

Leicester  
City Council

ALL WARDS

## FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND MEETINGS:

Council Procedures Working Party	23rd September 2005
Leicester Partnership Coordinating Group	12th October 2005
Leicester Partnership	9th November 2005
Cabinet	14th November 2005
Council	24th November 2005

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## DEVELOPING AREA COMMITTEES

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### REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES, ACCESS AND DIVERSITY

#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

Area Committees can help the Council and the Leicester Partnership to deliver Leicester's priorities on the ground, by coordinating services and the work of partners and involving local people to achieve common goals.

Equally, Area Committees can provide a valuable access point to information and decision making for local people – an arena for decision makers, providers and the community to pool their knowledge and collaborate to create change.

The critical value of Area Committees is that services and solutions that are developed locally can often be more effective in achieving change than 'one size fits all' citywide approaches.

Sometimes the impact of a service or the failure to deliver it can only really be seen from the 'user end' – and local area working can alert us to these issues in a much more direct and powerful way.

The Council set up three Area Committees in Autumn 2004. At the time, it was agreed that one of the purposes of a phased approach would be to learn from what worked, before extending arrangements to other parts of the city.

To help formulate these proposals we carried out an evaluation of Area Committees in May 2005.

The purpose of this report is to build on the learning from Area Committees by proposing we now develop them further.

This report proposes the development of the three Area Committees set up last Autumn and roll out to the six other areas.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is RECOMMENDED -

1. That the Council and the Leicester Partnership set up Area Committees in nine areas of the city in 2006 (see map of areas at Appendix A).

Three Area Committees are already in place in Areas 2, 6 and 7. It is proposed that a further one is set up in Area 4 (Spinney Hills and Stoneygate) in 2005, and the other five will follow in 2006.

Separate proposals for the city centre are being drawn up –see Section 2.9.

2. That the Council aims to provide the public with coordinated opportunities for area based engagement with public service providers. To develop this aim the membership of Area Committees should consist of -

- ward Councillors (one of whom would Chair)
- Police
- PCT
- The neighbourhood / community representative for the Leicester Partnership
- an area youth representative
- other partners as each Area Committee sees fit.

3. That each Area Committee should develop area plans to implement the outcomes of the Strategy for Leicester and the Local Area Agreement, with a particular focus on meeting neighbourhood renewal floor targets. These plans should:

- be based on data such as performance against NRF floor targets / Local Area Agreement outcomes and local issues
- be a mixture of actions to tackle city wide and local priorities;
- be developed through collaboration and consultation with partners and local communities; and
- include action to tackle deprivation in priority neighbourhoods

4. That to develop community engagement in Area Committees:

- they should be advertised widely once they are set up to encourage people to attend

- meetings and events associated with Area Committees are designed to attract and engage people more effectively, for example by having themed meetings, patch walks, social events, facilitated discussions etc.
  - they should work with area youth service to bring young people's issues on to the agenda, and make links with the three Area Youth Forums.
5. That the Council agrees an indicative package of support to Area Committees set out in Section 3.4 to be funded from existing resources.
  6. That Members note that each Area Committee has been given a budget of £25,000 for improvement to benefit their area. (This has been agreed at a previous meeting of Cabinet – 26<sup>th</sup> September 2005).
  7. That officers work with Members to develop proposals for delegated functions for Area Committees, to be agreed at a future Cabinet and Council meeting.
  8. That Members agree the Terms of Reference for Area Committees attached at Appendix B. These have been amended to reflect the proposals in this report, and also include an amendment to the quoracy rule.

### **3. HEADLINE FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The financial implications of Area Committees fall into four categories –

- staffing costs
- running costs
- budgets for Area Committees to spend; and
- the financial implications of delegating functions

An indicative budget for staffing and running costs is set out in Section 3.4 of the Supporting Information.

On 26<sup>th</sup> September, Cabinet agreed to allocate £25,000 to each Area Committee to spend for the benefit of the area. Arrangements for spending these budgets are included in the Terms of Reference set out at Appendix B.

Recommendation 7 (discussed in Section 2.8 of the Supporting Information), proposes that officers develop proposals for delegating some of the functions of the Council to Area Committees, to be agreed at a future meeting of the Cabinet and Council. The financial implications of these proposals will be set out at that stage.

The full financial implications are set out in Section 3 of the Supporting Information.

***Andy Morley, Chief Accountant***

#### **4. HEADLINE LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

Under the Local Government Act, 2000 the Council has a great deal of choice about the Area Committees it appoints. It may choose to establish none at all or several. If it does choose to establish an Area Committee then they may be decision making bodies or consultative forums with no decision making powers at all.

The three Area Committees established by the Council so far have been purely consultative, their membership consisting only of City Council members. However, the proposed fourth Area Committee for Spinney Hills and Stoneygate, although also consultative, includes partners who are not City Council members. The law enables the Council to establish an Area Committee which includes co-optees but they will only be able to vote on specified matters. Full legal implications are shown in the supporting information.

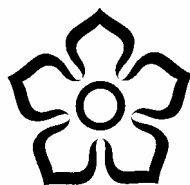
*Peter Nicholls, Head of Legal Services*

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#### **DECISION STATUS**

<b>Key Decision</b>	No
<b>Reason</b>	Policy and budget framework
<b>Appeared in Forward Plan</b>	No
<b>Executive or Council Decision</b>	Council



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## DEVELOPING AREA COMMITTEES

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## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

### 1. DRIVERS FOR CHANGE

The proposals in this report are built on the need to respond to a number of key drivers for area based working in Leicester. These are both local and national.

Both the City Council and the Leicester Partnership as a whole need to develop an approach to area based working in order to -

1. Enhance the focus of the Council and it's partners on some of the **key 'bread and butter' issues** experienced by the community.
2. Better organise the resources and processes for **planning, managing and improving the performance of services to meet key targets**, particularly in deprived areas where Leicester is currently failing to meet it's floor targets.
3. Provide **better support to Councillors** in wards by providing a structure and support to help them fulfil their community roles.
4. **Help to reinvigorate local democracy and active citizenship** in the city, by creating positive, user friendly, collaborative opportunities for people to work with decision makers and providers in their own areas.
5. **Harness the potential of the community and voluntary sector** to engage with other sectors and collaborate in solving shared problems.

6. **Build on existing area arrangements** for influencing and deciding on local issues. There are already arrangements for schools – eg governing bodies, Housing (TARAs and Community Associations) Parks (user groups) policing (Joint Action Groups) health (Patient and Public involvement Forums). However they may not cover the whole of the city and / or they may be specific to a service, issue or group.

Some areas of the city have arrangements that have grown out of regeneration programmes such as New Deal in Braunstone and SRB (Area Forums, LNWCF, Greater Humberstone) . Other groups exist to represent the needs of particular communities of interest. All of these groups should be involved in the Area Committees and inform their work.

The Area Committees proposed in this report will need to be developed to work with, support and learn from those existing groups in the city. But there is a need to make arrangements that are taking a holistic view of services and that are not confined to particular geographical areas, services or interests in the city.

7. Create local hubs for **focussing and deepening effective partnership working**, paving the way for joint target setting and a greater pooling of resources to support new arrangements such as the forthcoming Local Area Arrangements (see 11);
8. Implement **the Strategy for Leicester** in ways that are responsive and tailored to areas. This strategy has an emphasis on neighbourhood participation and adopts the same cross cutting approach as Local Area Arrangements.

In addition, the **Leicester Partnership** (LP) needs to now take forward neighbourhood working as one of the key areas for improvement pinpointed by the **Annual Review** in August 2005.

The LP has developed a good foundation of inclusive strategic working, but now needs to focus on delivery at neighbourhood level. Area Committees will provide one mechanism to mirror and deliver LP strategy on the ground.

9. Respond to the **Government's developing 10 year strategy** for local government – *local:vision*. There is now a strong national emphasis on joined up working with other agencies at neighbourhood level to deliver change by having joint target setting and joined up community engagement.
10. A central element of the Government's strategy is **Local Area Agreements** (LAAs). Leicester will sign an LAA with the Government in March 2006. The LAA includes targets on developing neighbourhood participation, and many of the other targets will be easier to meet if we have area arrangements to deliver them.

To reflect the importance of making things work at neighbourhood level, the Government is committing extra resources to Councils with deprived areas to develop neighbourhood arrangements in priority deprived neighbourhoods.

Under the **Neighbourhood Element of the Safer Stronger Communities Block of the LAA** Leicester is eligible for an £1.6m over 4 years from 2006-07 to develop

Neighbourhood Management in the priority neighbourhoods(s) (excluding Braunstone because it already receives New Deal money). The Neighbourhood Management model has proven successful in turning around deprived neighbourhoods in other cities. A separate report on the Neighbourhood Element is being prepared.

Area Committees could provide some of the infrastructure for these neighbourhood arrangements.

11. The corporate element of the **Comprehensive Performance Assessment** of Councils in 2005 will:

*test more fully how well councils understand their local communities and provide community leadership, how this understanding of local people and places translates into the council's ambitions and priorities, and what, in practice, councils are achieving. For the new CPA framework the test of achievement will be how well councils are delivering outcomes across cross-cutting themes while understanding and meeting the needs of their local communities.*

p 22 CPA - the Harder Test, Audit Commission, June 2005

## **2. PROPOSALS IN DETAIL**

### **2.1 Partnership Working**

One of the main objectives of area working is to get all of the people who can make a difference to local problems to work together effectively. A prime example is the complex interconnections between crime and disorder issues and issues about the local environment.

From the public's point of view, issues to do with the neighbourhood are a mixture of issues dealt with by different agencies. At a practical level, many members of the public do not want to have to go to one area meeting to have Council issues dealt with and another to raise issues about policing and another to discuss the development of the local health centre. In areas of Leicester there are examples of good joint working – but there is a need to improve and spread good practice across the city as a whole.

#### ***Police***

There are already some good examples of joint working between the Police, the Council and other agencies. The Police want to work jointly with the Council in terms of local planning, community engagement and taking local action. They have identified a number of significant issues that could be tackled jointly.

The Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership reviewed the neighbourhood policing arrangements to prepare Leicester for the implementation of the Home Office's *Building Communities, Beating Crime* agenda which gives renewed emphasis on neighbourhood policing and citizen engagement in preventing and tackling crime, and proposes the

strengthening of the requirement for the police and local authorities to work together at a neighbourhood level on these issues.

The police have set up new area arrangements for community engagement – nine ‘Joint Action Groups (JAGS) to be led by LPU commanders in their areas. The framework was developed in response to:

- Guidance to police entitled *Professionalising the Business of Neighbourhood Policing*; and
- Good practice developed in two pilot initiatives in the New Parks and Police and Partnership Reassurance Project and the St Matthews Community Cohesion Police and Partnership Project.

Currently the three Area Committees consist of Members of the Council only – with other agencies – notably the Police - in attendance to help answer questions. The Council’s areas are not coterminous with those of the Police. However the Police take the view that this should not act as a barrier to developing area collaboration and engagement.

The Police would like to work more closely with the Council and other partners in area working, and they are willing to overcome the current boundary differences. However, they would prefer to see a less Council-dominated, less traditional format for meetings, with more joint problem solving with the community, rather than just questions and presentations.

In particular, they suggest that the JAGs could act as delivery groups for crime and disorder objectives in each area. This should be coupled with rigorous analytical support to provide detailed maps and trends and an enhanced role for Police Community Support Officers.

### ***Primary Care Trusts***

All Primary Care Trusts have to set up Public and Patient Involvement Forums. There is one for each Trust – and the forums consist of up to 12 members of the public.

The PCTs see area based working as an opportunity to extend this public engagement in health issues in Leicester. They would like to work with the Council on issues such as engaging young people, promoting public health, engaging people in the decisions on how to use new / refurbished health centres under LIFT, tackling issues around access to GPs, developing the PCT’s annual strategy and commissioning services.

PCT officers have taken part in Area Committee meetings and there has been some exchange of information about the LIFT scheme in one area and issues about access to GPs in another. However, like the Police they feel that there would be greater opportunities for joint working if the arrangements were not seen as ‘Council only’ and there were opportunities to engage and plan jointly through area working.



## ***Voluntary and Community Sector***

Area Committees could have the potential for creating mature collaborate relationships between the voluntary and other sectors, whereby all partners champion a common agenda for the area.

Currently there are voluntary / community sector representatives elected on to the Leicester Partnership, some representing communities of interest – and 10 representing each of the 10 areas of the city. The area representatives often attend Area Committee meetings, but have no formal role.

It is proposed that the current neighbourhood / community representatives on the Leicester Partnership also become representatives on their respective Area Committees – making the connection with the Community Empowerment Network .

## ***Other public / voluntary and community or private sector partners***

Currently the Area Committees have not worked with other organisations. However it is important that in the development of new arrangements we engage with those other partners and look at opportunities for joined up working and community engagement at an area level.

It is RECOMMENDED that the Council adopts a long term aim of providing the public with coordinated opportunities for area based engagement with public service providers. To develop this the membership of Area Committees should consist of -

- ward Councillors (one of whom would Chair)
- Police
- PCT
- The neighbourhood / community representative for the Leicester Partnership
- an area youth representative (see para. 6.31 below)
- other statutory / voluntary or community sector / business partners as each Area Committee sees fit

## **2.3 Area Plans**

Although area bodies can do a lot to effect action in their areas, one of the concerns that people had in the evaluation of the three Area Committees was whether they would be able to be proactive in bringing about long term change – rather than just reacting to issues brought by the public.

Area Plans could be one of the main ways the success or otherwise of the Area Committee is judged. By basing them on evidence of need they will publicly demonstrate the rational behind the actions that service providers take, and the funding that is allocated to particular issues.

Public progress reports on meeting the targets in the plans will help to make the Council and its partners publicly accountable to the Leicester Partnership and the community.

Area plans would have to be developed in collaboration with partners and the community itself, and could be based around the four themes of the Strategy for Leicester/ Local Area Agreement. They should identify action to achieve key city wide goals in the area – such as neighbourhood renewal floor targets, targets in the Strategy for Leicester and forthcoming Local Area Agreement.

But they should also reflect local aspirations, for example by building on and taking forward the existing plans that some communities have developed eg in New Parks, Saffron Lane Estate and St Matthews.

Plans need to be based on a mixture of data about the area and local intelligence from partners and the community.

The Council and the Leicester Partnership are currently working on developing better information about performance and data about areas which would be used as a basis for the plans.

The Area Plans should show how targets such as national floor targets are going to be met. Deprivation data (which is used to allocate funds such as NRF) is now available at sub ward level covering around 1,500 people ('super output areas' – SOAs). The Leicester Partnership has agreed that the worst 20 SOAs will form the priority for neighbourhood renewal. This means Area Committees and others can really target action and resources where they are needed, and this could be reflected in the Area Plans.

Within areas, Area Committees could set up specific task groups to focus on priority super output areas, possibly using the successful Neighbourhood Management model, piloted by using money from the Neighbourhood Element of the Safer Stronger Communities Fund. Decisions on this will be made by the Council and Leicester Partnership in December 2005.

Specific work could be commissioned from public, private or the voluntary and community sector to meet targets in the Area Plan. And specific funds (such as money committed as part of a Local Area Agreement / NRF in priority areas) could then be focussed on meeting those targets in the area.

It is RECOMMENDED that each Area Committee should develop area plans to implement the outcomes of the Strategy for Leicester and the Local Area Agreement, with a particular focus on meeting neighbourhood renewal floor targets. These plans should:

- be based on data such as performance against NRF floor targets / Local Area Agreement outcomes and local issues;
- be a mixture of actions to implement both city wide and local priorities; and
- be developed in collaboration with partners and local communities; and
- include action to tackle deprivation in priority neighbourhoods

## 2.4 Community Engagement

The three Area Committees have been an important development in community engagement in Leicester.

When we looked at issues about community engagement in the evaluation of the Area Committees we found that:

- the meetings were reasonably well attended and over all three committees the majority of people (67%) attending who fed back thought they were good or excellent;

but to build on this we need to look at the following issues –

- there is a wide variation of satisfaction between the three Area Committees
- the over 55s were over represented –the Area Committees were not attracting younger people. And about 75% of the people attending were also involved in other community organisations or meetings in the area eg TARAs. There is low percentage of ‘new’ people at meetings
- there was a low level of awareness of Area Committees amongst residents in the areas
- the traditional format of the meeting were off putting to people; and
- the format of the meeting – particularly question time – exacerbated a ‘them and us’ culture where the public’s role is to hold service providers to account, rather than a collaborative or creative approach, where the knowledge of all parties is brought together to devise solutions.

A number of changes could be made to tackle these issues and to build on the work of the existing Area Committees.

Firstly, a makeover in terms of the publicity, paper work, presentations, and design of events would signal a more modern, collaborative approach.

The Area Committees could be more widely advertised to raise awareness and attract a wider range of people.

Meetings and events could be held which are more attractive and more effective at engaging people. A number of suggestions have been made on this issue -

- experiment with different meeting styles
- have group discussions using facilitators
- have themed meetings eg to develop area plan and decide how to meet targets in the plan
- have patch walks
- link it to a social event

- train chairs in facilitation skills
- produce a newsletter
- provide a creche
- provide refreshments

Work also needs to be done to encourage the input of younger people in to area working. Some of this could be achieved through the ideas listed above – for example partnerships could hold special events for young people to look at issues and services for them.

The Youth Service is currently doing work to develop wider participation of young people working with young people themselves, Connexions and the UK Youth Parliament. They plan to set up Area Youth Forums in each of the three areas of the city to into which the youth service is divided.

The Area Committees could work with the Area Youth Forums in a number of ways:

- holding events with them to look at local issues;
- inviting members of the Youth Forums to participate in Area Committees with the support of youth workers; and / or
- having key youth workers on board at the Area Committees to act as young people's advocates and feed information between the two bodies.

It is RECOMMENDED that

- Area Committees be advertised widely once they are set up to encourage people to attend
- Meetings and events associated with Area Committees are designed to attract and engage people more effectively, for example by having themed meetings, patch walks, social events, facilitated discussions etc.
- the Area Committees should work with the Area Youth Service to bring young people's issues on to the agenda, and make links with the three Area Youth Forums.

## **2.5 Supporting Members in their community leadership roles**

One of the key results of the evaluation of the Area Committees is that people felt that one of their strengths was that they helped ward Councillors to do their jobs as representatives and local leaders.

But the work of local Councillors is both stressful and demanding. They carry out partnership working and community engagement often without being given the effective structures or support they need.

The Government have reported that there is a feeling that the induction and support that Councillors do get is often more to do with their 'Council facing' role than with their 'community facing' role. (p. 12 Vibrant Local Leadership : OPDM 2005).

But research into 'what works' in area based working shows that good, vibrant leadership in areas is critical.

Area arrangements can help to give Councillors a stronger role through connecting with community issues and experiences, and using these connections to improve scrutiny and executive decision making.

## **2.6 Community Capacity**

There is a wide range of activity going on in the city by statutory, voluntary and community organisations to help groups and individuals develop their capacity to help themselves, to help each other, and to take part in activities.

Much of this work is focussed on supporting specific groups (eg ethnic groups, Council tenants) with the barriers they face, or on supporting people to access and engage with particular services (eg housing, adult learning or health services).

However, there is a recognition that this work needs to be brought together more effectively, to avoid duplication and fragmentation and to share information and good practice. A city wide group – the Community Development and Engagement Support Group (CDESG) have been taking a key role in doing this.

The city has a Community Empowerment Network (CEN) supported by a small team in Voluntary Action Leicester who help the community in each of the 10 areas to access and influence the work of the Leicester Partnership. Currently CEN representatives attend Area Committee meetings. It is proposed that this role be continued for Area Committees across the city.

Area Committees would create an opportunity for us to focus this work on key priorities in each area.

## **2.7 Organisational Development**

Area Committees will only be as good as the Council and other organisations' ability to support them and respond to them effectively.

The key areas where the Council and other relevant organisations need to develop better systems and skills in order to support area working are partnership working, city wide performance management, communication, community engagement and customer care. The development of Area Committees will provide additional stimulus to the work that is already being done in these areas.

## 2.8 Area Committee Delegated Functions

The setting up of Area Committees represents an important step in the devolution of governance in Leicester. A potential next step is the devolution of services.

There is a wide spectrum of possibilities in terms of the delegation of functions to areas. In some Councils, there is significant devolution, where a number of services are managed at an area level in association with a well staffed area body. In others area bodies simply hold small budgets for minor improvements and / or community grants.

Most of the change that Area Committees will create will be implemented by influencing the mainstream services that are provided in the area.

But to give the Committees the ability to take action quickly on some issues, the Council wants to delegate some functions to them – to give them some executive powers. There are three points of caution to note about this option:

- the process of choosing the functions to delegate, and assessing the organisational implications of this delegation will have to be carefully thought through and debated
- new Area Committees will need time to find their feet – they will not have the capacity to manage executive powers on day one. We need to give them time to get ready first; and
- the delegation of powers to Area Committees needs to be seen as the first step on what could be a longer term journey to devolution. To make that journey successfully we should take a gradual approach – to allow us to base what we do on learning from experience, but also start to debate where we ultimately want to be on the spectrum of devolution.

We need to choose the function to delegate on the basis of agreed criteria. Six criteria are suggested below:

### **Criteria for choosing functions for delegation to Area Committees**

1. The function is of importance to the public.
2. There is scope for local choices (i.e. the function is not tightly prescribed by City Council and / or national standards).
3. It would be cost effective to have different approaches to delivering this function in different ways in different areas. The likelihood that local tailoring will help us deliver better outcomes in different areas outweighs the costs or difficulties of delivering it this way.

4. Local choice on this issue is of more importance than a consistent approach across the city.
5. The catchment area for the service is clear.
6. We have learnt from other Councils when choosing to delegate this function.

It is RECOMMENDED that officers work with Members to develop proposals for delegated functions for Area Committees to be brought to a future meeting of Cabinet and Council.

## 2.9 City Centre

The city centre is one of the keys to the liveability, regeneration, development and reputation of Leicester as a whole. It also has a wider and more complicated stakeholder base than the other areas of the city - beyond that of the residents and the businesses located there. Everyone in the city is an actual or potential stakeholder for different reasons, its reputation, jobs, shops and cultural and leisure facilities.

For this reason the Council agreed that we need to need to think differently about arrangements for decision making and community engagement in the city centre.

At its meeting in November 2003, when arrangements for Area Committees were agreed, the Council also agreed that there would not be an Area Committee for the city centre, but there will be a consultative forum or partnership made up of businesses, residents and other stakeholders in city centre issues, in which Councillors will have a key role.

Officers have consulted a number of key partners and residents about what those arrangements should be, and we will develop proposals from these consultations for the Council and for the Leicester Partnership this Autumn.

## 3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The financial implications of Area Committees fall into four categories –

- staffing costs
- running costs
- budgets for Area Committees to spend; and
- the financial implications of delegating functions

### **3.1 Staffing costs**

Currently the Council's Committee Services staff support the three Area Committees. However there is a gap in terms of coordinating work with partners and in working with officers to respond to questions and prepare for meetings. At the moment Committee Service staff are carrying out these roles, but the arrangement cannot be sustained over the longer term or over a greater number of Area Committees as it is not appropriate to their role. The need to fill this gap is part of the reason for proposing to appoint Area Support Managers.

A range of work will need to be done to support ward Councillors and to manage and support area arrangements in general – similar to other Councils with area based arrangements.

Other Councils with similar arrangements tend to have an area coordinator or manager at Principle Officer level allocated to between 1 and 3 areas. This officer acts as the manager for the area body, supports ward Councillors in the area, coordinates the work of the Council, its partners, and the local community – sometimes also coordinating community development work in the area. The officer would have a largely community facing role with the 'clout' to get things done and chase effectively.

Examples of the types of tasks of this officer would do are:

- Providing support to ward Councillors such as following up issues for them, providing information for them.
- Planning meetings, running special events
- Facilitating meetings and events
- Taking forward issues coming out of meetings
- Drafting area plans and monitoring their implementation
- Managing Area Committee budgets and work commissioned by the Area Committee
- Coordinating partnership working in the area

No financial or legal support would be provided at the meetings. Decisions that required financial or legal advice would therefore have to be referred back to these officers for advice before being finalised.

It should also be noted that there are also indirect costs on some sections of the Council that provide services of major interest to Area Committees. Consultation with officers on this paper, and the experience of the three phase one Area Committees shows that these costs primarily fall on sections within Regeneration and Culture and Education and Lifelong Learning.

At present Area Committees are not decision making bodies. If they were to become so then the increased support they would need from officers would become critical, and we will look at this issue in more detail when we develop proposals for devolution – when we will know which functions are being proposed.

### **3.2 Running costs**

A budget will also be needed to support communication, publicity and the cost of running meetings and events.



### 3.3 Current position – staffing and running costs

The Council has budgeted £175,000 for area committee support and there is also existing provision of £50,000 in the RAD budget – a total of £225,000.

### 3.4 Indicative budget for staffing and running costs of Area Committees

These costs are indicative at this stage – for example the Area Support Manager posts would need to be evaluated before final costings. PO3 is used as a proxy in the meantime.

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>COST</b>
2 x Committee Administrators	£63,000
1 x Team Assistant at Sc 3	£19,000
3 x Area Support Manager at PO 3	£120,000
Running costs of Area Committees	£23,000
<b>Total cost Area Committee support</b>	<b>£225,000</b>

It is RECOMMENDED that Members agree this indicative package of support to Area Committees to be funded from existing resources.

### 3.5 Area Committee Budgets

The Council has allocated £25,000 to each Area Committee to spend on improvements in the area. But learning from other Councils suggests that area meetings can end up spending too much time debating how to spend relatively small amounts of money at the expense of concentrating on bigger issues associated with the much larger amounts of money spent by service providers in the area.

Arrangements for managing this money have been drawn up and agreed at Cabinet on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2005 and are included in the proposed new Terms of Reference.

Any recommendation from the Area Committee to spend part of their budget would need to be made by a quorate meeting of the Area Committee using appropriate voting rules. The agreed

recommendation would then be made to the Service Director with responsibility for Area Committees and ratified by Cabinet.

#### 4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Terms of Reference are attached at Appendix B and have been amended to reflect the recommendations in this report.

As part of this we also propose that the quoracy rules for Area Committee meetings change to lower the threshold, making it easier for them to hold quorate meetings. Currently the quoracy rule is that -

(a) There must be at least one Councillor present from each ward covered by the Area Committee; and

(b) There must be at least 2 or 3 Councillors present as follows:

Total number of Councillors on Area Committee	Quorum
5	2
6	2
7	3

We propose that requirement (a) be removed, so that to be quorate there would need to be either 2 or 3 Councillors present, depending on the total number of Councillors on the Committee, as above.

It is RECOMMENDED that Members agree the Terms of Reference for Area Committees attached at Appendix B. These have been amended to reflect the proposals in this report, and also include an amendment to the quoracy rule

Under the Local Government Act, 2000 the Council has a great deal of choice about the Area Committees it appoints. It may choose to establish none at all or several. If it does choose to establish an Area Committee then they may be decision making bodies or consultative forums with no decision making powers at all.

Under Regulation 16A of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, the Council can establish an Area Committee which does not reflect the political balance of the Council if all the voting members on it represent wards within this area and the area does not exceed two fifths of the total for the Council by reference to population or area.

Under our executive arrangements the Council may delegate non-executive functions to Area Committees and the Cabinet may delegate executive functions. If both are delegated to the same Area Committee it must be made clear on the agendas for the meeting whether the decision required relates to executive functions or not.

Obviously if delegation of decision making is proposed then this needs to be carefully thought through, a Scheme of Delegation is required etc. It is understood that the proposed fifth Area Committee for Spinney Hills and Stoneygate will have consultative powers only but, even so, there will be occasions when the Committee members will need to vote.

Under Section 13 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and Regulation 4 and 5 of the 1990 Regulations the Council has the power to establish an Area Committee including voting co-optees if the Committee is appointed exclusively to discharge functions within Regulations 4 and 5. These functions include:

- property management
- housing management (of 1500 or one quarter of the Council's stock whichever is the less)
- promotion of tourism
- professional management
- together with some additional very technical matters

It can be seen that there is a need to draw up appropriate terms of reference for the Area Committee proposed and there will be a need for careful management of the agenda.

## 5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

OTHER IMPLICATIONS	Yes/No	Comment
Equal Opportunities	Yes	Area Committees are intended to shape policy on a wide range of services and issues to achieve improvements in neighbourhoods
Policy		
Sustainable and Environmental		
Crime and Disorder		
Human Rights Act		
Older People /People on Low Income		

## 6. BACKGROUND PAPERS – LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

*Review of Revitalising Neighbourhoods – in principle decisions on Area Committees*  
Council : November 2003

*Area Committees for Neighbourhood Improvement – Operational Framework and Toolkit*  
Council: July 2004

## **7. CONSULTATIONS**

Corporate and Service Directors, Leicester City Council  
Head of Finance, Leicester City Council  
Head of Legal Services, Leicester City Council  
Members of the Leicester Partnership  
Members of Highfields, St Matthews, Saffron and North Braunstone Area Forums  
Alan Helliwell, Leicester Partnership Development Manager  
Chief Inspector Julia McKechnie, Leicestershire Constabulary  
Meena Ackberally, Asst Director, Commissioning, Involvement and Partnerships, ELPCT  
Sue Walters, Healthy Neighbourhoods Coordinator, ELPCT  
Steve Gulati, Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development LCWPCT  
Deb Watson, Assistant Director, LCWPCT  
Carol Varley, Director – Policy, Voluntary Action Leicester  
Simon Jenner, Voluntary Action Leicester  
Lynn Senior, Community Development and Engagement Support Group  
Julie Bellm Leicester Learning and Skills Council  
Anna Parr, Youth Service  
Area Youth Managers  
Camille Naylor, Leicestershire and Rutland Probation Service  
David Davies, Audit Commission  
Trevor Croote, Audit Commission

## **8. REPORT AUTHOR / CONTACT**

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**AREA COMMITTEE AREAS**

**Start dates**

Areas 2, 6 and 7            Autumn 2004  
Area 4                        Winter 2005 / 6  
Areas 1, 3, 5, 8, and 9    2006



## **AREA COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

### **1. PURPOSE**

The purpose of Area Committees is to bring the right people together to take action to improve the quality of life for people living the area.

### **2. ROLES**

The roles of area committees are –

- To prepare area community plans to implement the Strategy for Leicester, Local Area Agreement, and to fulfil local aspirations.
- To pursue neighbourhood renewal, narrowing the gap between the area and the rest of the city and the country.
- To work with local partners.
- To engage the community in tackling problems and improving services.
- To exercise functions, powers or duties delegated to them by the Council or Council Cabinet.
- To assist the Council's Scrutiny Committees with the development of policy and the scrutiny of decisions.
- To help the Council achieve best value and manage the performance of local services.
- To improve community cohesion.

### 3. NUMBER AND BOUNDARIES

There will be nine area committees:

Area	Wards
1	Rushey Mead, Belgrave and Latimer
2	Humberstone & Hamilton and Thurncourt
3	Charnwood, Coleman and Evington
4	Spinney Hills and Stoneygate
5	Knighton and Castle, excluding the city centre (see map)
6	Aylestone, Eyres Monsell and Freeman
7	Braunstone Park & Rowley Fields, Western Park and Westcotes
8	New Parks and Fosse
9	Beaumont Leys and Abbey

### 4. MEMBERSHIP

The membership of an Area Committee shall consist of :

- all of the ward Councillors for the wards covered by the Committee
- Police representative
- Primary Care Trust representative
- Area Neighbourhood / community representative for the Leicester Partnership
- an area youth representative
- others as each Area Committee sees fit.

### 5. QUORUMS

To be quorate, there must be at least 2 or 3 Councillors present at an Area Committee as follows:

Total number of Councillors on Area Committee	Quorum
5	2
6	2
7	3

## 6. VOTING - GENERAL

As far as possible, Area Committees should seek to reach agreements by consensus rather than vote.

But, the Chair of the meeting shall decide whether a matter should be decided by a vote. Each member of the Area Committee shall have one vote. Issues put to the vote shall be decided by a majority of the Councillors present at the meeting and voting on the issue. In the case of equal votes, the chair of the meeting shall have the second or casting vote.

## 7. VOTING ON RECOMMENDING EXPENDITURE FROM AREA COMMITTEE BUDGETS

Where an Area Committee has a budget it must make recommendations to Cabinet for expenditure from this budget. Such recommendations must be made by a majority of Councillors at a quorate meeting of the Area Committee.

The formal responsibility for these budgets will rest with the Director of Resources, Access and Diversity, as required under Finance Procedure Rules, but the practical responsibility for the day to day management of these budgets will rest with the Service Director, Democratic Services, who will respond to recommendations from the Area Committees on the use of the budgets.

The budget will be monitored as part of the Council's corporate budget monitoring arrangements, but each Area Committee can request more detailed budget monitoring reports if it wants. The time and format of these reports will be agreed between the Area Committee and the Service Director.

The Service Director must keep expenditure within the budget available. If it is likely that the budget is going to be overspent or underspent, the issue will be managed by the Council's Director of Resources, Access and Diversity as set out in the Council's Finance Procedure Rules.

The budget proposals must be in accordance with the Council's Finance Procedure Rules. In particular, the Service Director must seek value for money in all cases. This may mean obtaining competitive quotes for the supply of goods and services.

There are some things that the Area Committee **cannot** ask for the budget to be spent on. These are:

- Staffing
- Paying any remuneration to Members of the Area Committee other than travel and childcare or other care costs or out of pocket expenses
- Buying land or buildings or refurbishing buildings outside the Council's own strategies and plans for property management (although redecorating can be funded)
- Making grants, other than one-off grants to voluntary organisations
- Investing money
- Any form of gambling or lottery



## **8. TIME AND PLACE OF MEETINGS**

The meetings of each Area Committee shall be decided in advance each year by all Members of the committee. If a special meeting is planned, the time and place shall be decided by the Chair of that meeting, in consultation with the other members of the Committee.

## **9. CHAIR OF MEETING**

The meetings will be chaired by a Councillor on the Committee. Each Area Committee will decide whether to elect a chair on a:

- rotational basis at each meeting; or
- continuous basis for one year

## **10. ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

Area Committee meetings shall be subject to Access to Information Procedure Rules

## **11. PUBLIC NOTICE OF MEETING**

Notice of the time and place of Area Committee meetings shall be published at Council offices, on the Council's internet site, in Link magazine, and in public places in the area concerned.

Notice of Area Committees shall be published at least five clear days before the meeting. (Five clear days excludes the day of notice, the day of the meeting, Bank Holidays and Saturdays and Sundays).

## **12. AGENDA**

The agenda for meetings shall be agreed in advance by the Chair for that meeting.

The agenda for standard business meetings will include:

- Approving the minutes of the previous meeting
- Declarations of interest from members of the Committee
- At least half an hour for the public to raise questions
- An opportunity for the public to submit petitions
- A report on progress with questions asked and petitions submitted at previous meetings

Other items will be decided by the Chair in consultation with other members of the Committee.