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| To: Area Committees    | Subject: Decentralisation: Review Of Progress |
| From: Chief Executive  |   |
| Date: 1 September 1998 | Ref: CE012/023                                |

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Area Committees of the arrangements for the first annual review of decentralisation and enable them to consider how they wish to contribute to the review by responding to a number of issues and questions..
- 1.2 The Council approved its decentralisation scheme along with proposals for the first stage of implementation in February 1997. The scheme envisages annual reviews of progress involving consultation with Area Committees and community forums and confirmed that the Policy and Resources (Community Development) Sub Committee is responsible for overseeing decentralisation.
- 1.3 At its meeting on 26 August 1998 the Policy and Resources (Community Development) Sub Committee agreed the arrangements for the review and these are summarised below. The review will be concluded at the meeting of the Sub-Committee on 25 November 1998.

## 2.0 Progress

- 2.1 Area Committees held their first meetings in August 1997 in accordance with the implementation timetable set out in the scheme. The Chief Executive appointed Liaison Directors for each area and the membership of Area Teams was settled shortly afterwards. The process of establishing community forums is still ongoing in most areas. Area profiles of needs, opportunities and resources are due to be produced by November 1998 and area strategies should follow. Area Committees have yet to consider the establishment of 'First-Stop-Shops'.

## 3.0 Review

- 3.1 The annual review of decentralisation requires to go further than simply identifying progress in establishing area structures and monitoring activity in relation to the initial tasks identified for Area Committees and Area Teams.
- 3.2 Decentralisation is not an end in itself. The Council has recognised decentralisation as a process of change to the political and management systems of the Council with the objectives of:
- bringing services and decision-making closer to the public where this will result in an improvement to the services;
  - enabling the public to influence and shape the design and delivery of services and the way the Council serves its community; and
  - providing more effective and responsive local government.

- 3.3 As well as considering the extent to which the Council has made progress towards these objectives the review should identify the opportunities for and the barriers to progress which can be realistically addressed over the next 12 months.
- 3.4 The following headings provide a framework for consideration by the Sub-Committee, Area Committees, Liaison Directors, Area Teams and the Corporate Management Team (The potential to seek a community view on decentralisation is limited until community forums are fully established and working with the Council to address local issues).
- Localisation
  - Integration
  - Devolved Management
  - Democratisation
  - Organisational Culture

(These headings are defined as dimensions of change and are described on page 9 of the Decentralisation Scheme)

- Area Committee status
- Area Committee remits
- Committee support and servicing
- Area planning and co-ordination
- Area Team composition
- Community Involvement
- Training and Support
- Resources

(These headings are elements of the Implementation Arrangements covered on pages 5 to 7 of the Scheme)

The review will also consider the role of the centre (as discussed on page 17 of the scheme).

#### **4.0 Practical Arrangements**

- 4.1 Based on the above framework and with a focus on the opportunities and barriers to progress over the next 12 months the Assistant Chief Executive (Operations) will co-ordinate internal consultation on the review and report to the Policy and Resources (Community Development) Sub Committee meeting in November. Area Committees are invited to contribute to the review at their meetings in September but the review timescale allows for the review to be considered at their subsequent meetings also.

#### **5.0 Issues for Area Committees**

- 5.1 Area Committees are invited to consider and comment on any aspect of decentralisation including opportunities for and barriers to progress which can be addressed over the next 12 months. The remit and terms of reference for Area Committees is attached as Appendix 1 of this report.
- 5.2 In particular Area Committees are asked to consider and respond to the following questions:
- *Remit*
    - 1) Which elements of the Committee's Remit and Terms of Reference has the Committee addressed so far?
    - 2) What changes (if any) should be made to the remit and terms of reference?

3) Does the Committee have access to sufficient support and resources to undertake its remit?

- *Support and Services*

4) How is the Committee being supported and serviced?

5) What changes (if any) should be made to the current arrangements?

- *Area Team*

6) In what ways has the Area Team assisted the Area Committee so far in pursuing its remit?

7) Has the Area Team contributed to better co-ordination of Council services and activities at an area or sub-area level?

- *Resources*

8) To what extent have 'departmental' resources being redeployed within the area to contribute to the implementation of decentralisation?

9) What level of financial resources do you consider will be required in the area to support community involvement and other developments in 1999/2000?

- *Community Involvement*

10) What progress has been made in establishing representative Community Forums?

11) How does the Committee plan to work with Community Forums in the coming year?

- *Achievements*

12) What have been the main achievements of the Committee so far?

13) What does the Area Committee hope to achieve over the next year?

## 5.0 Budgetary Issues

5.1 Area Committees should note that the Policy and Resources (Community Development) Sub Committee have agreed that a bid should be made for dedicated resources for decentralisation in the coming year.

## 6.0 Recommendations

6.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- (a) note the arrangements for reviewing decentralisation;
- (b) consider how to contribute to the review and how to respond to the questions set out in the report; and
- (c) otherwise note the contents of this report

  
 Chief Executive

## AREA COMMITTEES

APPENDIX 1

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

- (1) To discuss matters of local concern relative to the Council's activities and functions;
- (2) To consider and discuss the policy and operational arrangements affecting Council activities undertaken within the local area;
- (3) To consider issues remitted to them by the Council as a matter of particular consultation where there is a specific wish to ascertain the wishes of the community;
- (4) To consider and make suggestions as to the needs of the area concerning services which are the responsibility of the Council;
- (5) To develop and update an area profile including local needs, opportunities, issues and resources;
- (6) To establish and support representative community forums as one mechanism for consultation and community involvement and to develop effective working relationships with them;
- (7) To support local community groups and voluntary organisations and provide a focus for participation and partnership involving the Council, the local community, the private and voluntary sectors and other public bodies;
- (8) To make decisions in respect of requests for financial assistance under the Community Grants Scheme and other schemes of grant remitted to Area Committees by the Council and to administer Area Development budgets;
- (9) To assist the Council in developing twinning links with any authority with which the Council has agreed a formal twinning scheme and which has been traditionally or generally associated with the area of the Committee, and
- (10) To carry out further functions as determined by the Policy and Resources (Community Development) Sub-Committee.