

North Area Committee

13th April 2010

Report of the Chief Executive

North Area: Towards a new work plan

1. Why has it come to Committee?

1.1 At its meeting in July 2009, the Committee agreed its work plan for the 2009/10. It was agreed that the April 2010 meeting would consider the committee's 'Annual Report' and also begin the process of identifying work streams for 2010/11 year. These work streams will then be finalised by committee into a new work plan for the year.

1.2 The next committee meeting in June will decide on the work plan for the next municipal year. This report will highlight possible options for consideration at the June meeting.

2. Description of Decision (Recommendations)

2.1 Area Committee is recommended to:

- Examine Local Area Plan priorities and to focus the efforts of the Area Committee on areas where they can make a real difference;
- Agree to the principle of a limited number of priorities (suggest up to six), to include Responsive Local Services, to form the 2010/11 work plan, which will be agreed at the June work plan meeting;
- Examine the governance processes to ensure they can deliver the committee's programme and priorities.

3. Background

3.1 The Annual Report provides a snapshot of the committee's work over the 2009/10 municipal year. Whilst there are a number of major achievements, it has become increasingly clear that changing some of the ways the committee operates will lead to greater alignment with priorities and a clearer focus on delivery.

3.2 The improvements suggested for consideration have arisen through the collection of information throughout the year via the Thematic Reports, Area Action Plan developments, issues raised through the Leader's Ward Visits and feedback from members and partners.

4. Refreshing Local Area Plans and priorities

4.1 The suggestions below can form the basis of discussion at June's meeting and assist the committee in deciding upon the areas and actions its work plan should focus on.

- Safe:
 - Antisocial behaviour
 - Increase confidence and trust levels in the community
- Attractive and Inclusive
 - Responsive Local Services project
 - Inclusiveness and community cohesion
 - Environmental and streetscene improvements
 - Enhancing and raising the public profile of the heritage of the North area
- Learning
 - Ensure that Family, Adult and Community Learning (FACL) provision is delivered in line with local need;
 - Identify and address gaps in youth and play services for all ages

- Healthy
 - Addressing the reasons behind the inequity of life expectancy across wards in the North Area
 - Child Poverty at a local level
 - Consider how a targeted response could be provided to support individuals who may not be aware that the Council could help them maximise their independence, an objective within the Local Area Agreement.
- Prosperous:
 - Support enterprise and entrepreneurship

5. Process

It is proposed that Area Committee discuss and agree a limited number of priorities (suggest up to 6), where they can make a difference, to address in 2010/11. Members will receive information that will build a picture of key facts and current services on priorities currently identified in the LAP. As well as June's Area Committee agreeing priorities, Lead Agents will be named against each priority. Lead Agents will ensure that the project is delivered, actions are allocated and measurable, monitored and provided with feedback to the Area Committee, linking into the Area Officer throughout the process, ensuring a central point of collection of information.

It is proposed that a series of 'Task and Finish' groups be established per priority action and should include elected members and partners. These groups will support the Lead Agent in delivering against the priority using problem solving techniques as necessary.

Actions identified and agreed during 2009/10 will also be progressed until all actions are resolved/complete. Feedback will be given to Area Committee as part of the performance and feedback reports.

6. Committee Governance

- 6.1** It is proposed to reduce the length of reports presented to Area Committee. Additional or supporting papers will be sent separately via e-bulletin.
- 6.2** Recommendations in reports will be replaced with a list of options, along with key strengths and weaknesses against each option. Committee will be asked to discuss options, with all members (including partners and officers) asking questions, informing debate and agreeing the preferred option to implement.
- 6.3** It is proposed that agenda items on which Committee do not have to make a decision will be classified as 'information only' and not discussed at Committee; instead these updates will be circulated with the planned e-bulletin.
- 6.4** The above measures to be discussed at the June meeting are designed to focus the work of the committee on deliverable actions, ensure meetings last a maximum of two hours and help towards encouraging residents to become involved in influencing decision making.

7. Funding Governance

- 7.1** To further the process of greater focus on actions that deliver the objectives of the LAP, it is proposed that funding governance for SIB should be adjusted. Consideration could be given to the following:
- Aligning a percentage of funding against priorities;
 - Re-design the application form to reflect the area's priorities;
 - Authenticating internal applications, via seeking approval from the Executive Director and relevant Portfolio holder before approaching Area Committee's budgets.

8. Background papers

- Sunderland Strategy Delivery Plans
- Local Area Agreements Delivery Plans
- North Local Area Plan

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