APPENDIX D

Role of Area Boards in providing Local Challenge, and their Relationship with the Overview and Scrutiny function of the Council.

A significant role for the Area Boards is to exercise local challenge of services delivered by the council, its partners and other agencies.

It does so by inviting the appropriate representatives to make submissions and be questioned at meetings of the Board with a view to achieving awareness, influence and improvements in services.

It will report its findings and recommendations to the appropriate body which, in the case of the Council, will be the relevant Executive Cabinet Member and Service Director. A formal response will be given to the Area Board within (28 days?) for further consideration.

If the Board remain dissatisfied then a referral to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the Council is possible, setting out the action taken to date and the reasons, with evidence, for the decision to refer. It will be for the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee to decide what action, if any, to take and to report back as appropriate to the Area Board. The fact that an Area Board simply does not agree with the decision/response of a Cabinet Member and/or Service Director will not be acceptable grounds for referral.

Should the issue under Local Challenge be cross-cutting or have implications for the budget or policy framework of the Council, or contractual / agreement implications for the partner or agency then the matter can be referred early with the available evidence, to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee to undertake a review. Again, it will be for the Committee to determine how to respond to the request and the level of action it intends to take.

Within the remit of Local Challenge will be the formal process of local petitions and calls for action by local councillors. These will, in the first instance, be received by the Area Board and a view taken which will accompany the petition or call for action during its formal consideration by the Council, and Overview and Scrutiny in the case of calls for action. The process for handling these formal mechanisms is set out in the constitution.

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