Neighbourhood Review
Report by the Director, Communities

Call-in deadline: N/A (this is a consultation report for decisions to be taken by full Council at its meeting on 11 December 2018)

Purpose
To seek the views of the Committee on emerging outline proposals for the strengthening of the Council’s Neighbourhoods arrangements.

Recommendation that -
The Committee considers and comments upon the proposals for the strengthening of the Council’s Neighbourhood arrangements set out in Annex 1 of this report.

Benefits to the Community:
The strengthening of the role of Neighbourhoods will enable the Council’s services to better meet the needs of the local community, help ensure that the voice of the community is heard in debate on more strategic borough-wide issues and promote more active engagement with residents and other stakeholders.

Key Points
A. The Council is currently undertaking a review in order to establish how it might strengthen its Neighbourhood arrangements. The focus of the review is on ensuring that Neighbourhood Committees have the ability to help determine local priorities; take decisions on local issues; can act as an effective means of engagement with the local community; are consulted on strategic or borough-wide issues before decisions are made at Strategic Committees, and given access to resources to help respond to local issues or priorities.

B. The Neighbourhoods Review complements a broader review of the Council’s constitutional structures which seeks to ensure that the governance processes are robust, efficient and flexible and to enhance clarity on responsibility for decision making.

C. The presentation attached at Annex 1 sets out the areas of focus of the Neighbourhoods Review, which is intended as a framework to take the work forward and develop final proposals based on Member feedback. This includes outline proposals for Neighbourhood Committees to oversee the development of local community plans, a strengthening of the Committees consultation and engagement role, the introduction of arrangements which would provide flexibility for Neighbourhoods to determine a much broader range of issues than is presently the case where the impact is confined to a single Neighbourhood area and the devolution of certain funding streams.
D. The Committee is asked to discuss and comment on the issues raised in the presentation. Questions which the Committee may particularly like to explore in its discussion include:

- How should Neighbourhood Committees carry out their dual role as decision making bodies and as a means of consulting and engaging residents?
- Should separate consultation and engagement sessions be held from decision making meetings?
- How should Community Plans be developed with input from local residents, businesses and community groups?
- What sort of decisions should be taken by Neighbourhood Committees?
- How should the views of Neighbourhood Committees be fed into decisions made by Strategic Committees?
- How should resources devolved to Neighbourhood Committees best be allocated?

E. The views of the Committee will be fed back into the review process and be used to help to shape the final proposals in respect of both the Neighbourhoods and Constitutional arrangements. Ongoing dialogue is also taking place with Neighbourhood Committee Chairs and Vice-Chairs and the detailed recommendations will be presented to the Finance & Contracts Committee on 29 November and, subsequently, to the meeting of Council on 11 December for decision.

**Background papers -**
Slide Deck,
Neighbourhoods Review Outline Approach October 2018

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