Neighbourhoods Review: Outline approach

October 2018
Objective

- Effective use of Neighbourhood Committees as a means of determining local priorities and bringing Council decision making, consultation and engagement closer to communities

- Taking decisions and responding to issues at the Neighbourhood level is intended to make the Council more responsive to local priorities, opportunities and challenges
Neighbourhoods Review - areas of focus

- **Determining local priorities** - Developing Community Plans via Neighbourhood Committees - through engagement with residents, businesses & community groups - to frame local decisions

- **Decision making at the right level** - determining which decisions made by Neighbourhood Committees and which made by Strategic Committees

- **Consultation and engagement** - Neighbourhood Committees as a means of engagement on local and Borough-wide issues

- **Resources to respond to local priorities** - Devolving resources to Neighbourhood Committees and making effective use of Community Rangers
An iterative approach

- Proposals to strengthen the role of Neighbourhood Committees will evolve over time
- Discussion at Neighbourhood Committees to develop initial proposals
- Proposals to Full Council on 11 December
- Keep proposals under review to consider what works in practice and amend accordingly
- Links to Constitution Review
Determining local priorities - Community Plans

- Each Neighbourhood Committee to oversee the development of a **Community Plan**
- Plans used to **determine local priorities** and provide a framework to guide local decision making and resource allocation
- Linked to **wider Council priorities** and **objectives**
- Developed via **consultation and engagement** led by Neighbourhood Committees
- Each Committee to determine **how best to develop their Plans**
Decision making by Neighbourhood Committees

- Constitution Review looking at which decisions should be made by Neighbourhood Committees and which by Strategic Committees.

- Developing Terms of Reference for Neighbourhood Committees to strengthen consultative role and refer decisions which affect a specific Neighbourhood to the relevant Neighbourhood Committee.

Decision making by Neighbourhood Committees

- Current **ToR** for Neighbourhood Committees very detailed
- Not possible to define **all matters** which might arise that are suitable for decision at Neighbourhood Committee
- Alternative approach to define **general principles** of the kinds of decision which should be considered at Neighbourhoods, based perhaps around geographical coverage, scope and impact
- Likely to **broaden the range of issues** brought to Neighbourhoods for decision
- **Thresholds** could be set to establish boundaries between matters delegated to Officers and those decided at Committee
Local consultation and engagement

- Currently, Neighbourhood Committees meet 5 times a year as decision making Committees.

- Exploring two functions of Neighbourhood meetings: 1) Formal decision making Committees; and 2) Consultation and engagement sessions.

- As well as taking decisions, they should be a means of consulting Ward Councillors and residents to consider local perspectives before decisions made at Strategic Committees or Full Council.

- Scope within the existing constitution to do this.

- Each Neighbourhood Committee to determine how best to carry out the two functions - separate consultation meetings?
Examples of local consultation and engagement

- Examples of the type of issue that might be considered at Neighbourhood consultation sessions before agreement at Strategic Committee or Full Council:
  - Borough-wide Council strategies relating to a range of portfolio areas such as growth and economic development; Environment; culture; health; children and young people
  - Local priorities as part of strategic highways schemes (e.g. LIP)
  - Major planning and regeneration schemes
Devolving resources to Neighbourhoods

- Looking at three funding streams to provide resources to Neighbourhood Committees to respond to local priorities:
  - Proportion of Community Infrastructure Levy (15% of Borough total) - for use on environmental and infrastructure priorities
  - Ward Councillor budgets
  - Small Grants

- Proposals being developed to determine how resources should be allocated by Neighbourhood Committees - linked to priorities in Community Plans.
- Looking at how best to use Community Rangers as a means of responding quickly to local issues
Areas for discussion

● 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?
Timetable and next steps

• Oct/Nov - Discussion on approach at Neighbourhood Committees
  - 18 Oct - South of the Borough
  - 31 Oct - Maldens & Coombe
  - 1 Nov - Kingston Town
  - 6 Nov - Surbiton

• 29 Nov - Constitution Review & Neighbourhoods proposals to Finance & Contract Management Committee

• 11 Dec - Final report to Full Council