

Sunderland West Area Committee

2nd July 2009

Report of the Chief Executive

Questions to Area Committee

1. Why has it come to committee?

- 1.1** To raise awareness and understanding on the new agenda item, 'Questions to Area Committee'; provide guidance to Members on its purpose and seek support to launch the scheme from September 2009.
- 1.2** The proposed protocol is attached at Annex 1 and the form to be completed by local people to enable them to participate in Area Committees is attached at Annex 2.

2. Background

- 2.1** For the past year the committee and its partners have been developing a Local Area Plan and developing its priorities. It was identified via the consultation programme that there was a need to introduce a method in which local people could ask questions directly to their elected Councillors about public services being delivered in their communities. Area Committee is seen as the appropriate arena to facilitate this process.

3. Questions to Area Committee

- 3.1** It is proposed to pilot the 'Questions to Area Committee' at the next two meetings in September and November 2009, with Councillors being encouraged to invite local people along to these meetings to ask strategic questions affecting the Sunderland North area as a whole.

After the pilot a review on how it was managed in terms of process and practicalities will be held, with the possibility of it being rolled out across the City in 2010.

4. Recommendation

- 4.1** To approve the proposed protocol and pilot, as set out in Annex 1 and to utilise the form as set out in Annex 2.

5. Background papers

- Area Committee reports
- Local Area Plans
- Workshop notes

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Annex 1: Protocol for Questions at Area Committee

Annex 2: Question form template