently being determined and will be introduced from September 2012 onwards.

5.0 Meeting Management - Frequency of Area Committees / Boards

5.1 To allow the Area Committees the capacity to meet the challenges of this new way of working it is intended that Area Committees will meet five times a year.

5.2 The Area Boards will meet on a monthly basis and as such hold a minimum of two board meetings before each meeting of the Area Committees. The boards will be responding to the priorities referred to them by the Area Committee and in turn updating the Area Committee in relation to progress, requests for decisions / funding and the ability to undertake its influencing role as necessary.

6.0 Support Arrangements

6.1 The Area Committees will be supported by Keith Moore, Area Lead Executive, Nicol Trueman Area Officer and Matthew Jackson Governance Officer, in terms of how it develops and delivers on its area priorities.

6.2 In the short term, Charlotte Burnham Head of Scrutiny and Area Arrangements will support the Area Committee in the establishment of the Area Boards.

7.0 Impact on the Allocation of Strategic Initiatives Budget and Community Chest Grants

7.1 The Strategic Initiatives Budget (SIB) remains unchanged and continues to be a resource made available to the Area Committees' to allocate against agreed area priorities only. It should be noted that SIB city-wide applications are not permitted where they impact upon any more than two areas.

7.2 The Community Chest is a grant made available to ward members to allocate to community groups in their own wards, up to maximum of six wards. The three ward members will continue to make the decisions on applications at a ward level.

7.3 As the Area Committees will meet five times a year, a responsive decision making process is to be introduced to ensure where necessary urgent decisions can be made in relation to SIB, Community Chest and Healthy Cities Fund applications.

8.0 Recommendations

8.1 It is recommended that the Area Committee:

- a) Receives the report outlining the improved changes to its operating framework and asks any questions felt appropriate; and
- b) Approves membership of the Place and People Boards as outlined in 3.3 of this report.

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