

REPORT TO: COMMUNITY PLANNING BOARD ON 4 MARCH 2010

**SUBJECT: GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS – POSSIBLE MERGER OF
COMMUNITY PLANNING & COUNCIL COMMITTEE
STRUCTURES**

BY: CORPORATE POLICY UNIT MANAGER

1. REASON FOR REPORT

1.1 The Community Planning Board is asked to approve in principle a proposal to pilot a merger of the community planning and council committee structures.

2. RECOMMENDATION

1.2 The Community Planning Board is asked to approve in principle a proposal to pilot a merger of the community planning and council committee structures.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The current community planning structure has been in operational since 2008. The structure reflects 5 national themes as well as community engagement.

3.2 When mapping the decision making structure of community planning and making links back to council committees the structure can be confusing i.e. should you seek approval from community planning or committee before proceeding.

3.3 The current structure can also cause delays in gaining approval for projects. This can occur when consultation needs to take place either to community planning from the council or from community planning to the council.

3.4 Finally there is an issue of duplication in staff time and reporting. Some officers are submitting similar reports to community planning and council committees. They must be in attendance at both meetings. This causes confusion and duplication.

4. PROPOSAL

4.1 It is proposed to pilot a merger of the structure over the next cycle. The basic structure would be changed to hold related community planning strategic groups prior to the relevant council committee.

- 4.2 The exact remits of each of the merger of the strategic themes to the council committees required to be completed. However a rough match has taken place and provides a good basis for the merger. For instance, Children and young people's services committee and smarter would merger.
- 4.3 The idea would be to hold both community planning and committee on the same day. Community planning items with partners would be held first followed by a break when the meeting will become a council committee only.
- 4.4 The community planning meeting will remain at quarterly meetings which means that every other council committee meeting is with partners.
- 4.5 The pilot merger is proposed for Greener and Wealthier & Fairer with the Economic Development & Infrastructure Committee. All three meetings have the same chair, Cllr Russell and the remits match well together.
- 4.6 If the Board is in favour of pursuing this proposal, a more detailed report would be submitted to Full Council for consideration at their meeting in March. If approved by Full Council the pilot can begin with the first joint meeting at the scheduled meeting of Economic Development & Infrastructure Committee on 20 April. A second joint meeting will be held on 24 August. Thereafter the evaluation of the pilot will be reported to the Full Council on 15 April and the Board on 16 April.

5. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Single Outcome Agreement/Service Improvement Plan

Improvement to the Community Planning structure is in keeping with local priority on efficiencies and the national priority 15 in which "our public services are high quality continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs".

(b) Policy and Legal

There is no policy or legal requirement in relation to the structure of community planning.

(c) Resources (Financial, Risks, Staffing and Property)

A number of reports are included in this agenda which highlights resource implications for partners to service the community planning structure. This proposal may provide a mechanism to streamline the decision making process while eliminating duplication.

(d) Consultations

Consultations have taken place with statutory partners who are supportive of the principle.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Mapping out of the remits and decision making across council committees and community planning structures have identified the potential to merger the two structures. The merger would begin with a pilot committee Economic Development & Infrastructure Committee and two of the theme groups, Greener and Wealthier & Fairer. The pilot will have two joint meetings before reporting back to Full Council and Board for recommendations.**

Author of Report:

Background Papers:

Ref: