OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REVIEW - "Fit for Purpose, Fit for the Future" - A Review of Durham County Council's Area Action Partnerships

Review of recommendations considered by Cabinet 22nd September 2011

Review Recommendation		Progress Report of Action taken to implement recommendation	Resib'ty	Timescale
(i) to co		All issues identified within Review Recommendation (i) first examined by a working sub-group of AAP co-ordinators with principal lead.	Lee Copeland	Completed
•	The inclusion of AAPs being non-political within the purpose and principles outlined within the AAP terms of reference;	This work led to further examination of additional governing documents such as public rep recruitment in order to tighten up on other AAP processes.		
•	The list of alternative public representatives drawn up at the initial appointment stage to be revisited as it is over 2 years old;	Draft documentation taken to a sounding board of AAP board members for further scrutiny, examination and input. This enabled the governing documentation to be reviewed		
•	The rules regarding co-option and their application (currently co-optees have to stand down after 6 months but can be co-opted again formally); The rules relating to the rotation of chairmanship of AAP	by community representatives, elected members and partners and final terms of reference were agreed and then re-issued in January 2013.		
	Board amongst the three Board groups and their application;	Further work is taking place on producing more guidance for Task and Finish Groups to ensure that attendance,	Sandy Denney	April 2014
•	The rules regarding speaking at AAP Board meetings and their application; Clarification on the roles of the AAP Forum and Board	discussion of potential project ideas and allocation of funds is a fair, open and above board process and to avoid any unfair bias towards projects.	(covering for Lee Copeland –	
•	meeting;		maternity leave)	
•	The inclusion of information and guidance regarding "Conflicts of Interest" and the rules for declaring personal/prejudicial interests;			
•	The production of robust terms of reference for task and finish groups to ensure that their activity is conducted within appropriate governance arrangements;			
•	Where AAPs identify a need to alter their Terms of Reference, this should be done in compliance with the County Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance.			

(ii)	routine analysis of training needs and training to meet such development needs for both the board and staff should continue as this will enhance their effectiveness in the AAP.	Training Team responsibility transferred to County Durham Partnership from 13 th June 2011. The focus of this team since transferring has been developing and enabling consistent consultation and engagement across the Council. This has involved providing a range of consultation and engagement training, support and mentoring and sharing good practice particularly linked to MTFP savings plans. The training manual was re-issued in 2011 which falls into two parts: training for AAP Forum and Board members and training for AAP staff and Members. The main trainer has been on maternity leave since February 2013 and during this time the core training requirements have been provided via e-learning.	Donna C Jefferson	Complete
		A 2014/15 updated training manual will be circulated to boards when available.	Shealagh Pearce	June 2014
(iii)	all Durham County Councillors be encouraged to engage with their local AAPs.	Cabinet portfolio holder wrote to all councillors. Some AAPs after discussion with elected members now hold regular drop-ins. Recognition that we have had elections since the review took place. Lorraine O'Donnell held training and induction sessions for new members May 2013. All AAP co-ordinators held meetings with their new board members and a refresh can be offered.	Shealagh Pearce	Complete
(iv)	Cabinet reaffirm the role of AAPs as a key mechanism through which the Council and partners will consult upon service and policy reviews; that service groupings, via the Consultation Officer Group ensure that such consultation is timely, appropriate and consistent across all AAPs.	All elements complete.	Gordon Elliott	Complete
(v)	where Town and Parish Councils are members of the County Durham Association of Local Councils (CDALC) appointments to AAP Boards should be made via CDALC. However, not all Town and Parish Councils are affiliated to CDALC and where this is the case in a particular AAP area then every effort should be made to	Offer of presentation to CDALC made in September 2012 – no take up of offer. Selection of AAP representatives followed process as established at beginning of AAPs. The structure of CDALC is subject to ongoing discussions as referenced in the Jan 2014 issue of Durham	Sandy Denney	Ongoing

	ensure that those Town and Parish Councils have an equal opportunity to become involved with their respective AAP;	Association News. Links will continue with CDALC to discuss future link opportunities. In areas where Town and Parish Councils are not affiliated arrangements have been made to include non CDALC affiliated members to the board e.g. Weardale Action Partnership. Any future changes to be reflected upon.		
(vi)	the key actions identified within the internal review of AAP project funding (Section 5.78 of the main report refers) be implemented, particularly in respect of those areas of training and development identified.	 Any future changes to be reflected upon. Members seminar held May 2012. Funding Team manned a stand during information week at County Hall to disseminate info and be on hand to answer any queries. Gordon Elliott, Andrew Megginson and Marie Moore delivered documentation which was made available to new members. In addition to the above, an Audit Assurance review was conducted by Internal Audit to look at the processes used and also to consider how best to monitor completed projects given the breadth and number of projects that have been funded. This work led by Andrew Barnes from Internal Audit was conducted between Feb – May 2012 and a detailed action plan was put in place to deal with additional recommendations arising out of this Audit led review. This was implemented and signed off by Internal Audit in October 2013. 	Andrew Megginson	Complete
ívii)	Cabinet in determining its Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) take into consideration any financial allocation to the AAPs, the value that AAP Area Budget(AB) and Neighbourhood Budget(NB) have brought by way of matched funding opportunities namely, that each £1 of AB funding generates an average of £1.39 matched funding and each £1 of NB funding generates an average of £1.75 matched funding.	Budget for 2014/15 has kept AAP levels the same as at 2012.Capital/Revenue split now monitored to ensure minimum impact on the council's revenue budget, Regular financial updates provided to AAP boards. Assurance audit for AB/NB processes has taken place. AAPs engaged attendees in the recent 2013 MTFP exercise – high levels of feedback and engagement.	Gordon Elliott	Complete
viii)	 AAPs look to develop the level of engagement and activity with the press and other media by: Actively engaging with Town and Parish Councils and utilising their publications to evidence and raise awareness of AAP activity. 	More AAPs using different mediums for engagement than ever before. Increased usage of facebook for example. Local AAPs responsible for local press opportunities. e-bulletins/newsletters produced for each AAP.	Lee Copeland	Complete

	 Enhancing relationships between AAP Boards and Co-ordinators with local media. Liaising with community groups/residents associations. Including dedicated AAP pages within Durham County News. further enhancing AAP activity via new ways of working using the Internet, Facebook, Twitter and SMS Messaging. 	Distinct press contacts for each AAP to enable direct links with regional press. Usage of local radio stations. Dedicated pages within Durham County News.		
(ix)	that the AAP project funding approval, appraisal process and application forms include a requirement that reports be submitted to AAP Boards on a quarterly basis detailing project progress.	New documentation complete. Suite of outputs complete. Board reports subject to new performance management framework for AAPs to adhere to in order to be in a stronger position to track project outcomes during project delivery and to ensure timescales are met.	Andrew Megginson Marie Moore	Performance management framework from April 2014 after advice and consultancy work from internal audit.
(x)	performance reports for AAP activity be shared with the wider AAP Forum membership and that the AAPs further develop the process of publication and reporting of the delivery of and impact made by AAP projects against local priorities. That the 14 AAPs come together in an annual conference to celebrate their achievements and successes in this respect.	As above and linked to the enhanced work around performance reporting. Conference held October 2011. 2 nd conference held October 2012 – focus of 2 nd conference around best practice sharing. Attended by peer challenge colleagues.	Andrew Megginson Lee Copeland	Complete plus additional work post April 2014 Complete
		Further work in planning stages to investigate the potential for joint CDP/AAP conference in order to strengthen links and share best practice. Held County wide Participatory Budgeting events – October – Dec 2013 to increase awareness, share best practice and increase AAP forum membership.	Lee Copeland/ Sandy Denney	October 2014 – tbc following further investigation Complete
(xi)	AAPs undertake further work in conjunction with the ACE Planning and Performance team to enhance the reporting of performance management information and indicators.	Linked to AAP input to CDP report to cabinet which is circulated to all board members as a tool to share best practice. Also linked to recommendations (ix) and (x) above	Andrew Megginson	Complete

(xii)	the learning and evidence of good practice detailed within this review report be shared by AAP co-ordinators and their respective Chairs across all 14 AAPs and that bespoke improvement plans for each AAP be produced for example engagement with young people, options for broadening representation.	Learning of good practice identified through the report of the scrutiny working group disseminated through presentations at all 14 AAPs Complete skills audit for AAP boards	Lee Copeland Andrew Megginson Shealagh Pearce	Complete Complete
		All AAPs to develop project case studies to ensure sharing of best practice across all 14 AAPs.		Complete (at 2012 conference)
(xiii)	the Council's Equalities and Diversity Team run a seminar with all 14 AAPs to develop an action plan to ensure that equality considerations are embedded in	Equality and Diversity training seminar delivered to all 14 AAP co-ordinators at PACE away day.	Shealagh Pearce	Complete
	AAP practice and procedures evidencing the good practice that already exists.	The new funding application form containing revised E&D questions has been presented to co-ordinators for future use.		Complete
(xiv)	an initial response to these recommendations is brought back to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board within six months; and that Cabinet agree to a review of the AAPs in another 2 years.	A systematic review of the recommendations was presented to OSMB on 26 th July 2012 as part of the County Durham Partnership Update report.		
		It was also agreed that due to the Peer Challenge carried out in July 2012 which contained positive feedback re AAPs, it was not necessary to carry out a further review, recommendation (xiv), however a final systematic review of recommendations would be presented to CIOSC on 19 th February 2014.		