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**VOLUME B**  
**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION**

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**Website  
Updated – May 2015**

## B6 – District and Ward Committee Functions

1. THE ROLE AND PURPOSE OF DISTRICT COMMITTEES IS MORE PARTICULARLY SET OUT WITHIN THE "TERMS OF REFERENCE" BELOW. THE TERMS OF REFERENCE ARE SUBJECT TO AMENDMENT BY CABINET OR BY COUNCIL BUSINESS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE, AS APPROPRIATE, TO REFLECT THE EMERGING SHAPE OF THE FUTURE COUNCIL.
2. The following functions are devolved to District Committees:
  - Enforcement of litter prevention.
  - Enforcement relating to fly-posting, placarding, graffiti and fly-tipping.
  - Local community safety (local CCTV and local neighbourhood tasking issues taken forward usually in partnership with the police).
  - Power to authorise the picking up of stray dogs, and relating to scavenging in alleyways and fouling of land.
  - Street Cleansing – local decisions on services and the specific role of working with local communities and social enterprises to encourage additional services such as community clean ups and anti-litter campaigns.
  - Grants to Neighbourhood Forums from the budget approved for this purpose.
  - The right to consider and respond to consultations on planning briefs and frameworks and major development proposals and for any such response to be given to the Planning Committee for consideration at the appropriate time.

### TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR DISTRICTS AND WARDS

#### Background

These terms of reference form part of a three pronged approach to defining the role and remit of the Council's community governance structure at both district and ward level. This also includes a schedule of functions that are to be delegated to these committees or forums, amending section B6 from the 2014/15 City Council Constitution; an article recognizing the existence of district committees and ward committees or forums and granting authority and powers to both and the terms of reference set out in this document.

This builds on, consolidates and amends the guidance agreed at Cabinet in July 2012 (*Meeting Arrangements for District Committees*) and constitutional refinements made in 2012,

2013 and 2014. Updated guidance on the operation of district committees and ward committees or forums will be issued by Cabinet early in the new municipal cycle for 2015/16.

## **Principles**

The City Council is committed to the retention and the ongoing development of its devolved approach to community governance, given the scale, size and diversity of challenges, opportunities and needs across the city.

The operation of new arrangements at the district and ward level must be consistent with the new resource framework for local governance and services, with a dramatic reduction since the council introduced its devolved arrangements over ten years ago. This means that the support and administration of the refined model needs to take account of this and focus on the key priority of protecting front line service delivery, whilst also helping to shape new approaches to service delivery at a local level through partnership working and co-production.

The new model demands a particular set of cultural, organisational and individual behaviours, values and technical competencies. A key priority for its future operation is to shape a systematic, whole organisation approach to getting this right. This will be incorporated within the wider Future Council programme.

## **Overall purpose of the districts**

Work at the district level will promote democratic accountability and support councillors in their community leadership role. It will also drive forward service improvement, community empowerment, active citizenship and local partnership working, and ensure maximum influence over the use of service budgets and resources, to ensure they are aligned with local needs, with the ultimate outcome of improving the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the local area.

## **The roles of district committees**

In conjunction with the relevant Cabinet Members, the role of district committees is to:

- Develop and support the community leadership role of councillors and others in the area. This includes roles in relation to governance, community planning, local dialogue, partnership, commissioning and accountability
- Promote and influence service improvement, service integration and a focus on prevention across the whole of the local public sector in the district
- Work in partnership with all local stakeholders to further the needs and priorities of local residents in the district
- Ensure that city wide and city regional levels of decision making have a good understanding of local needs and priorities in different parts of the city

- Promote community empowerment and active citizenship and a diversity of local service provision, including community and voluntary organisations and social enterprises (e.g. through the Standing up for Birmingham campaign) and to develop positive working relationships with parish, neighbourhood or community councils
- Take local decisions on local issues as specified in the constitution and this Terms of Reference

**Functions delegated to district committees (Executive Members for District)**

Within each Committee's area:

(Council functions)

1. To adopt and review a Community Plan
2. To make Elected Member appointments to outside bodies; where such appointments relate solely to one Ward within the District, the appointment should be made by the relevant Ward Committee Members.
3. To advise or make representations to the Council, the Executive or an Overview and Scrutiny Committee on all matters affecting community interests, including the exercise of a "Neighbourhood Challenge" function, working in conjunction with Cabinet Members to provide improved accountability in council and other public services within the district
4. To consider and respond to consultations on planning briefs and frameworks and on major development proposals affecting the district, within appropriate planning timescales
5. To consider proposals referred to the committee by the Council, the Executive or an Overview and Scrutiny committee and to report back the committee's views to the referring body
6. To consider the performance, integration and co-ordination of public services in the district and make recommendations to the Executive and to the council's partners as appropriate

(Executive functions)

7. To promote and improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area
8. To exercise any executive functions that may be delegated in section B6 of the constitution - specifically to exercise the following duties and delegated functions in conjunction with designated officer responsibilities, relevant ward councillors and the relevant Cabinet Member:
  - a) A duty to ensure tenant engagement in the management and development of social housing, in conjunction with the relevant Cabinet Member

- b) A duty to promote safer neighbourhoods, including local CCTV and neighbourhood tasking issues taken forward in partnership with the police and in conjunction with the relevant Cabinet Member
- c) A duty to promote cleaner neighbourhoods, in conjunction with the relevant Cabinet Member, specifically:
  - Street cleansing – taking local decisions on service delivery in conjunction with appropriate officers and working with local communities and social enterprises to encourage additional services such as community clean ups and anti-litter campaigns
  - Enforcement of litter prevention
  - Enforcement relating to fly posting, placarding, graffiti, and fly-tipping
  - Power to authorise the picking up of stray dogs, scavenging in alleyways, Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act
- d) A duty of “Neighbourhood Challenge” – to investigate, review and gather data on the performance of all local public services, working in a collaborative but challenging way with all service providers and seeking out and promoting new ways of improving services, in conjunction with the all Cabinet Members as appropriate
  - Approval of grants from the Local Innovation Fund (from April 2016)
  - Bidding for external funding to support neighbourhood and service improvement
- e) A duty to promote effective neighbourhood management
- f) A duty to promote and support active citizenship, community empowerment and a diverse and dynamic civil society, in conjunction with the relevant Cabinet Member
- g) A duty to ensure effective ward level governance arrangements, in Conjunction with the Leader of the Council
  - Approval of neighbourhood forum grants

### **The roles of ward committees or forums**

Members will also provide community leadership at the ward level to take forward the functions of the district committees, in particular through engaging the local community and identifying very local issues and priorities (for example through Ward Litter Plans or Neighbourhood Tasking meetings). The ward committees or forums will:

1. Provide a forum for community engagement in decisions affecting the local area (through regular meetings including neighbourhood forums, residents associations, parish, community or neighbourhood councils and other local organisations)
2. Make representations to the district committee, the Executive or to Council on matters affecting the ward and to support the work of Overview and Scrutiny committees as appropriate
3. Make comments on behalf of residents on significant planning applications within the ward or which have an impact on the ward, subject to the appropriate planning timescales
4. Co-ordinate the work of councillors with neighbourhood forums, residents associations and neighbourhood, community or parish councils to enable local community engagement, debate and action in relation to local issues and priorities
5. Plan work with the other wards in the district to support the functions of the district committee and to engage with partners such as the police