

Desktop Evaluation Report: Assessment of new Associate Cabinet Member roles from July 2014 to March 2016

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to review and evaluate the roles of the newly created Associate Cabinet Members (ACMs) that were introduced by the present administration in July 2014. The contents of the evaluation will provide an overview of the activities involving the ACMs thus far and provide a reflection point to prompt improvement planning for the remainder of the lifetime of the administration.

Executive Summary

When reviewing the evidence contained in the regular reports received from ACMs the following conclusions can be drawn in respect of the key identified areas associated with the roles when they were established.

- **Area based partnership working and sub-borough regeneration** – the ACMs have successfully supported sub-borough regeneration activity in their respect areas, chairing partnership/board meetings and ensuring progress has been made against key milestones. ACMs have also been active in helping to support targeted public health initiatives in their respective areas.
- **Support to Cabinet** – the ACMs have provided support to Cabinet both in terms of helping deliver key strategic messages as part of their ACM roles and supporting key borough-wide initiatives such as Cycle Enfield and budget consultation.
- **Supporting democratic engagement** – All ACMs have been actively involved in supporting and facilitating the new style ward forums with regular appearances at ward forums to support ward level Member working.
- **Supporting area specific planning activity** – ACMs have taken a leading role in helping to engage local communities on planning related engagement such as that focusing on local plans/core strategy. They have also provided a focal point for local groups wishing to feedback on proposals, linking into the teams within the local authority who are developing our planning agenda. There has also been some excellent work done to support the development of our 'Friends of Parks' groups in the borough
- **Participation in the Enfield Strategic Partnership** – there has been an ACM presence at the annual ESP Partnership Board meetings.

1 Method of review

The evaluation at 'mid-point' in the administrative cycle is desktop and limited to a) an analysis of the documentation produced by the ACMs during their tenure to 31st

March 2016, and b) a review of associated correspondence and observations made by the lead supporting officer in his role as ensuring associated process is adhered to. The evaluation is carried out by the Head of Strategy, Partnerships, Engagement and Consultation.

The analysis will consider the evidence of supporting outcomes associated with the roles when created through the Cabinet Report (CR: 01) in June 2014.

2 Background – Extract from Cabinet Report, June 2014

The following extract is taken from the original Cabinet Report agreed by Council in June 2014 that established the ACM role as part of a wider overhaul of democratic engagement services.

“3.7 Creation of 3 Associate Cabinet Members (ACMs)

This approach would be highly innovative and give the Council the opportunity to think in a more dynamic and cross-cutting way.

The selection of ACMs would be determined via the Annual Council process and drawn from the majority party, with a ward councillor from each of the three geographical areas (as described below). The ACMs will also be invited to attend Cabinet meetings, but they will not be executive members or have voting rights. This adapts an approach to extend involvement and enhance cross cutting activity that has been implemented by other local authorities. ACMs can act as Council spokespersons and be quoted or featured in publicity where it relates to their responsibility on the Council.

3.7.1 Coverage - spatial area

It is recommended that the ACMs be responsible for geographically defined areas that reflect a strategically relevant spatial approach. This would mean members being assigned with responsibilities for areas covering Enfield North, Enfield South East and Enfield West.

Each of these spatial areas has active area based regeneration partnerships that would be chaired by the relevant ACMs. The transformation of these areas will be critical to the long term achievement of our strategic objectives for the borough and form a crucial element of the new ACM remit.

A map showing the proposed areas can be found at Appendix 1.(this is attached to the Cabinet update report)

3.7.2 Main duties

- **Chairing Area Based Partnerships and membership of Enfield Strategic Partnership**

Each ACM will be responsible for chairing their respective area based regeneration partnership which will meet quarterly, ensuring that strategic objectives are being met and supporting the ongoing work programme. The ACMs would also take a seat on the Enfield

Strategic Partnership Board (ESP), ensuring that any matters that require assistance from the ESP or other partners are acted upon.

- **Provide a focal point for Members issues within their geographical split and include these issues in regular reports into Cabinet/Council**

ACMs will provide a focal point for the Members within the wards covered in their areas and coordinate a reporting function that can be the basis for reporting into Cabinet/Council/ESP. Protocols will be developed to enable ACMs to support Members in ward focussed work.

- **Develop a portfolio of work (work programme) that reflects the character of the area being championed including coordination of cross-ward issues**

The ACMs will be expected to gain a full understanding of the issues and dynamics at play within their spatial area, working with ward members to identify priority needs, coordinating cross-ward issues and lobbying internally and externally on behalf of residents. A mechanism will be developed to ensure regular reporting into Cabinet.

- **Promote the new approach to ward level engagement by Members**

The ACMs will be expected to be at the vanguard of new ways of working for the wider elected membership, providing support to Members in their wards and helping to escalate issues raised where appropriate.

- **Liaison with planning activity in the area being championed**

The ACMs would be expected to be a contact point for local strategic planning issues, and provide support/advice to relevant Cabinet Members. This would not extend to involvement in particular development control applications to maintain the independence of the Planning Committee.

- **Encourage and facilitate liaison with other spatial work being delivered by partner statutory agencies**

The ACM would also develop a robust network of contacts across all statutory agencies to ensure that joint working and information sharing was evident in their designated areas.

3.7.3 Evaluation of Impact of ACMs at 18 months

This is an innovative proposal and it is recommended that a full evaluation of the impact made by implementing the ACM approach is carried out after 18 months and presented to Cabinet (early 2016).

3.7.4 The award of an SRA allowance to ACMs

It is appropriate that an SRA allocation is made to those carrying out this work. This has been set at £7,608 per annum, a level that is in keeping with other local authorities who adopted a similar approach to extending the strategic involvement of Members. “

This framework for ACM working had remained intact for the duration of time considered in this report and is the basis for considering how the roles have been delivered in the first 18 months of their tenure.

The councillors appointed to the 3 positions in July 2014 were as follows:

Cllr O Uzoanya (Enfield North)
Cllr B Charalambous (Enfield West)
Cllr G Savva (Enfield South East)

The ACM personnel have remained constant for the duration of the new arrangements with the exception of the ACM for Enfield North when Cllr Uzoanya was succeeded by Cllr V Pite in May 2015.

Template based reporting mechanism

Template based twice yearly reporting returns have been the basis upon which ACM activity has been recorded. These have then been collated and attached to regular Cabinet 'updates'. As mentioned the content of these returns form the bulk of the material for this evaluation.

3 Commentary and Analysis

The format of the templates has enabled a commentary and analysis to be carried out against each of the main areas assigned to the roles.

- **Area based partnership working and sub-borough regeneration** – the evidence indicates that ACMs have successfully supported sub-borough regeneration activity in their respect areas, chairing partnership/board meetings and ensuring progress has been made against key milestones. ACMs have also been active in helping to support targeted public health initiatives in their respective areas. Some typical examples of positive outcomes in this area include:
 - Supporting outcomes related to increasing energy efficiency and achieving Sustainability outcomes (Enfield 2020)
 - Involvement in developing response and influencing the Cross Rail 2 proposals
 - Cycle Enfield and wider traffic management issues (including CPZ)
 - Neighbourhood regeneration plans for hot spots in the borough

- **Support to Cabinet Governance** – the ACMs have provided support to Cabinet Members both in terms of helping deliver key strategic messages as part of their ACM roles and supporting key borough-wide initiatives such as Cycle Enfield and budget consultation. Some examples of supporting activity can be evidenced in the following portfolio areas:
 - Housing
 - Environment
 - Public Health
 - Community Safety
 - Adult Social Care

- **Supporting democratic engagement** – All ACMs have been actively involved in supporting and facilitating the new style ward forums with regular appearances at ward forums to support ward level Member working. The returns show evidence that this has been a regular feature of the ACM working in all 3 sub-areas over the past 18 months.

- **Supporting area specific planning activity** – ACMs have taken a leading role in helping to engage local communities on planning related engagement such as that focusing on local plans/core strategy. They have also provided a focal point for local groups wishing to feedback on proposals, linking into the teams within the local authority who are developing our planning agenda. Some typical examples of positive outcomes in this area include:
 - Supporting the development of the Local Plans
 - Support to master planning exercises in Edmonton/Enfield Town
 - North Circular Road Area Action Plan

- **Participation in the Enfield Strategic Partnership** – there has been an ACM presence at the annual ESP Partnership Board meetings. Given the fact that only two meetings of the ESP Partnership Board have taken place since the commencement of the ACM roles, there has been a limited amount of demonstrable evidence of influence although ACMs have been supportive in the decision making process attached to awarding further funding to the flagship Parent Engagement Panel and in one instance (Enfield North), supplementary outcomes associated with public health issues being tackled in local wards have been informed through participation at the annual meetings and all ACMs in attendance have been able to increase their own organisational network by participating in the agenda.

4 Assessment of the periodic reporting process

Whilst the formal reporting requirement attached to the roles has now expired, if the exercise were to be repeated there could be some changes made to modernise the reporting process. To assist with the timeliness of completions and returns

consideration could be given to how technology can assist ACMs to complete their returns in 'real time' by providing 'cloud capacity' that can be accessed via their tablets that can then be saved and then a reminder can be placed into the IT system that will automatically send the reports to the compiling officer for analysis and inclusion with the next set of Cabinet Reports.

5 Conclusions

The evaluation has shown that the new roles have been able to add value to how the Council operates on a number of levels and that positive outcomes associated with all main duties associated with the new roles can be evidenced.

The continuation of this innovative approach and the tasks attached to the role of ACM should provide further positive assistance to cabinet governance and democratic engagement. As the Council continues to evolve its approach there could be an opportunity to view ACMs as champions to help embed emerging Council programmes such as 'Enfield Connected' in the community over the remaining years of the current Administration.

The Head of Strategy, Partnerships, Engagement and Consultation remains available to support the coordination of the ACM roles when required.