



WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE JOINT COMMITTEE (WNJC)

GOVERNANCE TASK AND FINISH GROUP

19 DECEMBER 2019

Report Title	Area Committees and Youth Forum (Council)
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1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the Governance Task and Finish Group of information relating to Area Committees and Youth Forums/Councils.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- 2.1 The Governance Task and Finish Group notes the information provided.
- 2.2 The Governance Task and Finish Group considers whether to recommend to the West Northants Joint Committee (WNJC) that a Working Group be set up to investigate the feasibility of the inclusion of Area Committees and a Youth Forum in the meeting structure for the West Northants Authority, together with the legal structure and scope of such Committees and Forum.
- 2.3 If the Governance and Task Finish Group approve recommendation 2.2 above it considers the composition and membership of the Working Group.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

- 3.1.1 At the meeting of the WNJC held on 14 June 2019, the Committee considered the report of the Chair of the Governance Task and Finish Group.
- 3.1.2 It is detailed in the minutes of that meeting *“In reference to Appendix B, Councillor Matt Golby, commented that with the delay to vesting day, there was more time for work to be done on area committees and in establishing a Youth Council. There was an opportunity*

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to learn best practice from others and this could potentially be done by forming a Working Group.”

Therefore, in response, this report has been compiled.

Area Committees

3.1.3 Generally, Area Committees of Local Authorities, comprise all Elected Members from the area's wards. They work closely with Council Officers, service delivery partners and members from the area's Voluntary and Community Sector to ensure strong and consistent links are made between local and town-wide priorities.

3.1.4 A typical role of an Area Committee is to:

- Identify the main priorities that reflect the biggest need in the area
- Monitor the quality and effectiveness of services delivered by the council and other main providers in the area
- Develop efficient and effective solutions to local area priorities as well as supporting city-wide issues
- Encourage local residents to become involved in decision making on matters which affect them

3.1.5 An Area Committee would be expected to work closely with local organisations make recommendations as part of a public meeting, following consultation with the community and networks within that community.

3.1.6 Typical functions that are delegated to Area Committees, include:

Each Area Committee shall have the following consultative and/or advisory roles: (a) to advise Cabinet or any Committee or Sub-Committee on matters of interest in its area; (b) to respond to consultations from the Cabinet or any Committee or Sub-Committee on proposed service charges, quality standards, new facilities, best value reviews or on any other matter; (c) to refer matters affecting its area, or part of its area, to Cabinet or the relevant Committee or Sub-committee. The exact legal structure and scope of responsibilities could be considered as part of the working groups brief.

3.1.7 A number of Local Authorities have appointed Area Committees, including Sunderland, Bristol, Cambridge and Hull.

Youth Forum (Council)

3.1.7 Northampton Borough Council has a Youth Forum. Northampton's Youth Forum is the town's youth council, made up of representatives aged 13 to 19 years old from schools and youth organisations across the borough. The forum members aim to speak up for, and on behalf of young people in Northampton and take an active part in decision making about young people by:

- Identifying and tackling issues of importance to young people.

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- Helping to make sure that young people get to have services and facilities in Northampton that they want.
- Seeking the views of young people and promoting opportunities to get involved and have their say.

3.1.8 The Youth Forum elects two young people to act as co-chairs each year.

3.1.9 The Youth Forum also has two adult co-chairs. A councillor co-chair, the Cabinet member for Community Safety and Engagement, and a community co-chair, currently an individual with an MBE for her longstanding work with the community and work in young people's education.

3.1.10 As a further example, Coventry City Council has included a Youth Council within its meeting structure. Its stated purpose is *“Coventry Youth Council is a group of young people aged between 11-21 who want to have a say about the decisions that are made in the city. It works with lots of different organisations, including the NHS, Coventry and Warwick Universities, CAHMS, Grapevine, Live UnLtd, West Midlands police and the Council. It does yearly campaigns on issues that affect young people in Coventry and aim to raise awareness to tackle these issues.”*

3.11 Derby City Council has a Youth Council – Voices in Action (ViA).

3.12 Voices in Action (ViA) is a youth council for young people aged 11 to 19 years old representing their school, support group or youth project. It holds monthly meetings and discusses a range different topics that affect children and young people, shares ideas and improve services for other children and young people who live in Derby, represent the views of young people at meetings and presents ideas to senior decision makers.

3.13 The Youth Mayor and Deputy Youth Mayor chair the youth council meetings and represent all children and young people in Derby. They are a vital part of the youth council helping to make beneficial decisions and create new ideas.

3.14 Each year ViA identifies one issue that is of particular significance to young people in the city such as:

- mental health
- homelessness
- new communities.

3.15 This issue is then looked at in detail and at the end of the year the findings and recommendations for improvement and change are presented to senior decision makers.

3.2 Issues and Choices

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- 3.2.1 The Governance Task and Finish Group is asked to consider recommending to the WNJC that a Working Group is set up to investigate the feasibility of the inclusion of Area Committees and a Youth Forum or Council in the meeting structure for the West Northants Authority.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Legal

- 4.1.1 Should it be agreed that Area Committees and a Youth Forum (Council) are to be included as part of the Committee structure for the West Northants Authority, their Terms of Reference would need to be included within the Constitution for the West Northants Authority.

- 4.1.2 Detailed advice on the mechanisms available for delegating functions to Area Committees and allowing them to refer matters to other decision making bodies can be given to a Working Group if appointed. Similarly, detailed advice can be given to a Working Group as to how the views and findings of a Youth Forum or Council could be reported to decision making bodies to assist in their functions.

4.2 Policy

- 4.2.1 None.

4.3 Resources and Risk

- 4.3.1 None.

4.4 Equality and Health

- 4.4.1 None.

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