

# Renewing Kingston's Democracy - Putting the Resident into Power

## Report by the Leader of the Council

### 1.0 Introduction

This Report puts forward a number of proposals for consideration by the Council which are designed to help improve the way in which the Council works and adapts to the changing Environment in which it operates, so as to improve our engagement with residents, partners and Local Businesses. The recommendations which give effect to the proposals are set out at the end of the report.

### 2.0 Background and Diagnosis

#### 2.1 The changing role of a Council

Local Government is changing. It is changing not just because we are driven by austerity to make changes but because there is a new mood within the minds of residents about the types and means of interactions they have with the Council and its Councillors.

The Council can no longer be immune to that change, but has to recognise that disillusionment with public institutions will continue for as long as we do not allow the 'public voice' to better permeate the 'Council ear'.

Last Autumn's 'All in One Survey' demonstrated further how people want more of a say in the manner in which their services are run and decisions taken. This is not just about methods of consultation but about how we as a Council see the communities in which we live and how we seek to engage with them or let them have that voice in what we do.

Councils clearly have legal obligations and some of the bodies we currently have need to be there by law - decision making committees and statutory and regulatory committees. Beyond that we have ultimate flexibility to set up whatever structure we believe best suits the needs of local people.

A recent Civica report (from which some of this thinking is drawn) recently determined that there were four main themes that a Council in 2025 needs to adapt to:

- **The changing citizen** - the changing demography, but also changing expectations about what and how services are delivered.
- **The role of the Council** - Not just a commissioner of services but a diagnoser of need, using data to derive citizen insight and conversation to understand actions. Acting as the Guardian of the community.
- **Staff, skills, partnerships and resources** - the changing landscape will require new skills from staff as we move into a more commercially driven and complex environment that is fractured across many newly formed partners.
- **Pervasive technology** - Digital public services are not just the future they are here now. Much of the frustration with public services is because of the lack of digitisation and engagement as evidenced by public concerns over the Council website. The 2025 Council needs to be at the front of development in this field and not in the rear.

In Kingston we have applied similar thinking to defining our ideas about how our Sovereign Council should work and the role of Members as:

- Champions of Place
- Setters of Vision
- Holders of Democratic Accountability

Too much of our attention and energy is drawn into the apparatus of decision making and its panoply of meetings. For the future, our focus will be more outside the Guildhall and its formal meetings and on how we interact with our Partners, Businesses and Residents to achieve our shared vision for Kingston.

The role of this document is to look at how best our Council can adapt to these needs and structure itself in a way that is best able to deliver the future of Kingston.

## **2.2 Where are we now?**

### **2.2.1 Full Council**

Full Council has lost its purpose. In part this is due to the original shift to an Executive model of Governance but since returning to the Committee system it still has yet to attain some authority and relevance.

It has also become adrift through an agenda that bears little relevance to the priorities of the Borough, but more to the political machination of the various groups. When people look to a sovereign body for answers, they expect the Full Council to be scrutinising the administration and holding to account decision makers. When there is overall control, and the committee system is looking at detailed scrutiny of decisions as they are made, the Full Council should be looking at the strategic direction of the Borough.

#### **Annual Council**

This has a legal duty and purpose to appoint the Mayor and to look at the allocation of responsibilities for the coming year.

#### **Budget Council**

Has a duty to set the budget and, whilst by the time of this meeting 99.9% of the budget is agreed, this meeting occupies itself with trying to reallocate those small remaining sums on which there is more political than Council objective setting.

Beyond these meetings Full Council has little role in the governance of the Council or in allowing the residents of Kingston an opportunity for engagement. This needs to change.

### **2.2.2 Committees**

The committee system has many advantages in the management of the Council but little role in the public holding the Council to account. Whilst residents rarely attend committee meetings that, in itself, should not be seen as a measure of their success.

The real issue around committees is that they rarely do the in-depth analysis of decisions or discuss options. They tend to fall into partisan decision taking and we need to review their terms of operation. The question to answer is how we ensure there is swift decision making but also the ability to hold the administration to account.

We equally need to understand how we shape the future committees to embrace a new culture where we work with and alongside partner organisations in decision making. Councils should rarely be taking decisions alone.

A recent Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) Peer Review has also raised some issues around where HWB and Health Overview Panel (HOP) sits within this new environment and how we can best help them take holistic decisions.

### **2.2.3 Neighbourhoods**

The present neighbourhood system was introduced by the Lib Dem administration of 1994 when they were first composed of seven neighbourhoods. They were designed as a first step towards a federal form of Local Government. Similar experiments had been tried in Tower Hamlets.

Inherent in the system is a conflicting unilateral federalism within a single legal Borough. Councillors are elected to the Council and not to a neighbourhood, they represent their ward residents in decisions affecting the whole Borough. It is also the case that they have never secured the greater interaction with residents that was always expected by this artificial devolving of power from the Guildhall to the neighbourhoods. Unless a neighbourhood agenda item directly affects a resident there is no reason for them to attend a meeting and apart from the regular attendance of a very small number of residents (usually attached to political parties or Residents Associations), they are no greater advocates of place and engagement than the committees they sought to replace.

The Neighbourhood system as it currently operates misses the point claimed for it by its proponents. 'Decision making closer to the people', it was asserted, would bring about greater engagement. It has not. The formal structure of committee meetings, however adapted, is not the means to achieve engagement. We need to look elsewhere for answers. We need to listen, interact and engage with people where they are, on their terms in the ways that are now open to us all. Change is needed and this Administration will bring it about.

In July 2014 I threw down the gauntlet to Neighbourhoods to use their existing powers, and the additional powers given to them, to engage better with the whole community, particularly with Schools and the Health sectors. In November 2014 I again challenged Neighbourhood Committees to take a proactive Community Leadership role in their local community.

Surprisingly, the previous Lib Dem administration withdrew some powers from Neighbourhoods in areas where they were actually being quite effective e.g. Parks. Since 1994 financial responsibility has been reduced, as has some direct decision/influencing opportunities over key front line services; Green Spaces (Parks and Trees), Waste, Street Cleansing and Youth Centres. This has led to a focus on Neighbourhood Planning and Highway Schemes which now dominate meetings. The localism agenda is a key part of our philosophy and we need to find a way to reinvigorate the neighbourhoods not destroy them.

### **Highways and traffic**

Neighbourhood highway budgets are too small to be really effective in delivering the needs of the highways. It also means that strategic needs are not always addressed in the most sensible manner. But it is also the case that there can be a tendency for neighbourhood wide decisions being taken that in essence are strategic in that they affect a wider area than just the single neighbourhood. We need to review the boundaries between what is and what is not a neighbourhood decision.

## **Lack of Vision and imagination**

Due to their size the neighbourhoods tend to lack a vision for the whole area and the fact that they are often one party states means there is little effective challenge or scrutiny to what is done.

## **Local Planning Issues**

In recent times the Neighbourhoods seem to have lost their way in this area. Whilst acting as a sounding board for large strategic applications is a useful purpose, spending significant officer time on taking to committee small applications with little objection is not a sensible or rational use of money in a time of austerity. There is not even a democratic argument to justify this use of money. There is nothing to stop them taking planning decisions here, but new rules need to be established.

## **Strategic assets**

All neighbourhoods have been given 'control' of some of the assets within their local area. This is somewhat of a phantom responsibility because whilst they apparently have responsibility for the budget they cannot make changes to the strategic approach of the wider Council. A classic example of this is Kingston Town Centre where despite it being a key Borough wide asset it currently only reports to the Kingston Town Neighbourhood. The strategic importance of the town centre to the wider Council is fundamental.

This also leads to complications with regard to working with partners as they are unclear with whom to deal when wanting to bring investment or change to areas within neighbourhoods.

## **Acting on local issues**

Where neighbourhoods were successful in the past was in identifying and acting on local issues not always in the remit of the Council. There has been little evidence of this being the case today.

## **Grants**

Whilst there is a useful element for neighbourhoods in engaging with voluntary organisations in their area the only way they currently do this is through the distribution of small grants. These grants are rarely spent in full and there is a debate to be had about how we might better create a link between Councillors and voluntary organisations through this small grants scheme.

## **2.3 Conclusion**

Neighbourhoods have made the mistake of believing that 'the committee' and its decision making is their role when in fact it is community engagement and capacity building that should be the role. Engaging the public was the whole point of the neighbourhoods and yet they fail to do that on a level that is consistent and understandable. Residents do not want to attend meetings that are impossible to understand or participate in. They want a voice in the discussion and having given that voice they may well be prepared to better accept decisions with which they do not agree. Neighbourhoods need to be about the resident and no longer about the Council and to do that they need to move out of the formal and legal straitjacket in which we have entwined them. Residents are very confused as to why sometimes they can engage with the meeting and at other times they cannot.

## **3.0 A New Democracy**

### **3.1 Full Council**

Can we ever change Full Council to make it relevant to the people who live here? Probably not. However, it needs to be relevant again to the system of governance we adopt; the committee system. We therefore need to find a way of ensuring it is seen as the central node of the Council where important strategic issues are debated and where the future long-term aspects of the Council are scrutinised.

#### **Reports from Committees**

We should restore this aspect of Council agenda that existed before we transferred to the Executive model and gave the opportunity for each committee to present to the Council the key activities and decisions that it had made during the preceding cycle of meetings. Committees reporting in this way will not only include Strategic committees but also neighbourhood committees. The reports from committees should be presented by the Chairman of the Committee and report on the key issues that were agreed within the committee. Questions can be asked but Reports from Committees will be limited to a 15 minute slot on the agenda.

However, there may be items where Committees decide that, notwithstanding the requisition process, that the matter in discussion is of such strategic and public importance that it wishes to refer those items to Full Council. This would need a majority decision of the Committee.

#### **Council cycle**

We should have a Full Council meeting at the end of each cycle of Committee meetings but also some should be themed. We are required to have a Budget Council meeting and an Annual council but we should also look to introduce within the cycles:

- **State of the Borough Debate**

We will restore the annual State of the Borough debate. However this time we will manage this in a much more proactive way, picking a single theme on which the debate should be based and allowing external speakers who have experience in the area being considered to come and participate. We could have motions arising from this which enact new Council policy.

- **The Community Debate**

We should allow groups in the community to come forward with suggestions for community debates. The debate would be opened by members of the community and the role of Councillors will be to respond to the propositions put forward and to decide whether they wish to accept a motion on the issue. The motion will be from the community and the debate led by the community. This process will recognise that we do not have all the ideas and that we are partners with residents in delivering and shaping our services. Two areas where this procedure would not be possible are in matters relating to planning and licensing applications.

The debate could be stimulated by the use of the online petitions system, however, residents would need support in how to frame a motion for debate before having residents sign up to call for a motion to be debated. The current 500 signature threshold for petitions to Council would apply.

#### **Streaming Council meetings**

Subject to final approval on costs, we will stream all relevant meetings; Council, Strategic Committees and other appropriate meetings when they are held at the Guildhall. We can look at future rollouts to neighbourhoods.

## **Questions**

At the beginning of each Question time there would be the availability of 3 Questions to the Leader given orally and not in writing. These will be offered to each of the parties on the Council and where there was not a third opposition party the main opposition would have 2 questions. Following this the question time would proceed as normal with pre-submitted questions.

## **Motions**

This would continue as before but they will alternate between the administration and the opposition and only a single motion will be debated.

## **Topical Statements**

This would be removed from the Council agenda.

## **3.2 Portfolios**

New portfolios will be formed and are shown in the diagram referred to below (Annex 1) that depicts the new Committee structure.

As well as providing a Portfolio Holder, this system envisages a supportive role of a Lead Member, there to support the Portfolio Holder where there are specific needs or projects the Administration wishes to pursue.

## **3.3 Committees**

We need to move from the current process and agenda driven committees to a structure based more on the needs of the Borough. With this in mind, there are to be four main themes for our strategic committee structure:

- Treasury
- Residents
- Growth
- Wellbeing

### **- Treasury**

This Committee will address the needs of our finances but also manage the wider Partnerships of the Council, particularly as we move towards Health Integration, as well as Community Safety.

### **- Residents**

This Committee will deal with those services that almost all residents will require to access or will identify the Council with, as well as the very important future issue of Resident Participation.

### **- Growth**

This Committee will address the needs of the Growth agenda and how it impacts on Kingston. Regeneration, Housing, Skills, Business and the wider tools of Growth (Culture, Arts, Leisure, Libraries and Heritage)

## **- Wellbeing**

The long-term aim is that we have a single Wellbeing committee that addresses the health and social care of all Kingston residents. It is our aim to achieve this by the beginning of the next Civic year in May 2016. However, as we progress towards this, we have brought together Adults and Children's Care services as well as Public Health into a single committee whilst we engage with our Health partners in working through the options for next year. This will be a cohesive and strategic approach to the future provision and in the longer term give our health partners a role in taking decisions that affect wider Wellbeing. The HWB will continue and the Health Overview Panel will become more closely aligned with it, whilst maintaining its independent scrutiny role.

**Annex 1** sets out diagrammatically the new Committee structure and, within that, the content of the new Portfolios.

In order to streamline agendas and ensure that meetings can concentrate on strategic matters, information items and update reports will in most cases now be reported through a pack of information papers to be circulated regularly, in electronic form, to all Members and published on the Council's website. Arrangements will be made to ensure that reports presented in this way can be referred to Committee by Members, if required.

## **3.4 Neighbourhoods**

Community leadership is the key requisite if the neighbourhoods are to continue.

They need some powers restored that were taken away and new methodologies for engagement and decision making.

New terms of reference for Neighbourhood Committees are attached as **Annex 2**.

All neighbourhoods must develop a community plan and work with residents on community planning frameworks where there is demand. Their main activities will cover the following:

### **3.4.1 Community engagement, empowerment and communications**

1. Promoting the Neighbourhood as the place where people want to live, work, play and be educated, a place they are happy to call home.
2. Overseeing community engagement / consultation / feedback – Annual Community Engagement Plan
3. Identifying community priorities and creating a Community Plan
4. Act as advocates for the community (civic pride)
5. Encourage community self-help schemes/good neighbours/volunteering
6. Support the enabling, empowering and influencing by communities
7. Giving the community a voice
8. Promote and engage the Voluntary Sector on community issues
9. Promote and engage local business wellbeing and support local economic regeneration
10. Community Grants - A Councillor Community Grants scheme. All NH grants will be pooled and, in effect, allocated by individual Councillors through a community promotion scheme.
11. Communications - Promotions, advertising and social networking, better use of social media etc. newsletters – Communications Plan available to all.
12. Support local venues and services to deliver what residents need.
13. Receiving Neighbourhood service data to improve services.

## **-Community safety**

1. Support community safety – Neighbourhood Watch and Anti-Social Behaviour campaigns and initiatives
2. Fire Safety initiatives

## **-Local environment**

1. Street based issues
2. Highways / footways maintenance/cleansing and monitoring (also Snow Angels schemes and similar leaf clearance etc.)
3. Community Greenspace – Parks/ Conservation / Green Spaces / Trees etc.

## **-Health**

1. Local health provision, campaigns and GP engagement – Health and Wellbeing/
2. Public Health
3. Culture - Arts, sports and play at a local level – Self-help.

## **-Young people**

1. Education engagement - Children, Schools and youth within the community
2. Playgrounds in parks
3. Employment – opportunities and initiatives
4. Role Of Ward Councillors
5. Provide strong and effective Leadership
6. Encourage local residents to be engaged in local decision making
7. Understanding the communities they represent
8. Build capacity and resilience in the communities
9. Putting the Community first and politics second

### **3.4.2 Budget**

The Neighbourhood Community Committee should continue to oversee local spend, hold service areas to account and to support local communities to access and apply for external funding streams to benefit community initiatives. However, they must be budgets that are directly and solely in the control of the neighbourhood and where that is not the case neighbourhoods should have those budgets removed from their budgeting process. A good example of this is with regard to library budgets. This does not prevent Neighbourhoods investing in libraries if they wish to. However budgets are not essential to Ward Councillors or Officers delivering their Community Leadership responsibilities and engaging with the community.

### **3.4.3 Powers**

To decide on:

1. planning decisions up to 10 units of accommodation and where ten or more residents object; the relevant 3 ward Councillors will be able to agree to refer an application to Committee
2. Highways and traffic matters where they involve single roads
3. Powers over parks to be restored
4. Phantom powers over the youth service and libraries to be removed.

### **3.4.4 Neighbourhood Grants**

The Neighbourhood grants scheme will be abolished and replaced with a discretionary community grants scheme. Each Councillor or ward will be allocated an amount that can be awarded to Community projects without recourse to proposals or outcomes. This will be used for small community projects and spent in consultation with Neighbourhood Managers under delegated powers. Councillors could pool spending if they wish.

### **3.4.5 Neighbourhood Meetings**

There are currently up to 9 neighbourhood meetings timetabled per year for each neighbourhood. The new format will require a different neighbourhood meeting format.

- 5 decision making meetings per year
- 3 themed Community Forum meetings per year
- up to 2 street forums per year per ward

At **Annex 3** a revised municipal calendar shows how these and other Council and Committee meetings will be arranged for the rest of the current year.

### **-Neighbourhood Decision Making meetings**

#### **Planning**

Resident led call in of planning applications. Up to 10 units of accommodation but 10 or more objections required before it goes to neighbourhood. Where all three of the relevant ward Councillors wish to call in the application to the committee for decision, they should be allowed to do so, citing planning reasons for doing so.

Applications without 10 objectors will be decided under delegated powers in consultation with the Chairman, on advice from planning officers.

#### **Highways and Traffic Schemes**

Traffic measures can be taken by neighbourhoods for single roads but not area wide issues. Any area wide schemes need to be proposed by the neighbourhoods to the relevant strategic committee for agreement and after consultation with all relevant neighbourhood committees. In reality we may develop a process similar to that with LIP where projects of an area wide scheme can be proposed but agreement would need to be made by the new Residents committee.

### **-Community Forums**

Community Forums would provide the key focus for engagement, high visibility of the Council in the community, and enable Ward Members to act as Community Champions. The new format would allow flexibility and the ability to identify solutions to local needs working together with the community to resolve issues.

The Neighbourhood Forums should open membership to co-opt non-elected neighbourhood based members covering key areas such as Schools, Health, Doctors, Police, Residents Associations, Voluntary Sector and the local business community. In addition it should be easier for local groups/individuals to take part in debates when items of particular interest are being discussed, without the need to become a formal member of the committee.

Young people will need to be involved and this may be better addressed as a separate initiative that could have two way communications with the Community Forums, such as a young person's panel with maximised use of social media. Young people should be asked how they want to have their say.

Portfolio Holders/ Cabinet Members and partner agencies should use the Community Forums to present their vision and aspirations that will have an impact in the local area and get face to face engagement through them. Community Forums can then create their action plan/policy to meet the locally identified vision, working together to create a better neighbourhood to work, visit and live.

Community Forums would be held three times a year and would be themed around one area of concern to local people at each meeting. It could be:

- Parks and open spaces
- Anti social behaviour
- Planning e.g. back garden development
- Highways matters
- Environmental matters
- Caring for the vulnerable
- Policing
- Health

They will draw together Councillors with other community leaders who would sit on the panel. They would engage with:

- Schools
- Social care
- Resident associations
- Police
- Health providers

### **-Street forums**

Ward based street forums to be held up to twice a year in each ward. These forums would walk the ward engaging with residents on the streets and identifying where there are issues of concern regarding their neighbourhood.

### **3.4.6 Officers' Role**

Neighbourhood officers will continue to present reports relating to their service areas and they will be accountable for engaging and supporting communities as and when appropriate. A greater emphasis will be placed on tailoring reports to the community - officers can be very laborious and formal in presentation style when the more simple and plain approach provides much clearer messages and greater understanding /opportunity for two-way conversations. Neighbourhoods will be consulted on strategic planning issues but other strategic issues will be dealt with by the committee structure in order to limit the cost of duplication.

The Neighbourhood Managers role will need to change and be expanded. It will focus on the Neighbourhood Community Committees and lead on delivering the engagement, empowerment, capacity building and communications responsibilities.

They will support Councillors to be Community Leaders and the localism ethos of helping communities to help themselves. Their role will be to work in partnership, influence and negotiate with service areas, partners and the community to deliver the outcomes. They will work with external partners such as the Police, Health and voluntary and business sectors with an expectation they will contribute to a higher level than currently experienced.

Neighbourhood Rangers will work with the Neighbourhood Managers acting as the first force when it comes to community actions.

### **3.5 Honorary Aldermen**

The current system of Honorary Aldermen replaced a system based on Aldermen being able to sit unelected at Council meetings and participate in debate. Whilst it is clearly not desirable for Aldermen to have unelected power, there is clearly a value in giving Aldermen a role where they can use the knowledge of the Borough and the workings of Council to good effect as critical friends.

The proposal is for us to lift the ban on former Mayors becoming Aldermen and to move to offer such a post to each of the living former Mayors who wish to take up the position. Once we have appointed a number of Aldermen, we will then move to discussing any other opportunities there may be for the Aldermen to use their knowledge to support the Mayor and the wider Borough.

### **3.6 The Public Service Leaders Committee**

This will be an informal meeting of all CEO's of organisations who deliver public services across the area of Kingston held on a regular basis to explore cross-cutting areas where we can innovatively work together.

### **3.7 The Kingston Strategic Partnership**

This will remain the premier organisation for Strategic relationships although its role will be recast to a smaller number of meetings a year on a more conference based platform. Much of its work will move to the Health and Wellbeing Board as it moves to the wider Wellbeing agenda.

### **3.8 Councillor Recall**

Recall of MPs has been passed into law. One of our MPs has been a proponent of Recall as a democratic means of holding to account elected politicians when they do something that is fundamentally against the principles of behaviour as an elected Member.

It is proposed that a local Councillor Recall scheme be introduced in Kingston whereby in one or more of the following situations a Councillor would trigger a proposal and petition for recall:

- Attendance at meetings over a municipal year being less than 20% of those at which the member was expected at the point at which a petition is started
- Attendance at less than two full Council or less than two Neighbourhood Committee meetings within a year
- Conviction of a crime for which a prison sentence (whether suspended or not) has been imposed and the appeal period has expired without the sentence having been overturned
- Moving their main residence outside of the Borough

This cannot be forced upon any Member as it would require legislation. It is therefore proposed that this is adopted as non-statutory protocol, within the Council's Code of Conduct, which Members are requested to sign up to at the earliest opportunity upon taking office.

We would need to make provision for genuine illness but in a sense we need to trust the residents to avoid abuse of this.

Full details of the scheme are set out in **Annex 4**. The basic elements of the scheme would be that if one or more of the above criteria were met the Council's Monitoring Officer (not Councillor led) would consider the circumstances and whether a petition should be launched on the web site calling for the resignation of the Councillor concerned. Once launched such a petition would be live on the site for a period of three months.

Where at the end of that period a number of electors equivalent to 33% of the number of registered electors in the Ward on the day the petition was launched have validly signed the petition, there would be an expectation that the Councillor concerned would resign thereby triggering a by-election in which they could, of course, stand if they chose.

Of course, legislation already lays down provisions relating to the qualification(s) people must meet to be eligible for election as a Councillor and those circumstances under which they might be disqualified during their term of office. Failure to attend any meetings over a six month period would result in automatic disqualification in any event.

#### **4.0 Review**

Big changes, such as we are making, cannot always be perfect and we will review the procedures as we progress through the year and make changes as necessary. This is particularly relevant in the area of neighbourhoods and how agendas are managed during the transition to a smaller numbers of meetings and in the area of neighbourhood highways where we will review the parameters around what is a neighbourhood responsibility.

### **Recommendations**

It is **RECOMMENDED** to Council that, from 1 August 2015

#### **Full Council**

1. Standing Order Number 1 be amended to provide for the reinstatement of the annual State of the Borough Debate and the proposed Community Debate as additional Council meetings to be convened during the course of each municipal year.
2. Standing Order Number 9 (Reports to the Council) be amended to require all Strategic and Neighbourhood Committees to submit a report to each Council meeting on the business they have dealt with during that cycle of meetings. Part A of the report will detail any matters on which a decision of the Council is required (or requested) and Part B of the report will contain a selection of items of business dealt with by the Committee that the Chair considers will be of general interest to the Council.
3. An additional provision be added to Standing Order Number 6 (Questions and Topical Statements) to provide that, at every ordinary meeting of the Council, at the beginning of the 30 minute period set aside for Questions, there shall be an opportunity for Members of the Council to ask up to three questions in total of the Leader. No notice needs be given of such questions which shall be asked on the basis of one for each Party Group represented on the Council. In circumstances where there is no second Opposition Group, the main Opposition Group will have two of the three questions.

4. As a consequence of (3) above, the provision relating to Topical Statements be deleted from Standing Order No 6.
5. Paragraph (A)(5) of Standing Order Number 8 (Motions) be amended to provide that at any ordinary meeting of the Council only one motion shall be debated and that shall be alternated, from meeting to meeting, between motions submitted on behalf of the Administration and on behalf of Opposition Members, subject to the proviso that, as recently agreed, the minority opposition Group on the Council shall have the opportunity to put forward at least one such motion over the course of each Municipal Year.

### Portfolios

6. Standing Order Number 18 (Political office holders) be amended to provide that the Leader of the Council may appoint up to 10 Portfolio Holders (currently known as Lead Members) each with oversight of a portfolio of service areas/activities and that, for each Portfolio Holder, a Lead Member may be appointed to support the Portfolio Holder where there are specific needs or projects that the Administration wishes to pursue.

### Neighbourhoods

7. The remit of the Neighbourhood Committees be amended to provide more focus on their community leadership role and with revised terms of reference as set out in **Annex 2**.
8. The current Neighbourhoods Grants Scheme be discontinued and be replaced with a new Scheme whereby individual Councillors, through the relevant Neighbourhood Manager or other appropriate officer, would be able to award funds to community projects within the Ward (or neighbourhood) area on the same basis as agreed by the Policy and Finance Committee, on 2 July 2015, in relation to the administration of the small and emerging grants programme.
9. The arrangements for Neighbourhood Committee meetings be varied so that there would normally be five formal decision makings per year and three themed neighbourhood forum meetings; in addition there would be up to two street forums per year per ward.

### Committee Remits and Membership

10. The existing structure of Strategic Committees be revised to provide for the following, with the Councillor membership as indicated and remits (including portfolios) as detailed in **Annex 1**:
  - Treasury (Partnerships) -12 Councillors (7:4:1)
  - Residents -13 Councillors ( 7:5:1)\*
  - Growth - 13 Councillors (8:4:1)
  - Adults and Children's -12 Councillors (7:4:1)
11. No change be made to the role of the Health and Well Being Board at this time but work be undertaken, with Health partners, with a view to establishing a single Committee responsible for the health and social care of all Kingston residents, to be operative from the beginning of the 2016/17 municipal year. In the meantime the Councillor membership of the Board be increased to 7 members (4:2:1)

*\* assuming no change in proportionality following the Grove Ward by-election*

12. The membership of the Development Control Committee be increased from 10 to 11 members (7:4)
13. The Standards Committee be discontinued and its role be subsumed within that of the renamed Audit, Governance and Standards Committee.
14. The proposal to circulate Information items and update reports to Members, on a regular basis, and to be published on the Council's web site be agreed.
15. The revised Timetable of Meetings for the remainder of 2015/16 set out at **Annex 3** be approved.

#### Honorary Alderman

16. The current criteria for conferring the status of Honorary Alderman be amended to remove the exclusion on Councillors who have served as Mayor (though they would need to have met the 12 year service threshold).

#### Public Service Leaders Committee

17. Arrangements be made for periodic informal meetings involving the leaders of those organisations who deliver public services across the Borough to explore cross cutting areas and the scope for innovative collective working.

#### The Kingston Strategic Partnership

18. The Kingston Strategic Partnership remain the primary organisation within the borough for strategic relationships but with meetings taking place on a more conference based platform.

#### Councillor recall

19. The proposed arrangements set out in the report and the Scheme at **Annex 4** for introducing a Councillor Recall process be approved and the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee be given responsibility for oversight of the operation of the Scheme.
20. Representations be made to the Local Government Association, and via the Council's Members of Parliament, to seek the promotion of legislation for the introduction of a power of recall for local Councillors on a national basis.

#### Streaming Council meetings

21. The principle of "streaming" Council and other appropriate Guildhall based meetings be confirmed and a report be submitted to the appropriate Committee as soon as practicable on detailed implementation arrangements and costs.

#### General

22. The Head of Corporate Governance, in consultation with the three Party Leaders, be authorised to make any additional or consequential amendments to the Council's Constitution to give effect to the foregoing changes; this to include any adjustments to the proportionality arising from the outcome of the Grove Ward by-election.
23. The Director of Finance be authorised to make any necessary adjustments to the Council's Budget to reflect the foregoing decisions.