

SECTION 5 - AREA COMMITTEES

There is a Protocol outside this Constitution setting out how Area Committees are to operate. This Protocol can be amended by the written agreement of the Leaders of the Political Groups on the Council.

The Borough has 7 Area Committees comprising all Ward Councillors from the Wards represented.

The Chair of each Area Committee shall be a Councillor from among the Ward Councillors serving each Area, excluding the Mayor or any Cabinet Member, and these appointments shall be ratified each year at the Annual Council meeting.

The Access to Information Procedure Rules in Part 4 of this Constitution apply to Area Committees. The Committee Procedure Rules in Part 4 apply to Area Committees except where this would be inconsistent with the Protocol mentioned above.

Area Committees are intended to have formal decision-making and advisory roles. Area Committees shall have the following functions:

- (a) Developing and making an Area Committee Plan at the commencement of each municipal year setting out the priorities for the Area over the coming year;
- (b) Developing and encouraging partnerships with local residents' associations, voluntary and community bodies and other stakeholder groups in the Area to consider matters of mutual interest;
- (c) Proposing variations to standard service delivery and to specifications for procurement within the remit of the Directorate of Place and Sustainability in order to reflect local needs and aspirations subject to these variations being consistent with agreed budgets and legally possible;
- (d) To monitor and make proposals for improvements to the physical environment and street scene of neighbourhoods and to consider the impact at a neighbourhood level of strategic policies to develop services;
- (e) Being consulted, and making recommendations to the Cabinet, about potential items for inclusion in the Local Implementation Plan, indicating priorities as between schemes which meet the Borough-wide criteria and making recommendations on the detailed design of such schemes;

- (f) Being consulted, and making recommendations to the Borough Commander, about local police priorities for promoting Community Safety;
- (g) Making recommendations to the full Council on the introduction of by-laws to have effect in the Wards covered by the Area Committee. Wherever possible proposed by-laws should be consistent with the model by-laws on that matter issued by central government;
- (h) Being consulted informally about applications under the Licensing Act 2003 and the Gambling Act 2005. Only Ward Councillors (and local residents and businesses) will be “interested parties” with a right to make relevant representations under these Acts but the Area Committee can make its views known informally to Ward Councillors;
- (i) Being consulted and making representations about (i) applications under other non-executive licensing and regulatory legislation, (ii) planning applications, and (iii) proposed changes to parking controls and traffic calming measures;
- (j) Exercising the powers of the Local Planning Authority to adopt, revise and revoke Local Development Orders under section 61A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and overseeing all procedural steps including local consultation;
- (k) Making arrangements to hold a pre-planning application presentation at a normal Area Committee meeting, on schemes that have formally entered the Council’s Pre-Planning Application Advice Service;
- (l) Monitoring and making recommendations to develop the system of Area Based Working for service delivery;
- (m) Undertaking Area Studies about issues of concern to local residents;
- (n) Considering recommendations and concerns raised during the public forum element of the meeting;
- (o) Considering and taking action in any way relating to, or connected with, the above matters and recommending amendments to the Protocol on Area Committees.

Area Committee meetings shall commence with an open public forum, intended to act as a consultative discussion for local people and their Ward

Councillors on all issues affecting, or relevant to, the Council and service delivery.

Area Committees and Urgency

Where there is a need for urgent decisions, or representations in response to consultation, to be made between scheduled meetings of an Area Committee the Chair shall be responsible for taking those actions. Action taken by the Area Committee Chair shall be reported for noting to the next meeting of the Area Committee.