

## APPENDIX 2

**Report of:** Leader of the Council

**Briefing to:** Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

**Date of Cabinet Decision:** 16<sup>th</sup> February 2009

**Subject:** Locality Governance

### SUMMARY

1. At its meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2009, Cabinet will be asked to approve proposals in relation to Locality Governance.

### BACKGROUND & BRIEFING DETAILS

2. The Council has operated a range of arrangements in relation to neighbourhood participation and engagement, with varying degrees of success. The report proposes different arrangements from those pursued previously.
3. The fundamental policy principle, on which the new arrangements are underpinned is that they are based upon the existing ward structure and the role of councillors in their ward / representational role.
4. This has to be seen in the context of national support for delivering locally focussed services, and enhancing the local representational role as well as the democratic process. There is also national and local support for enhancing the role and support for members and in using ward councillors, who have already been elected as representatives for their constituents, as the key building block in delivering local and neighbourhood arrangements. These arrangements are entirely in line with the powers, duties and obligations contained in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, as well as the national priorities of all principle political parties who see "localism" as a feature of local government in the future.
5. The main features of the proposals are as follows:
  - a. Ensuring accurate and timely information is available and accessible to Members on a ward basis. Specifically an annual ward profile covering issues such as demographics, schools, crime and health issues. In addition, providing up-to-date information on planning applications, road works, parking, bin collections and licensing issues.
  - b. A Community Engagement Strategy for the Council.
  - c. Revised arrangements in relation to local management and the co-ordination of services, particularly the establishment of three areas for the management and co-ordination of such local services.
  - d. In addition, further work will be explored in relation to the better integration of information and exploitation of the Customer Relationship Management System being introduced in the Council, to assist and support Members in undertaking case work by providing a history of

customer interactions and the ability to actively manage customer requests and track progress, thereby both reducing both the number of matters that are raised with Members as a result of dissatisfaction by citizens but also providing a structure within which Members can ensure that their requests and other matters are effectively and proactively chased through the organisation.

- e. It should be noted that there are other matters that may in due course be brought forward, most particularly the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill now before Parliament which contains a new duty for the Council to promote local democracy, building on the existing duty on a Returning Officer to encourage participation in elections. Other initiatives may, therefore, in due course be brought forward.

### **RESOURCE / POLICY / FINANCE / LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6. There are no capital or revenue implications in relation to the implementation of this report, although resources will need to be redeployed to, for example, accommodate the proposals in relation to the three district areas. The legal powers to undertake the proposals in the report are contained in the Local Government Acts 1972 and 2000 and the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, and the delivery of these implications will not only be entirely in support of existing and proposed Government policy, but will also assist the Council in delivering other targets and objectives, particularly in relation to local service provision through the revised arrangements for the local management and co-ordination of services.