

Subject:	Localism Act - implementation		
Date of Meeting:	10th January 2012		
Report of:	Strategic Director Resources		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Elizabeth Culbert	Tel: 29-1515
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Ward(s) affected:	All		

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 This report provides Members with the available information in relation to implementation arrangements for the Localism Act.
- 1.2 The report also sets out the proposed arrangements for the programme of work required for the Council to change its governance arrangements in accordance with the decision of full council on 15th December 2011.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Governance Committee notes the information contained in the report.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 The Localism Act (the Act) received Royal Assent on 15th November 2011. Members have received reports at previous meetings of Governance Committee explaining the key provisions in the Act, which cover significant changes to public services on a wide range of issues including planning, housing and governance.
- 3.2 The Act is coming into force in stages:- some elements are already in force, others have a known commencement date and some are awaiting regulations or have no commencement date yet identified. In order to assist Members in keeping up to date with the current position on the implementation arrangements, a table is attached at Appendix One which summarises the key provisions in the Act and their commencement dates where these are known. This document will be kept updated and is accessible to Members on the Council's intranet.
- 3.3 One issue of particular interest to Governance Committee, is the ability introduced by the Act for councils to choose to operate under an executive or committee structure. On 15th December 2011, full council agreed in principle to change its governance arrangements to a committee system with effect from Annual Council in May 2012.
- 3.4 Officers have been instructed to prepare detailed proposals for a committee system and to bring the proposals to Governance Committee for consideration prior to full council approval. Officers will work with a Member Working Group and the Leaders Group to develop the proposals. A timetable for this programme

of work is attached at Appendix Two for information. Design principles will be put to the Leaders Group on 9th January which could include, for example:-

- Forward looking Identifying new ways to operate a committee system which may include incorporating some features of an executive system that have been successful;
- Efficiency Ensuring the council has the capability to make decisions quickly in response to changing circumstances and the developing needs and aspirations of local communities;
- Transparency Ensuring that anyone who has dealings with the council can easily determine who is responsible for decisions and how best to make representations to that person/body;
- Accountability Enabling people to find out about decisions which have been taken;
- Robustness Ensuring that the decision making arrangements meet the legislative requirements and therefore stand up to external scrutiny;
- Sustainability Seeking to ensure that the cycle of meetings involves a manageable workload for councillors and officers and attracts councillors with a range of backgrounds and commitments;
- Affordability Ensuring that the council can meet the costs of the structure in allowances paid to members and in officer support.

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

4.1 This report is for information only at this stage.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

5.1 The financial implications of provisions not yet commenced, including proposals for a committee system, will be considered as they are reported prior to commencement.

Finance Officer Consulted: Anne Silley

Date:21/12/11

Legal Implications:

5.2 Legal implications are addressed in the body of the report and Appendix One.

Lawyer Consulted Elizabeth Culbert

Date: 20/12/11

Equalities Implications:

5.3 None at this stage

Sustainability Implications:

5.4 None at this stage

Crime & Disorder Implications:

5.5 None at this stage

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

5.6 None at this stage

Public Health Implications:

5.7 None at this stage

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

5.8 None at this stage

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Localism Act – summary table
2. Constitutional change work programme

Documents in Members' Rooms

1. None

Background Documents

1. None

