

**Name of meeting and date: Corporate Governance & Audit Committee  
14<sup>th</sup> May 2010**

**Title of report: Revised Area Governance Arrangements**

<b>Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?</b>	<b>Yes / No or “not applicable” If yes give reason why  Yes, affects all wards</b>
<b>Is it in the Council’s Forward Plan?</b>	<b>Yes/ No or “not applicable” If yes give date it first went in Not applicable</b>
<b>Is it eligible for “call in” by Scrutiny?</b>	<b>Yes/ No or “not applicable” If no give reason why not Not applicable</b>
<b>Cabinet member portfolio</b>	<b>Cllr Mehboob Khan</b>

**Electoral wards affected and ward councillors consulted:**

**Public or private:**

## **1. Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to recommend revisions to the council’s arrangements for area governance, in the context of:

- Revised locality and neighbourhood working including Neighbourhood Management Groups
- A renewed emphasis on more targeted and focused resident involvement emerging from initiatives such as Total Place
- Responding to the Audit Commission draft report on area based working in Kirklees
- Current Area Committee working and efficiencies
- Other considerations

**Revised locality and neighbourhood working including  
Neighbourhood Management Groups**

There are currently twelve Area Committees in Kirklees, five of which are single ward. Only four Area Committees are coterminous with locality boundaries. A list of current Area Committees and the wards which they cover can be found at Appendix 1. Current terms of reference are shown at Appendix 2.

Additionally there are now also Neighbourhood Management Groups (NMGs) in most wards. Increasingly, there are several parallel structures, both formal and informal, which also have a claim to be providing a neighbourhood based approach which responds to the needs of local residents. These include tenants' structures, Parish Councils, ward forums organised by members themselves, ward meetings to advise on traffic schemes and the Neighbourhood Management Groups noted above. The NMGs, which work on a single ward basis, evolved originally from community safety work initiated through the Safer Stronger Communities partnership. The NMGs develop and fund projects which are often very similar in nature to those funded by the Area Committees. The Police Neighbourhood Policing Teams also 'piggyback' on the Area Committee meetings.

This plurality leads to some duplication of effort and inevitable confusion for the public, partners and some officers involved in local service delivery. In some areas discussion and/or decision making is happening at locality and ward level while in others it is happening at ward level only, but through two separate structures, single ward Area Committees and NMGs. The duplication and overlap also potentially increases costs and anecdotal evidence from staff working in these areas indicates that often the same small number of people are attending more than one of the local meetings.

Recent reviews and reports concerning locality and neighbourhood working have identified strengths and weaknesses of the approach to date. One weakness identified was the perception of Area Committees as a political process and localities work as an officer process and that the two were disconnected.

It is proposed that the overall picture is simplified and structures are joined up, reducing duplication and strengthening decision-making. It is also proposed that the terms of reference for Area Committees are revised by clarifying the role of elected members in Area Committees, particularly around the over-arching strategic leadership and scrutiny role.

This would mean further consideration of the question as to whether Area Committees should become strategic locality wide governance structures, leaving ward forums or enhanced Neighbourhood Management Groups to focus on issues at ward level. The advantage of such a change would be:

- Area Committees would have a stronger role in making the localities approach work
- There would be a clear and robust governance structure which would match the geographic base of service delivery, making it easier for services to be more accountable to locality based democracy.
- Clearer agreed locality priorities
- A more coherent set of structures in which Locality Area Committees would set strategic priorities and the ward based structures would manage ward based priority setting and problem solving.

### **Resident involvement**

Clearly resident involvement can take place in many forms; electronically, through the new social media, by attendance at meetings or by involvement in particular consultations, initiatives or forums. Examples might include the new Total Place initiative which looks at how services might be completely re-designed from the user perspective, the 'personalisation of services project' which continues to develop in Kirklees and the concept of 'co-production', where services are jointly designed with service users.

Many other councils are currently revising their arrangements for area governance, partly in response to dwindling public interest and poor attendance. Some councils have found that encouraging resident involvement through Area Committees alone has often led to a small number of regular attendees being the only participants in local structures and that the majority of residents are simply not attending. For example, Sandwell recently abolished its six neighbourhood committees, replacing them with targeted neighbourhood forums for discussion on specific topics such as anti-social behaviour and environmental issues. Themed or single issue meetings have proved more successful in attracting the public.

The review of area governance provides an opportunity to seize this agenda and ensure that resident participation is built into formal governance structures. Locality based Area Committees could:

- Engage residents across different communities in the locality in dialogue with each other
- Set priorities for participatory budgeting and other community involvement activities
- Participatory appraisal to identify local aspirations
- Participatory service design in the locality

Ward based forums could stimulate the local development of:

- Themed resident involvement forums e.g. Streetscene in a local area
- Targeted participatory budgeting exercises with Area Committees setting priorities

The importance of local democratic leadership in developing this process can be seen in the table below on the design and delivery of public services. This is based on the work that the council and NHSK have been doing with the New Economics Foundation on commissioning for well being:

		<b>Who Designs Services?</b>		
		<b>Professionals are sole designers of services</b>	<b>Service users/ community &amp; professionals are co-designers</b>	<b>Service users/ community are sole designers of services</b>
<b>Who delivers services?</b>	<b>Professionals are sole deliverers of services</b>	Traditional professional service provision	Service users/ communities involved in designing services delivered by professionals	
	<b>Service users/ community &amp; professionals co-deliver services</b>	Service users co-deliver professionally designed services	Full user/ professional/ community co-production of services	Service/users/ community delivery of services with little formal/ professional planning or design
	<b>Service users/ community are sole deliverers of services</b>	Service users/ communities delivery of professionally planned services	Service users/ communities delivery of co-planned or co-designed services	Self-organised community provision

To move to any point beyond 'traditional professional service provision' would require the ownership and leadership of elected members acting both locally and strategically. A common approach could be adopted across localities and wards.

The possibility of incorporating these new formal responsibilities within the existing mixed ward and locality based structures was examined carefully, but the current complexity and confusion caused by the plurality of decision-making processes was considered to act as a barrier to involvement and had the potential to create inequality of access between areas.

## **Audit Commission findings**

The Audit Commission have commented upon area governance in Kirklees and recommended revisions. The CAA process threw up a number of questions about the efficacy of area based working in Kirklees and resulted in a proposal for a further in depth review from the Audit Commission. This has been deferred until 2011 to allow the council to consider and implement its revised approach. The Audit Commission did carry out some initial investigations which were fed back in March 2010 and this work identified four key issues to address:

- The vision for area-based working is not clear and is not the same for all partners
- There is partner commitment but this does not translate into practical processes and measures of progress
- There is no role for residents and communities to contribute to area working
- The support of elected members is needed to drive localized service process and improvement.

There were three early recommendations for the council to consider:

- Partners should turn general commitments into a series of action goals
- Local residents should be involved in area-based working – including lowering the barriers by simplifying the multiple structures (including Area Committees)
- Practical performance measures and measures of cost/benefit

The creation of strategic locality wide Area Committees would significantly help to address these issues by:

- Providing a single forceful focus for democratic input, informed by and drawing on the work at ward level
- Providing a common point of reference and leadership that will provide clarity for partners
- Simplifying structures to enable better resident involvement.

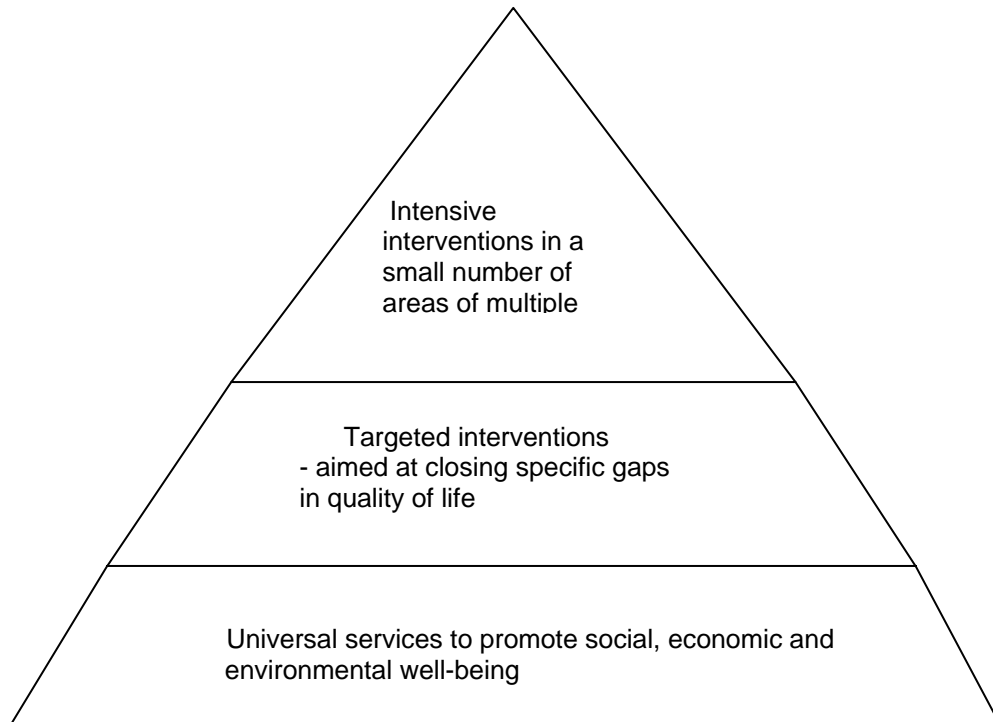
The Audit Commission initial draft findings assumed that revised area structures would encompass improved resident involvement and participation.

## **Current Area Committee working and efficiencies**

A desk-top review of Area Committee agendas suggests significant variation in the extent to which Area Committees act to their full terms of reference (see Appendix 2). The Area Committee should be in a position to support the development of locally designed services and

the increased involvement of communities in service design and delivery. The opportunity to re-focus through a clear requirement for locality wide strategic direction would help to address this.

The review also considered the resources available to support locality and neighbourhood governance in the light of current and forthcoming financial constraints as well as the 'triangle' or hierarchy of interventions or support which the council and its partners can provide.



The resources to support the neighbourhood impact areas, which are areas of high need, and the resources available to support the 'middle of the triangle', are limited. Moving to strategic locality based Area Committees covering several wards would reduce the administrative support required by reducing the number of committees by five and it is estimated that this would release an additional one week per month of staff capacity within the new integrated team.

### **Other considerations**

If this proposal to simplify the existing structures is accepted by members then further consideration should also be given at this time as to whether the locality boundaries should change before the new arrangements are implemented on the basis of the current seven locality areas.

One option would be to keep the seven original localities as the framework.

Another option would be to create eight locality committees. The rationale for this suggestion is mainly that it would recognize the particular 'town' nature of Huddersfield, Dewsbury and Batley, defining each of these localities in their own right, thus creating localities and Area Committees of:

Spennings  
The Valleys  
Mirfield  
Dewsbury  
Batley  
Huddersfield  
Birstall/Birkenshaw  
Denby Dale/Kirkburton

Members may wish to suggest other variations.

## **Summary**

This report makes the case that the continued mix of wards, sub-locality and locality based Area Committees as currently structured is creating inefficiencies.

It proposes a reconfiguration with strategic locality based Committees and the development of simpler consistent ward based activities which could incorporate and enhance the work of the Neighbourhood Management Groups. Committee members would be able to shape and develop these new structures within their localities. The main focus of the ward structures will be on real engagement and dialogue between local communities and local democratic representatives.

In considering future area governance the broad options are:

### **Option A Remain as is – a mix of ward, sub-locality and locality wide Area Committees**

This would mean little change, but continues the current potential for duplication and confusion. It is unlikely to provide a strong platform for future strategic leadership of area based working or encourage a step change in the extent to which residents are engaged in service design and development. Continuing the current arrangement does not release any capacity for more focussed or targeted work.

**Option B Change to seven locality wide strategic Area Committees, supported by ward level structures based on enhanced Neighbourhood Management Group support and by resident involvement structures that are clearly linked to local decision making.**

This would simplify the current structures for the public, partners and those delivering services and has the advantage of supporting improved service delivery and improved mechanisms for targeted resident involvement. It would also support elected members in their role as community champions, acting as leaders and facilitators of community empowerment, particularly if linked to initiatives such as service redesign and participatory budgeting.

**Option C As (B) but with the revised locality boundaries outlined as above giving eight Area Committees.**

**2. Key points**

Existing arrangements for area governance would be reconfigured to map to localities and new ward based forums would be developed.

**3. Implications for the Council**

The proposals involve a reconfiguration of mostly existing structures.

**4. Consultees and their opinions**

These issues have been well-rehearsed and debated over the last few years, since the further expansion of Area Committees from seven to twelve some years ago. There has been no specific formal consultation on this report. Any changes which might be made to the current composition of the Area Committees would have to be considered by the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee before coming to the Council for consideration.

**5. Recommendations**

Members are asked to consider the options outlined above and make a recommendation about the proposed revision of area governance for adoption at the Annual Council on 26<sup>th</sup> May 2010.

**6. Cabinet portfolio holder recommendation**

I recommend consideration of these options and any variations proposed at the meeting by Full Council.



**7. Next steps**

To consider the recommendations of this committee to the Council Meeting.

**8. Contact officer and relevant papers**

Merran McCrae Director of Communities and Well-Being Tel:860 1248

Jane Scullion Director of Organisation Development Tel:860 5375

## Appendix 1

Area Committee	Wards
Batley	Batley West Batley East
Birstall & Birkenshaw	Birstall & Birkenshaw
Colne Valley	Golcar Colne Valley
Denby Dale	Denby Dale
Holme Valley North	Holme Valley North
Holme Valley South	Holme Valley South
Huddersfield North	Greenhead Ashbrow Lindley
Huddersfield South	Almondbury Dalton Newsome Crosland Moor & Netherton
Kirkburton	Kirkburton
Mirfield	Mirfield
Spen Valley	Liversedge Cleckheaton Heckmondwike
Dewsbury	Dewsbury West Dewsbury South Dewsbury East

### Area Committee Terms of Reference

All elected members from the relevant wards, together with co-optees as approved from time to time by the council.

To consider and report and make appropriate recommendations to the council and Cabinet on:

- (i) Within the context of the Kirklees community strategy and with partner organisations to develop a strategic direction and community plan for the township/area. The whole approach needs to be informed by community action plans which should be the basis for devolution and elements of funding.
- (ii) To be consulted on Kirklees wide strategic issues, budget setting and service plans.
- (iii) To contribute to service reviews and scrutiny processes. Also, for area committees maintaining the required standards as specified in Article 10.2 above, to propose scrutiny activities and the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee may decide to draw the membership of ad hoc scrutiny panels wholly from the membership of the relevant area committee, where considered appropriate.
- (iv) To work closely with other public, private and voluntary agencies in the area.
- (v) To oversee the development of community action plans for areas within the township/neighbourhood and monitor their implementation.
- (vi) To be a focus for community involvement and consultation.
- (vii) To carry out such delegated functions as may be determined by the council and the Cabinet and set out in Part 3 of this Constitution.
- (viii) To contribute, on the basis of local community engagement, to the work of the Kirklees Partnership.

CGAC8

Contact Officer: Adrian Johnson - Tel. 01484 221712

## **KIRKLEES COUNCIL**

### **CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE**

**Friday 14 May 2010**

Present: Councillors E Firth, D Hall, and Simpson

Ex Officio: Mr P Blythe

**1 Appointment of Chair for the Meeting**

As a consequence of the Chair for 2009/10 not having stood for re-election to the Council it was

**RESOLVED** - That Councillor E Firth be appointed Chair for the meeting.

**2 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 28 April 2010 were approved as a correct record.

**3 Interests**

No interests were declared.

**4 Admission of the Public**

The Committee determined that all the business on the agenda would be considered in public.

**5 Deputations/Petitions**

No deputations or petitions were received.

**6 Public Question Time**

No questions were asked.

**7 Revised Area Governance Arrangements**

The Committee considered a joint report of the Director of Communities and Wellbeing and the Director of Organisation Development, putting forward options for revising the Council's arrangements for Area Governance in the context of:-

- Revised locality and neighbourhood working, including Neighbourhood Management Groups
- A renewed emphasis on more targeted and focussed resident involvement emerging from initiatives such as Total Place.

- Responding to the Audit Commission draft report on area based working in Kirklees.
- Current Area Committee working and efficiencies.
- Other considerations.

The report addressed the above aspects in detail and concluded that the continued mix of wards, sub-locality and locality based Area Committees, as currently structured, was creating inefficiencies. The report proposed a reconfiguration with strategic locality based committees and the development of simpler consistent ward based activities which could incorporate and enhance the work of the Neighbourhood Management Groups, and allow Committee Members to shape and develop these new structures within their localities. The main focus of the ward structures would be on real engagement and dialogue between local communities and local democratic representatives.

The report analysed three broad options namely:-

**Option A:**

Retain the status quo - a mix of ward, sub-locality and locality wide Area Committees.

**Option B:**

Change to seven locality wide strategic Area Committees, supported by ward level structures based on enhanced Neighbourhood Management Group support and by resident involvement structures clearly linked to local decision making.

**Option C:**

As Option B, but with revised locality boundaries giving eight Area Committees covering Spen, The Valleys, Mirfield, Dewsbury, Batley, Huddersfield, Birstall/Birkenshaw, and Denby Dale/Kirkburton.

Whilst acknowledging the merit of a new approach to Area Governance the Committee raised a number of issues around the practicalities of merging certain areas, and felt that further work was needed relative to boundaries and working arrangements.

**RESOLVED** - That, in referring the submitted report to Annual Council for consideration, the Committee acknowledges the need for the adoption of a fresh approach to the provision of Area Governance, but accepts that more detailed work needs to be done to inform how this could be achieved.

**8 Special Meeting of the Committee**

The Committee noted that consultations with the newly formed Committee would take place after Annual Council to determine a date in early June 2010 for the Committee to consider recommendations to the June Council, 2010, on the new Duty to Respond to Petitions.