

Report of:	Leader
To:	Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date:	8th September 2015

Progress Report on Implementation: Are Ward Committees Fit for Purpose

Inquiry Information

Date approved at City Council:	6 th January 2015
Member who led the original review:	Cllr Waseem Zaffar
Lead Officer for the review:	Benita Wishart, O&S Manager
Date progress last tracked:	-

1. In approving this inquiry the City Council asked me, as the appropriate Cabinet Member, to report on progress towards these recommendations to this Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
2. Details of progress with the remaining recommendations are shown in Appendix 2.
3. Members are therefore asked to consider progress against the recommendations and give their view as to how progress is categorized for each.

For more information about this report, please contact

Contact Officer:	Ifor Jones
Title:	Service Director-Homes and Neighbourhood
Telephone:	0121 303 4595
E-Mail:	ifor.jones@birmingham.gov.uk

Progress with Recommendations

No.	Recommendation	Responsibility	Original Date For Completion	Cabinet Member's Assessment
R01	That all Ward Committees, or any successor arrangement for governance at this level, adopt the Citizen Entitlements set out in section 3.2.	Leader	December 2015	1 – Achieved (fully)
Evidence of Progress (and Anticipated Completion Date if 'Not Achieved')				
<p>The Citizen entitlements have been captured within the guidance for District Committee and Ward Committee / Forums agreed by Cabinet on 27th July 2015 - <i>Driving Forward The Community Leadership Role And Remit Of The Council: Guidance For District Committees And Ward Committees / Forums</i>. Wards and District Committees will be expected to set out their community governance arrangements by autumn 2015.</p>				

No.	Recommendation	Responsibility	Original Date For Completion	Cabinet Member's Assessment
R02	That each Ward Committee, or any successor arrangement for governance at this level, considers the good practice set out in paragraphs 3.2.4 – 3.2.13 and reports back to the appropriate District Committee on innovations they will use and; that Districts and Public Engagement O&S Committee will consider any resulting innovative practice.	Leader in conjunction with Executive Members for Local Services and Ward Committee Chairs	December 2015	6 – In Progress
Evidence of Progress (and Anticipated Completion Date if 'Not Achieved')				
<p>The framework for the good practice set out in paragraphs 3.2.4 – 3.2.13 will be captured within the Community Governance statements to be completed by autumn 2015.</p> <p>The Corporate Resources O&S Committee has taken over this remit from the Districts & Public Engagement O&S Committee, and will be considering good practice when arrangements are reviewed in February 2016.</p>				

No.	Recommendation	Responsibility	Original Date For Completion	Cabinet Member's Assessment
R03	That technology is harnessed to better support Ward Committees, or any successor arrangement for governance at this level: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Any upgrading to the City Council's website enable the Wards and Ward Committee information to be easier to locate; b) That ward information on the website is more comprehensive and up-to-date (following the example of the Neighbourhood Tasking Group pages); c) That the Birmingham Newsroom tweet dates and links to ward 	Deputy Leader	December 2015	6 – In Progress

	committees; d) To develop an “app” ¹ (a web application) which enables information relating to the ward to be easily accessible and meeting agendas and reports and action notes to be accessible.			
Evidence of Progress (and Anticipated Completion Date if 'Not Achieved')				
<p>A ward action tracker has been developed to allow wards to track actions from each ward meeting. This will be amended at each ward committee meeting and uploaded to the meeting page on CMIS the next day. This will enable anyone to see progress against each action.</p> <p>The development of an app has been considered but deemed too costly at the moment.</p> <p>The intention is to have four community governance managers to support the district and ward committees and to support ward committees in tasks such as promoting meetings.</p>				

No.	Recommendation	Responsibility	Original Date For Completion	Cabinet Member's Assessment
R04	<p>The Council's structures and resources should be used better to support Ward Committees, or any successor arrangement for governance at this level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Provide appropriate support to ensure that the meetings are set up and supported appropriately; b) Provide appropriate support to ensure that agendas and actions happens following the meetings; c) Council Officers need to attend when requested (or to actively explain to the Ward Committee Chair why they cannot) but equally if they are expected to be held accountable over a topic this needs to be explained by the Chair; d) Publications such as the Council's Forward publication should promote the concept of Ward Committees. <p>We request regular updates on Ward and District Champions: reviewing the role, who is in place and how well it is working.</p>	Leader	June 2015	2 – Achieved (late)
Evidence of Progress (and Anticipated Completion Date if 'Not Achieved')				
<p>Support arrangements for Ward Committees were agreed by Cabinet on 27th July 2015 (Driving Forward The Community Leadership Role And Remit Of The Council: Guidance For District Committees And Ward Committees / Forums).</p> <p>Further guidance will be issued around expectations of attendance. It is not envisaged that senior officers will attend on a regular basis or on routine matters – the ward action tracker will be the means of dealing with queries and problems. However, there will be reasons for attendance, which will have to be agreed with the relevant senior officer for example providing particular service or issue-based briefing on service and other matters.</p>				

¹ a self-contained program or piece of software designed to fulfil a particular purpose; an application, especially as downloaded by a user to a mobile device

No.	Recommendation	Responsibility	Original Date For Completion	Cabinet Member's Assessment
R05	That the City Council's adult education service explores the potential for developing a course on active citizenship and democratic structures in the city.	Cabinet Member for Skills, Learning and Culture in conjunction with the Executive Members for Local Services	July 2015	Concluded
Evidence of Progress (and Anticipated Completion Date if 'Not Achieved')				
This recommendation is not feasible in current financial context, as the adult education service's limited resources are focused on core skills e.g. Maths and English and ICT skills and the curriculum for 2015/16 is set. However, there may be opportunities in the future to work with partners / others to deliver such training.				

No.	Recommendation	Responsibility	Original Date For Completion	Cabinet Member's Assessment
R06	Progress towards achievement of these recommendations should be reported to the Districts and Public Engagement Overview and Scrutiny Committee as an interim report in July 2015 with a final implementation report being presented in December 2015.	Leader	Interim progress report July 2015 Final implementation report December 2015	1 – Achieved (fully)
Evidence of Progress (and Anticipated Completion Date if 'Not Achieved')				