



Item

## **REVIEW OF GOVERNANCE- RECOMMENDATIONS FROM GOVERNANCE REFERENCE GROUP 9/10/23**

**To:**

Civic Affairs Committee 18/10/2023

**Report by:**

Robert Pollock, Chief Executive

Email: robert.pollock@cambridge.gov.uk

**Wards affected:**

All

### **1. Introduction**

The purpose of this report is to consider recommendations from the Governance Reference Group (GRG), a non-decision making body, for Council to consider on 19 October 2023.

### **2. Recommendations**

To recommend to Council:

- To pause area committee meetings for two cycles (approximately half a year) after November/December 2023. (para 3.3-3.5)
- That Council Procedure Rules (Appendix A2 Rules of Debate on the Budget) is amended to change the length of speeches per group from up to 45 minutes to up to 15 minutes, and to note that the Council meeting on 15 February 2024 will deal with all agenda business and the scheduled 'follow on' Council meeting date of 29 February 2024 is therefore no longer required. (para 4.3)

- To change the deadline for Oral Questions from midday before the day of a Council meeting (noon two days before for the Annual Meeting) to the Friday before- ie the same deadline as Written Questions. To limit the number of Oral Questions for consideration at any meeting to 12 and that a majority of those received are to come from opposition councillors. The Mayor will have authority to allow additional questions deemed to be of an urgent nature. (para 4.4)
- Public Questions (except for Planning Committee) to be received in writing, in full, by noon two days before a meeting, not read out, with a Councillor reply of up to two minutes, a public supplementary of up to two minutes and a councillor reply to that of up to two minutes. (para 4.5)

### 3. Background

- 3.1 On 20 September 2023 this Committee considered and agreed the terms of reference of a Councillor working group (GRG) and its work programme and indicative timeline.
- 3.2 On 9 October 2023, the GRG met to consider further Area Committees and 'quick wins' to smooth and make more effective some of the Council's procedures and processes.

#### **Area Committees**

- 3.3 GRG considered on 11 September and then again on 9 October (see appended report), the current position for Area Committees. GRG concurs with one of the Centre for Public Scrutiny's recommendations (from February 2022) that Council should pause holding Area Committees, but that should be after the November/December cycle of scheduled meetings and the pause should be for the following two cycles ie until September 2024. GRG had considered an immediate pause, however, there is an already planned for round of Environment Improvement Programme Grants to be consulted on (but not decided, as

Area Committees by nature of being on-line cannot make decisions). This also gives more notice of the pause.

- 3.4 During the pause, GRG has asked that officers keep it updated on progress for options of alternative arrangements, which GRG will consider as part of its future work.
- 3.5 GRG noted that the Liberal Democrat members did not support a pause.

#### 4. **Council Procedure Quick Wins**

- 4.1 GRG considered individual Councillor suggestions for what was badged as a 'quick win'. These were suggestions that would require minimal resource to implement, no adverse effect on our governance-more a change in custom and practice to benefit (primarily) Councillors but also those engaging with the Council's democratic practices.
- 4.2 GRG recommends changes to the Council Budget debate, Oral Questions at Council and Public Questions to Meetings (other than Planning Committees).

##### Council Budget Meeting

- 4.3 The Budget Meeting has separate rules for debate. These allow for each political group to speak in introducing its budget, or alternative budget, for up to 45 minutes. GRG recommend that this is reduced to up to 15 minutes per political group. GRG believes that this will enable the 15 February 2024 Council meeting to deal with all agenda business rather than the adjourned meeting approach (ie two dates but one meeting) which had been used in the budget cycle 2022 and 2023.

##### Oral Questions

- 4.4 Some members proposed deleting Oral Questions as a Council Agenda Item. However, GRG recommends a limit of up to 12 oral questions per Agenda. A majority of those received should be from opposition councillors (and that the number of opposition questions should be in proportion to political group size). GRG also agreed to an earlier deadline so Oral Questions will be submitted by noon on the Friday before the Council meeting, as is the case for Written Questions. The

Mayor has the authority to allow Oral Questions deemed of an urgent nature.

## Public Questions

### 4.5 GRG recommends changes to the scheme as follows:

- all questions must be in writing in full to allow for publication before the meeting
- the question will not be read out
- an answer will be given (2 minutes)
- a supplementary may be asked (2 minutes)
- an answer will be given (2 minutes)

No change to submitting public questions by noon two days before the meeting and up to 30 minutes allocated to public question time.

Some members requested that if questions are of a similar topic then the members of the public are grouped together as far as possible. Officer do try to arrange this, within the boundaries of sharing personal data and individual member of the public preferences.

### 4.6 GRG considered other submitted quick wins, but there was no agreement and these will need to be considered further covering:

- Notice of Motions
- Use of an earlier guillotine for Council Meetings
- Changing the time of the Annual Council Meeting

## 5. Implications

As part of its on-going work programme, GRG will be monitoring the implications of the changes proposed in this report and report back to Civic Affairs Committee as appropriate.

## 6. Appendices

Reports to GRG on Area Committees 11.9.23 and 9.10.23

## 8. Contact

[Robert Pollock@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:Robert.Pollock@cambridge.gov.uk), Chief Executive.

## **Governance Review Group 9 October 2023**

### **Area Committees-update**

At its meeting on 11 September, GRG considered a paper on Area Committees (attached again for reference) and Members at the meeting agreed to consult their Groups further on whether to pause area committees.

Since writing the report for 11 September it has been highlighted that the Council is in the process of preparing its Environmental Improvement Programme 2024 with the intention of reporting to Area Committees in November/December for consideration prior to an Executive Councillor decision (as in 2022). This has been the intention since the request for applications was promoted in June (on news releases and on the Website).

An option to pause after November/December cycle is therefore recommended, if the principle of a pause is supported.

A submission has been received from the Lib Dem Group since the last meeting for GRGs attention (copied below).

**GRG is requested to consider pausing Area Committee meetings for two cycles following the next cycle (November/December).**

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### **Extracted Notes of GRG 11 September 2023**

#### **3. Area Committees**

Subjects discussed included:

- i. The need to articulate options and alternatives to Area Committees (via community engagement, consultations etc.)
- ii. The potential to engage external organisations to support producing an options appraisal for alternative forms of neighbourhood engagement.
- iii. A desire to ensure we get a broad scope of feedback from a wider demographic – perhaps by targeting and a more tailored approach to obtaining feedback - e.g. young people.
- iv. Consider, in future options, the value of engaging people on their terms, where they are

- v. If Area Committees were paused, this would take place after current (September 2023) round of meetings is completed.
- vi. Chief Executive Robert Pollock stated that it was important to not be seen to be limiting the democratic process, therefore important for members and officers to go away, consult people to explore a better way to engage residents. Then can come back with options for Members to consider at a future meeting.
- vii. Chair stated after discussion with Members that they would go back to their respective Political Parties to discuss the possibility of pausing Area Committees for 6 months while further options for possible replacement to engage residents are explored.

Lib Dem Group submission received since 11 September GRG

The Lib Dem group is keen to participate in agreement on potential development beyond area committees, but does not accept that they should be halted before the follow-on is ready to go. There are important aspects of ward councillor visibility and role in projects which should not terminate without new opportunities for similar.

One idea which we would like addressed in the officer briefing and analysis on this is the following:

Annual Ward Public Meetings to take place between June and October to focus on councillors' objectives for their wards for the year and the opportunity for public feedback and discussion; including an open forum and an opportunity for an officer or speaker from another organisation for Q&A on a matter of current relevance. Simple background dashboard of ward environmental data provided. Run under the auspices of a mid-ranking officer, but not as a decision-making, minuted proceeding of the council; EIP and community grant funding to be allocated to ward councillors collectively to agree consensus recommendation to Executive Councillor for formal decision.

Ends – appendix follows

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## Governance Reference Group 11 September 2023- Area Committees and community engagement

### Introduction

GRG is considering area committees and community engagement as the first work stream under its terms of reference. The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny recommended in February 2022 that the Council consider pausing area committees whilst a review is undertaken which should align and build on wider work about how the Council engages communities and residents. .

The Chief Executive briefing paper circulated at the last meeting puts the question: how can the Council improve and strengthen its engagement with communities- including area committees or alternative models in the context of increasing financial pressures in local government?

GRG commented at its 3 August meeting that there is an opportunity for a quick win to free up member and officer resource to focus on developing a new approach as the Council continues to modernise and change the way it works under the 'Our Cambridge' programme.

### Decision:

**Officer recommendation:** To pause Area Committees for at least 6 months to allow officers and members to work with a range of colleagues and partners to research, review and determine alternative approaches.

(For discussion and determination)

### Background

Area committees have been part of the Council's structure since June 2003. Since May 2021 Area Committees have had no decision-making powers as Members agreed that they remain on-line being aware that by law councillor decision making is required to be made in person.

The responsibilities (and potential responsibilities) listed in the Constitution (see appendix) mostly are as set out at inception in 2003. The reality is that some functions listed are now decided elsewhere or were never delegated to Area Committees despite the provision being made available at the time.

There have been several reviews of Area Committees over the years most in an attempt to re-invigorate local engagement:

- July 2010 Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee - Community Empowerment and local participation in decision making [Agenda for Strategy](#)

[and Resources Scrutiny Committee on Monday, 5th July, 2010, 5.00 pm - Cambridge Council](#)

- July 2012 Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee - Area working-review of participation pilot [Agenda for Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on Monday, 9th July, 2012, 5.00 pm - Cambridge Council](#)
- July 2014 Environment Scrutiny Committee - Planning applications revert to Planning Committee from Area Committees. **This reduced the number of each area committee from 6 to 4 per year** [Agenda for Environment Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday, 8th July, 2014, 5.00 pm - Cambridge Council](#)
- September 2016 Civic Affairs Committee - Public Involvement in decision making [Agenda for Civic Affairs on Tuesday, 27th September, 2016, 6.00 pm - Cambridge Council](#)

May 2022 Civic Affairs Committee -retain virtual Area Cttees (and therefore non-decision making) whilst reviewing options suggested by Centre for **Governance and Scrutiny**. Very few local authorities have area committees. Many of those most similar to Cambridge, such as, Exeter City, Gloucester City, Ipswich, Lincoln City, Norwich City, Oxford City, St Albans, and Stroud do not; Sheffield City Council does though it is a unitary with a population of around 550,000 people.

**Case study: Stevenage Brough Council (c. 90,000 pop.)**

Stevenage disbanded its four Area Committee around 2015/16. After a gap of around four years, developed a 'Co-operative Neighbourhood' approach. This was part of a wider shift from a 'top-down' way of working with communities to one that put an emphasis on supporting residents to deliver what matters to them in their local area. ,

Since 2020, six Co-operative Neighbourhood Area plans have been developed with residents. Some officer capacity is provided to help areas develop local investment proposals and support delivery. Ward Councillors play an important facilitative role with residents as do local anchor institutions and community organisations.

The area plans reflect a strength or asset-based approach to working alongside and with local communities on their local priorities. A senior officer is attached to each Co-operative Neighbourhood Area plan to bring some accountability for delivery. The total annual budget spend, excluding officer capacity, for this six area plans may be in the region of £200k.

[Co-operative Neighbourhoods \(stevenage.gov.uk\)](http://stevenage.gov.uk)

### **Area Committee attendance**

The last collection of data for attendance in-person was 2016/17 when for four meetings of each area committee there was:

North: 41 attendees of which there were 10 speakers



South: 32 attendees 7 speakers

East: 10 attendees 5 speakers

West: 60 attendees 20 speakers

Viewing figures for virtual meetings can be seen on the Council's You Tube Channel- however it is not possible to establish who has viewed the recording. When broadcasting live the number watching has consistently been fewer than 10 viewers and some of those would be council officers.

There was a budget pre-covid of £6,800 to cover venue hire and audio for 16 meetings per year.

Other opportunities for community engagement

Residents have been 'voting with their feet' and using other channels and opportunities to find out about council activity in their area, express their views and opinions.

The Council provides other forms of local engagement in some areas of the city, some of which have been in place for a number of years, covering North West Cambridge, North East Cambridge and East Cambridge [Get involved in the new neighbourhoods - Cambridge City Council](#)

The local police who attend area committees bi-annually have recently started to hold their own separate community forums [Cambridge | Cambridgeshire Constabulary \(cambs.police.uk\)](#). Members of the public, and councillors, can attend to inform policing and community safety activity, and engage directly with the police. The police have indicated, in the light of this development, that they do not see attendance at Area Committees as essential – our understanding is that no other Cambridgeshire district has had an equivalent of Area Committees for community safety/policing engagement. .

The Cambridge Joint Area Committee has recently been reconstituted – this will provide a forum for councillor engagement on local and neighbourhood issues within its remit, including highways matters and local project budgets.

The council provides various other channels for community and resident engagement and input to council thinking, planning, priorities and projects, including:

- (i) Consultation and community engagement on specific policies and projects via CitizenLab which is much more engaging than previous on-line systems, and has generated much higher levels of engagement and input on local environmental issues. We have 2,960 registrations on [citizenlab](#) now.

The site launch July 2022. Top engaged consultations:

- 735 participants - [Dog Control Public Spaces Protection Order 2017](#)
- 528 participants - [Putting residents and communities at the heart of the conversation](#)

- 369 participants - [Environmental Improvement Programme 2022](#)
- 240 participants - [Punt Touting Public Spaces Protection Order](#)

Current consultations:

- [Environmental Improvement Programme 2023-24](#) (263 participants so far)
- [Inspired Living – A design code to enhance design in Northern Cambridge neighbourhoods](#) (209 participants so far)
- [Taxi vehicle age limits](#) (170 participants so far)
- [Impact of licensed premises](#) (5 participants so far)

(ii) citywide initiatives such as the “Cambridge Together” rich picture, which included an online and in person survey of residents’ priorities, the Budget Consultation and others regular receive several hundred responses from residents

- (ii) Public speaking at committee and Council meetings
- (iii) Tenant engagement (including tenant reps on Housing scrutiny committee, Open Door, etc.);
- (iv) Neighbourhood engagement on major projects such as housing redevelopment or neighbourhood priorities such as currently running for Kings Hedges-Arbury-West Chesterton.
- (v) Engagement in community centres and through Community Development and Housing teams.
- (vi) Cambridge Matters
- (vii) Website and social media
- (viii) Complaints, compliments and customer feedback channels

Our partners also hold local engagement events on specific projects and initiatives.

### **Decision making**

The only decisions currently for Area Committees are annual local grants, which for the last two years have been approved by officers following advisory comments from each area committee. **If area committees were paused for a period of time, officers recommend these grants revert to the Executive Councillor and Scrutiny Committee.**

Policing and safer neighbourhood reporting affords each area committee an opportunity to comment on, but not decide, local policing priorities. A representative of the Council’s safer communities team supports the police representative for this bi annual agenda item.

All other agenda items in the last 3 years have been information or consultation items, plus any public questions in the Open Forum. An illustrative example for agenda items of one Area Committee, the North is given. For the two years 2021/23

other than local police reporting (bi annual), environmental reports (bi annual), area grants (annual) the following agenda items were included:

GCP City Access consultation (all 4 area cttees)

GCP Making connections consultation (ditto)

Local Plan consultation (ditto)

New road classification consultation (ditto)

GCP updates on Fen Road/Histon Road/Milton Road

Residents' projects (using environmental improvement grant)

Herbicide free trial update

### **Constitutional implications**

There are none. Area committees currently hold no decision-making powers and the decision currently being recommended to be made is to pause, not remove, Area committees from the Constitution. A pause is recommended until such time as GRG, Civic Affairs Committee and if required Council, consider the conclusions of this aspect of the governance review project.

Officers believe it would be wise to plan to carry out a full review of the purpose of, and options for, neighbourhood/community engagement over the next six months , potentially involving external expert support such as New Local or similar organisation that has experience of empowering local communities.

## Article 8 – Regulatory and Area committees

### 8.1 Regulatory committees and sub-committees

8.1.1 The Council will appoint the committees and sub-committees set out in section 12 of Part 3 of this Constitution to discharge the functions allocated to them in that section.

### 8.2 Area committees

8.2.1 The Council will appoint four area committees comprised of electoral wards of the City as follows:

Title of Area Committee	Comprising Wards
East Area	Abbey Coleridge Petersfield Romsey
North Area	Arbury East Chesterton West Chesterton King's Hedges
South Area	Cherry Hinton Queen Edith's Trumpington
West/Central Area	Castle Market Newnham

8.2.2 Each City Councillor representing a ward within an area committee shall be a member of that area committee, including members of the Executive.

8.2.3 Each area committees shall invite county councillors for its area to be non-voting co-opted members.

8.2.4 Area committees may invite representatives from other agencies and groups to participate in the proceedings of area committees as and when appropriate, other than by way of co-option as voting members. Area committees are encouraged to involve:

- Representative(s) from tenants' groups and residents' associations
- Local young people's representative(s)
- Local Police representative
- Local voluntary sector representative
- Local education representative
- Local GP or health representative

8.2.5 Area committees have these principal purposes:

- [~~To make decisions concerning executive and regulatory functions of the Council which have been delegated to them from Council decision 28.5.21 suspended whilst Area Committees meet virtually];~~
- To consider issues which affect their area;
- To act as a consultative body in respect of the interests of their area;
- To provide a forum for local residents to raise issues about their area;
- To facilitate themed discussions about issues of concern locally. Examples might include issues concerning crime and anti-social behaviour, traffic management/ congestion, public transport, health or education.

8.2.6 Powers and functions delegated to area committees are set out in section 12 of Part 3 of this Constitution.

8.2.7 The proceedings of area committees shall be governed by the Area Committee Procedure rules set out in Part 4 of this Constitution.

## **SECTION 11: AREA COMMITTEES**

Following a decision by Council on 28.5.21, Area Committees are held virtually and are non-decision making so section 11 only applies in an advisory capacity only.

## **11.1 Introduction.**

11.1.1 This part of the Constitution describes the Council functions for which area committees are to be responsible. Some are executive functions, and the delegation is made by the Executive Councillor responsible for that function. Some delegations relate to regulatory matters, and these are made by the Council.

11.1.2 The principal areas for which area committees have responsibilities are:

- Environmental Improvements
- Parks and Recreation Services
- Community Services (excluding management of the Council's housing stock)
- Streetscene Services
- Projects funded by developer contributions that relate to public art, the public realm, community facilities and open space
- Safer City grants

## **11.2 Environmental Improvements**

11.2.1 The relevant Executive Councillor may delegate a budget to area committees for the purpose of carrying out environmental improvements. In delegating a budget, the Executive Councillor may set criteria or conditions for its expenditure.

11.2.2 Area committees are not obliged to spend delegated capital budgets in the year in respect of which they receive them. It is open to area committees to "save up" capital budgets of this kind for environmental improvements.

11.2.3 Area committees shall have the role of investigating, identifying, consulting on and approving local environmental improvement projects, subject to their budget and to any criteria or conditions set by the Executive Councillor.

11.2.4 Area committees may be consulted on periodic reviews of Council policies and strategies affecting local environmental issues (e.g. the Planning Obligation Strategy, the Walking and Cycling Strategy).

11.2.5 Area committees may seek additional funding for environmental improvement projects, by bidding for other Council funding (for instance, 'Sustainable City' grants or City Centre Management grants). They may also seek additional

external funding, for instance through partnership schemes or other sources of grant aid.

11.2.6 Each area committee will be required to submit an annual report to the March cycle of the Environment Scrutiny Committee, setting out progress with schemes being dealt with by that area committee and identifying any projects where additional funding may be required so that a decision can be made about budget allocation. Such a system will also enable the Executive Councillor and Scrutiny Committee to consider planned 'rollovers' of budgets from one year to the next and to take an overview of environmental improvement work in the city.

### **11.3 Parks And Recreation Services**

11.3.1 Area committees will contribute to the scrutiny of local Parks and Recreation Services by considering parks and recreation issues which affect their area. In pursuit of this, area committees are asked to encourage links between themselves and local sports clubs and facility user forums, such as the Allotment Forum.

11.3.2 Area committees may recommend changes to the provision or management of local parks and recreation services, although any recommendations would need to be considered in the context of budgetary provision, overall parks and recreation policies and competing needs.

11.3.3 Area committees may be consulted on periodic reviews of Council policies and strategies affecting parks and recreation services (e.g. Parks Strategy, the Sports Development Strategy).

### **11.4 Community Development**

11.4.1 Area committees will contribute to the Council's community development role by promoting public awareness and involvement, making the links between local communities, Housing Associations, Tenants Groups etc. and the area committees.

11.4.2 Area committees may consider the provision of community facilities at neighbourhood level, identify any gaps, and make recommendations on priorities for development.

11.4.3 Area committees may be consulted on applications for grants for community activities in their areas, and may monitor the use of grant aid by recipients.

11.4.4 The Executive Councillor for Communities may delegate a budget to area committees to enable area committees to award grants for community activities in their areas. In delegating a budget, the Executive Councillor may set criteria or conditions for its expenditure.

11.4.5 Area committees may monitor and review neighbourhood services in their areas for children and families; e.g. Community and Neighbourhood Play Areas.

11.4.6 Area committees may extend the Council's engagement with children and young people by including a role for young people in the work of the committees..

## **11.5 Streetscene Services**

11.5.1 Area committees may consult local people about local priorities for streetscene services. (Street cleansing, public conveniences, grass cutting and maintenance of planted areas.)

11.5.2 Area committees may set local priorities for streetscene works subject to :

- Maintaining minimum statutory service standards;
- Accommodating changes within agreed budgets; and
- Not adversely affecting services in other areas.

11.5.3 Area committees may review and monitor the provision of streetscene services within their areas. They may make recommendations for changes or enhancements to the Executive Councillor or to service managers.

11.5.4 Area committees may review and monitor the provision of the Ranger Service within their areas. They may make recommendations for changes or enhancements to the Executive Councillor or to service managers.

## **11.7 Decision-making on Projects Funded by Developer Contributions**



11.7.1 Area committees are to be given delegated budgets and delegated decision making powers in respect of projects funded by developer contributions in the following terms:

11.7.2 The projects funded by developer contributions within the scope of area committees are projects relating to:

- Public Art
- Public Realm
- Community Facilities
- Open Spaces

11.7.3 Any decisions by area committees about the use of developer contributions for projects will be made in accordance with Council policy and budgeting procedures and, with the exception of public art, will take account of area needs assessments to be adopted by each area committee.

11.7.4 Funding from developer contributions will be given to area committees on the following basis:

- Where developer contributions derive from a planning application determined by an area committee, the use of contributions made for the purposes set out in paragraph 12.7.2 shall be determined by that area committee.
- Where developer contributions derive from a planning application determined by the Planning Committee, the Executive Councillor for the relevant service area shall determine the proportion of the developer contributions to be made available for the use of the area committee with a presumption that 50% of contributions made for the purposes set out in paragraph 12.7.2 shall be made available.
- If a developer contribution given to area committees is not committed to be spent within three years of receipt by the Council, the Executive Councillor may decide how the contribution is to be spent.

11.7.5 The area needs assessments referred to in paragraph 12.7.3 shall be made in accordance with the following principles:

- An area needs assessment will be produced every three years for each area committee and will be based on a desk top analysis.

The assessment will seek to do the following:

- Quantify the existing population within the area, split by age structure;
- Estimate new development taking place within the area over the next three years and assess its impact on the existing population;
- Summarise existing provision of facilities etc with commentary on the potential for enhancing or modernising them;
- Identify the need or scope for new provision of facilities etc or new projects.

The area committee will consult on its area needs assessment before approval.

The area needs assessment will be used by officers to develop and cost projects and to identify the extent to which they may be funded by developer contributions, for the purpose of preparing a report for the area committee.

This report will form the basis of area committee decisions to approve projects.

11.7.6 The area needs assessment may be used to identify projects not funded by developer contributions but funding for these would be subject to the Council's regular budgeting procedures.

11.7.7 Area committee decisions on public art projects funded from developer contributions will be made on the basis of officer reports submitted from time to time.

## **11.8 Safer City Grants**

11.8.1 The Executive Councillor may allocate a budget to area committees for making grants.

11.8.2 Area committees shall determine applications for grants in accordance with any policies or other guidance set by the Executive Councillor.

11.8.3 Officers shall advertise the availability of grants and invite applications. Applications shall be reported to the area committees, according to the area in which grant aided works are proposed, in March or April/May onwards depending on Area Committee dates, each year for consideration.

11.8.4 If funds remain after the "bidding round" described in 12.8.3, further grant applications may be made. These shall be determined by Strategic Director after consultation with the Chairs of Area Committees, relevant Ward Councillors and Opposition Spokes Persons as and when the applications are received and outside of Area Committees.

11.8.5 Any safer city grant allocation unspent by an area committee by 1 December in any year shall be returned to the Executive Councillor for reallocation to any area committee that has suitable unfunded grant applications for inclusion in the 'Citywide' pot for re-distribution to other areas, if appropriate applications have been made.

11.8.6 Grant applications that relate to the area of more than one area committee shall be determined by the Executive Councillor in consultation with the Chair and Opposition Spokespersons of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee.

### **11.9 Planning and development briefs**

11.9.1 New planning and development briefs (including Supplementary Planning Documents and planning guidance) on sites within the City boundary (but not within the Cambridge Fringe sites), whether produced by Planning Services or by a developers agent under the editorial control of Planning Services shall be referred to the relevant area committee prior to consultation, and prior to final adoption by the Executive Councillor, in place of current pre-scrutiny arrangements, other than:

11.9.2 (Where cross area committee boundary proposals are involved; or proposals related to major schemes involving more than 250 dwellings or 10,000m<sup>2</sup> of other or mixed floor space the default pre-scrutiny process will include presentation to the Area Committee(s) but the final recommendation will be from Development Plan Scrutiny Sub-Committee to the Executive Councillor).

11.9.3 Any Neighbourhood Planning proposals which may be promoted under the provisions of the Localism Act will need to be considered by Development Plan Scrutiny Sub-Committee because of their relationship with emerging policy development through the review of the Cambridge Local Plan

### **11.10 Tree Works**

11.10.1 The Executive Councillor may delegate decisions on tree works to area committees.

### **11.11 General**

11.11.1 The Council, its committees, Executive Councillors and officers may, from time to time, delegate such further functions to area committees as they judge appropriate.

## **Part 4EE: Area Committee Procedure Rules**

NB-Council agreed on 28.05.21 that Area Committees will continue to meet virtually. Whilst meeting virtually Area Committees are non-decision making. Any decisions following an area committee's deliberations will be taken by the relevant Councillor or Officer empowered to do so.

### **1. Appointment of area committees**

- 1.1 The Council will have the area committees set out in Article 8 of the Constitution.
- 1.2 The Council will appoint members to the area committees in accordance with Article 8 of the Constitution.

### **2. Role and Functions of area committees**

- 2.1 The role and functions of area committees are set out in Article 8 of the Constitution. The terms of reference of area committees are set out in Part 3 of this Constitution.

### **3. Meetings of area committees**

- 3.1 Area committees shall set their own timetable of meetings but shall, so far as practical, meet at least four times a year. Area committees shall usually meet between Monday and Thursday in the evening. However, area committees may choose to meet at other times of the week for business reasons.
- 3.2 Area committees may decide where their meetings are to be held but shall, so far as they can, hold meetings in locations that are reasonably accessible to people with disabilities.
- 3.3 That the Democratic Services Manager, after consultation with the Chair of the Area Committee, be authorised to call an additional meeting of an Area Committee if the business for that cycle warrants it.

- 3.4 That in the interests of better community involvement, additional Area Committees should, as far as possible, be held in the local area.
- 3.5 That the Democratic Services Manager, after consultation with the Chair of the Area Committee agree what time the additional meeting commences.

#### **4. Co-opted Members**

- 4.1 Each area committee shall invite county councillors where the clear majority of a County Council Division is within the area to be co-opted members. County Councillors may vote on all matters except for any decision relating to city council funding and the election of the Chair and Vice Chair. Area committees may appoint such other non-voting co-opted members as they choose. Co-opted members may be appointed either in respect of the whole work of the area committee, or in respect of specific aspects of that work.

#### **5. Quorum**

- 5.1 The quorum for an area committee shall be three members, not including co-opted members.

#### **6. Who chairs area committee meetings?**

- 6.1 An area committee shall, at its first meeting of the municipal year, elect City Councillors as Chair and Vice-Chair and shall be responsible for filling any vacancy.
- 6.1.1 In the absence from any meeting of the Chair and Vice-Chair, a City Councillor Chair for that meeting shall be appointed by the meeting, but shall relinquish the chair if the Chair or Vice Chair subsequently arrives at the meeting.

#### **7. Procedure at area committees**

- 7.1 Procedure at meetings of area committees will be governed the Council Procedure Rules which apply to committees, as supplemented or amended by these rules. Subject to these, and subject to compliance with the law, area committees may set their own procedure.

- 7.2 Area committees shall not be classed as regulatory committees for the purposes of Council Procedure Rule 51.
- 7.3 The Council's rules on public speaking rights and petitions shall apply to area committees..

## **8. Format of area committee meetings**

- 8.1 There shall be two main parts to meetings of area committees.
- 8.2 Area committee meetings shall begin with an open forum stage, at which members of the public may raise issues of concern or interest in respect of the local area. This open forum stage shall last up to 30 minutes but may be extended at the discretion of the Chair. The Chair may also impose a time limit on individual contributions to the open forum.
- 8.3 The second part of area committee meetings shall be formal consideration and decision-making by the area committee of matters within its remit.
- 8.4 Area committees may decide to hold themed meetings to discuss issues of local concern; for instance, crime and anti-social behaviour, traffic issues, public transport, health or education. In the case of themed meetings, area committees may vary the format described above, subject to retaining the formal part of the meeting described in 8.3 above.

## **9. Agenda items**

- 9.1 Any member of an area committee shall be entitled to give notice to the Democratic Services Manager that he/she wants an item relevant to the functions of the committee to be included on the agenda for the next available meeting of the committee or sub-committee. On receipt of such a request the Democratic Services Manager will ensure that it is included on the next available agenda.
- 9.2 Area committees may decide to add items to the agenda for future meetings, for instance to give further consideration to matters raised during the open forum stage of a meeting.
- 9.2 Further provisions for inclusion of items on agendas are included in the Council's Conventions for the Conduct of Council Business, which are set out in Appendix F of the Council Procedure Rules in Part 4 of this Constitution.



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