

Cabinet – 9 November 2011

Evaluation of Area Partnerships

Portfolio: Communities and Partnerships - Councillor Zahid Ali

Service: Walsall Partnership

Wards: All

Key decision: No

Forward plan: Yes

1. Summary

At the Cabinet meeting held on 14 September the Chief Executive was asked to report back to cabinet on arrangements to ensure that elected members were kept informed of discussions and decisions taken at their relevant area partner meeting. This report proposes a mechanism for achieving this.

2. Recommendation

That Cabinet are requested to consider and agree the proposal for informing Elected Members of the discussions and decisions taken at Area Partner meetings.

3. Report Detail

- 3.1 At the previous Cabinet meeting, a report was presented – “Evaluation of Area Partnerships”, which contained a number of recommendations to support the development of Area Partnerships and a number of which had already been implemented or progressed.
- 3.2 The evaluation report was presented to the Community Services Scrutiny and Performance Panel on 12 July 2011, where it was proposed that an additional recommendation be made to Cabinet proposing Elected Members should not attend Area Partner meetings.
- 3.3 Cabinet agreed this recommendation and a letter was sent to all Elected Members from the Chief Executive, dated 1 October 2011, informing them of the Cabinet decision and that a proposal would be presented to the next Cabinet meeting to ensure that Elected Members are kept informed of discussions and decisions taken at their relevant Area partner meeting.

- 3.4 Area Partnership meetings take place on a monthly basis throughout the borough. The purpose of Area Partnership meetings is to bring the key partners together to discuss and assimilate information from consultation and engagement and agree tasks to address the issues and concerns raised by communities. This will include tasking to deliver the aims of the area community plans which have been agreed through the Area Community Meetings.

At the meetings, partners discuss and agree tasks that they will undertake. This local tasking is integrated with the borough wide tasking that is well established in Walsall.

Membership consists of the area manager, and staff from the Council, Police, Walsall NHS, Fire Service and Walsall Housing Group/other Registered Social Landlords.

The proposed mechanism to keep elected members informed is as follows:

- The area manager will maintain a schedule of all issues raised at the tasking meetings.
- This will identify the lead agency and the named individual responsible for action
- The schedule will include the action agreed and timescales. It will also record once those actions have been complete
- This schedule will be circulated electronically to all councillors in the area no later than three working days after the tasking meeting
- Councillors can indicate in advance if they would like to receive this information in hard copy instead
- The schedule will contain some information relating to individuals and so will need to be treated by all as confidential
- Elected members will be invited to provide the area manager with further information about the cases
- The area manager will review periodically with each councillor in their area (and within 6 months of this new process commencing), the suitability of the information which is shared about area tasking meetings and how this could be improved.

A pro forma is attached at **Appendix A**.

For some years in Walsall the council, with other agencies, has convened a monthly Borough Tasking meeting. In practice this has been dealing with some of the local issues that, in the new arrangements, can now more appropriately be dealt with at a local level. However, there will inevitably be several issues which cannot be resolved at a local level or which span more than one area. A group of senior representatives from public service organisations will meet monthly to review particularly difficult cases which cannot be resolved by local tasking and which have been referred to it. This group, known as the Operations Group, will also maintain a schedule of issues referred to it and the lead agency/key individual responsible for taking forward action. This schedule will also be shared

with councillors from the area concerned. In this way councillors will not “lose sight” of local cases/issues which need to be handled at a borough level.

4. Council Priorities

Area Partnerships impact on each of the Council’s priorities.

5. Risk Management

Any risks associated with Area Partnerships are monitored through the Area Partnership Project Highlight Report.

6. Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

7. Legal Implications

There are no legal implications directly in relation to Area Partnerships.

8. Property Implications

There are no property implications directly in relation to Area Partnerships.

9. Staffing Implications

There are no staffing implications associated with this report.

10. Equality Implications

10.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been developed for Area Partnerships.

10.2 A presentation on Area Partnerships has been made to the Equalities and Diversity Group in June 2011, where information was provided to evidence the work being undertaken within Area Partnerships is linked to the equality and diversity priorities.

11. Consultation

The recommendation agreed at the previous Cabinet meeting, was proposed by the Community Services Scrutiny and Performance Panel.

Background Papers

None

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28 October 2011

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Portfolio Holder



28 October 2011



ELECTED MEMBER UPDATE

XX Area Partner Meeting – Actions / Decisions Taken

Issue Overview	Lead Officer / Organisation	Action Required / Decision Taken	Progress	Date Completed