

REPORT TO ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL - 22 NOVEMBER 2018

AREA WORKING ARRANGEMENTS – ESTABLISHMENT OF WORKING GROUP

1 Recommendations

The Council is recommended to:

- 1.1 **Establish a short-life Working Group to be known as the Area Improvement Working Group, with a remit as outlined at 2.3 of this report;**
- 1.2 **Appoint 12 Elected Members to the Area Improvement Working Group with the political proportionality as outlined at 2.6 of this report [with political groups to intimate the names of their appointments to the Chief Executive within 7 days]; and**
- 1.3 **Invite the Area Improvement Working Group to report its findings and recommendations to a future meeting of Full Council.**

2 Background / Discussion

- 2.1 Aberdeenshire Council has had a devolved area structure in place since 1996 when the Council was formed. The six administrative areas form a core aspect of the Council's structure and it is recognised that effective working arrangements at area level are fundamental for the Council to be fully effective and successful. It is considered timely for the Council to review its working arrangements at area level to ensure that these are as effective as possible.
- 2.2 Since there is a wide range of stakeholders who would benefit from inputting into a review of area working arrangements, it is proposed that a Working Group be established to lead on this work. The Working Group could be known as the "Area Improvement Working Group". The following remit is proposed:

To consider the cultural and behavioural aspects of area working; engage and consult with relevant stakeholders and partners; and make recommendations to Full Council on proposed improvements to include consideration of the following:

- **The ethos of community-based decision making**
 - **Effective communication between Services, Areas and Councillors**
 - **Co-ordination of cross-service Area Plans**
 - **Inclusive cross-working practices**
 - **Effective consultation with the Area Committees**
 - **Optimum line management of Area Managers**
 - **Ambassadors and Leaders at a local level**
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- 2.3 Whilst working within the above remit, the Working Group would be able to set its own meeting schedules, appoint a Chair from within its membership and set its own detailed Plan of Work etc. The Working Group would be able to draw on a wide range of mechanisms to progress its work, such as informal workshops, locality visits, consultations and engagement sessions etc.
- 2.4 It would be assisted by senior officers whose role would be to inform, advise and support the Working Group to achieve its objectives. “Senior Officer support for the working group will include the Director of Business Services, Heads of Legal & Governance, Finance and HR & OD or their nominated representatives, and Area Manager participation as well as other cross-service input as appropriate. Trade Union participation would be advantageous and it will be at the discretion of the Working Group to involve such external partners and stakeholders as they think appropriate in the course of the work.”
- 2.5 Upon the conclusion of its work, the Working Group would report its recommendations and proposals for implementation to a future meeting of Full Council. The remit of the Working Group relates to aspects of ethos, culture and behaviour, and does not extend to considering or proposing changes to the Council’s governance arrangements: this remains within the remit of the Procedures Committee (i.e. changes to committee and/or officer delegations is not in scope).
- 2.6 A Working Group of 12 Elected Members would be made up as follows, based on political proportionality:

	Total Members	Total % of Members	Proportionality for 12 Member Working Group (12 x %)	Number of Members to be appointed
Administration	43/70	61.43%	7.37	7
Partnership	23/70	32.86%	3.94	4
Amalgamated small groups and individuals	4/70	5.71%	0.69	1
				Total: 12

- 2.7 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report, their comments are incorporated within the report and they are satisfied that the report complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.

3 Scheme of Governance

- 3.1 The Council is able to consider and take a decision on this item in terms of its general remit in Section A of the List of Committee Powers in Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance as a matter relevant to all six administrative areas of the Council and not otherwise delegated to a Committee.

4 Implications and Risk

- 4.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not required at this stage as there is no direct decision making which can have a differential impact. An Equality Impact Assessment will be considered and reported with any recommendations of the Working Group to a future meeting, as appropriate.
- 4.2 Officer support for the Working Group can be accommodated within current staffing levels.
- 4.3 The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Corporate Level: *Business and organisational change*; Corporate Risk Register). The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Strategic Level *Community Empowerment* (Directorate Risk Registers).

Chief Executive

Report prepared by Karen F Wiles, Head of Legal & Governance
Date 8 November 2018

