South of the Borough Neighbourhood Committee
8 October 2015

Neighbourhoods for the Future
Report by the Neighbourhood Manager

Purpose
To update the Neighbourhood Committee following the Leader's report ('Renewing Kingston's Democracy - Putting the Resident into Power') which was approved at Council in July 2015. To propose key policies for the Neighbourhood to develop to support Members as Community Leaders and increase community engagement - with reference to Annex 1 (Community Engagement Plan) of the report.

Recommendations
To Resolve that -
1. the role of Neighbourhoods set out in the Leader's Report ‘Renewing Kingston's Democracy - Putting the Resident into Power’ is noted; and
2. the proposed Community Engagement Plan (attached at Annex 1) approved, subject to any amendments of the Committee.

Key Points
A. Improving community engagement is at the forefront of the Administration's policies. People want more of a say on how services are run and how decisions are taken. The Administration is clear this is not just about methods of consultation but about how the Council seeks to engage with them and let them have a voice in what it does.

B. The Leader of the Council presented a report to Council on 14 July 2015 setting out proposals to improve the way the Council works so as to improve and expand engagement with residents.

C. The report included a number of recommendations for Neighbourhoods. The Leader was clear the structure of committee meetings is not conducive to achieve future engagement, and the Council need to listen, interact and engage with people where they are, on their terms and in the ways that are now open to us all. Community leadership is the key requisite if the Neighbourhoods and their communities are to thrive.

D. This report based on the decisions made by full Council on 14 July, arising from the Leader’s Report, sets out the position and establishes the future direction of the Neighbourhood around engagement, empowerment and communications. There are some constitutional changes and budget changes to the Neighbourhoods which will be detailed in other reports.
Neighbourhood Activities

1. The Leader’s report details a number of key areas of activity that will be the focus for Neighbourhoods:
   - Community engagement - this includes promoting the Neighbourhood, giving the community a voice, overseeing engagement, consultation and feedback, young people’s involvement and social media.
   - Community capacity building - increasing involvement of local people in community activities, promote/support the community to help themselves, joining the community up with services to problem-solve in partnership, support community organisations in external funding opportunities.
   - Community safety - supporting community safety campaigns and initiatives such as Neighbourhood Watch, anti-social behaviour initiatives and fire safety.
   - Partnership - work in partnership with local service providers public and private and the voluntary sector, health, education and young people to integrate and shape services, bring partners together with the community to problem solve creating thriving, resilient communities.
   - Performance - receive Neighbourhood service data to improve services.

2. How the Neighbourhoods achieve these will primarily be through implementing specific tasks identified in the Leader’s report, detailed below.

Neighbourhood Policies

3. The Leader’s report identifies key policies that the Neighbourhood should develop in order to support Members to be Community Leaders and help communities to help themselves:
   - Community Plan - the production of the Community Plan will be facilitated by the Chair and Neighbourhood Manager, in consultation with local stakeholders. It will utilise the All in One survey results, engagement and consultation data and the existing on-going Neighbourhood Community Plan priorities to develop the new plan. Residents will also feed into the process through Community Forums, explained further below.
   - Community Engagement Plan - the Leader’s report introduces Community Forums as the key focus for engagement, along with Street Forums. Together these will provide high visibility of the Council in the community and enable Ward Members to act as Community Champions. This will be achieved through a Community Engagement Plan - the proposed Plan is attached at Annex 1.
   - Communications Plan - the new arrangements require a comprehensive communications campaign that will promote the Community Forums and Street Forums across the Neighbourhood using a variety of methods including social media. The proposed plan is attached in Annex 2.
   - Ward Funding Budget - aimed at providing local Members with the ability to support flexible, small and timely funds for local initiatives within their ward. The fund will be introduced from 1 April 2016.
**Timescale**

4. Full Council met and agreed the recommendations in ‘Renewing Kingston’s Democracy’ at their meeting on 14 July 2015 and this report presents the initial work to implement the changes with respect to Neighbourhood engagement and communication.

**Resource Implications**

5. The current Neighbourhood budget allocation does not include any additional funds. All community engagement costs will need to be met from existing base budgets or set aside from any in year underspends.

6. The Neighbourhood Committee will receive confirmation of the revised budget allocations post the changes and can expect regular budget updates thereafter.

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- None other than those referred to in this report