

**Subject:** Strengthening Communities Review – Progress Update

**Date of Meeting:** 27 April 2010

**Report of:** Director of Strategy and Governance

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**Wards Affected:** All

### FOR GENERAL RELEASE

#### 1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

1.1 At the Governance Committee meeting of 9 March 2010, Members agreed to the implementation of a strategic Review of neighbourhood and community engagement. It was agreed that the Review would test existing models and provide recommendations for a range of public engagement activities into the future.

1.2 It was also agreed that:

- Written updates be provided to the Committee at every meeting between now and September 2010 and where appropriate, Governance Committee attendance and involvement be requested in key aspects of the Review process.
- That a cross party working group be established to ensure Member involvement in the work.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 That the Committee notes that the review is underway.

2.2 That the Committee note the content of this written update.

#### 3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION / CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

3.1 Since the March Committee meeting work has commenced on the review. A scoping exercise is underway to establish the parameters of the work and a timeline is being agreed which will illustrate key milestones and dates for review reports and publication.

3.2 A package of additional funding has been identified to enable the purchase of independent evaluation which will focus on consultation with local people involved in neighbourhood forums and city wide activity. The work will examine whether residents who have been involved in groups such as Neighbourhood

Forums feel that they have been more able to influence decision making. The funding has been identified through fundraising activity including an allocation from the Stronger Communities Partnership.

- 3.3 The first meeting of the cross party Members group will take place in May and will be coordinated by the Head of Communities and Equality.
- 3.4 In addition it has been agreed that the new Local Engagement Working Group will ensure Senior Officer involvement in the Review. The group includes service leads for engagement (e.g. Housing Participation, Community Safety and Adult Social Care personalisation).
- 3.5 The Review is also to be discussed at the Stronger Communities Partnership of the LSP, at which cross sector leads for engagement will be able to regularly contribute to the work.
- 3.6 Desk top research has commenced which is looking at the range of evaluation and impact reports that exist in relation to neighbourhood and community engagement in the city.
- 3.7 Discussions have commenced with Senior Officers responsible for engagement activity in their departments. These aim to identify engagement work across the Authority and consider impact, duplication and possible areas of improvement.

#### **4. CONSULTATION**

- 4.1 Consultation with a huge range of stakeholders is embedded throughout the Review process and will include the cross party Member group.

#### **5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

##### Financial Implications:

- 5.1 The review of Strengthening Communities Commissioning activity will be funded in 2010/11 within resources identified within the Policy Unit's budget and funds available to strategic partnerships through LPSA Reward Grant. External funding has been identified to secure independent evaluation.
- 5.2 The longer term sustainability of this activity will need to be considered in developing the Council's budget for 2011/12 and beyond.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Anne Silley*

*Date: 07/04/10*

##### Legal Implications:

- 5.3 The proposals in the report are consistent with the Council's legal powers and duties.

*Lawyer Consulted:*

*Abraham Ghebre-Ghiorghis*

*Date: 16/04/10*

Equalities Implications:

- 5.4 The Strengthening Communities Review will analyse the extent to which community engagement provides effective opportunities for a range of minority groups and deprived geographical areas to have a voice in Council decision making processes. Where possible, the Review will also analyse the integration of these people and place agendas and made recommendations for further improvement areas.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.5 The Strengthening Communities Review will analyse the extent to which community engagement enables both minority groups and neighbourhoods to play an active part in sustainability activity. This will include a review of commissioning outcomes with a view to consider this area of work more in the future.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.6 On behalf of the Safe in the City Partnership, the Partnership Community Safety Team (PCST), Communities against Drugs and Environment Improvement Teams deliver a range of activities which engage and build cohesive communities. Some of these activities are integrated within the delivery plans of priority crime areas: facilitating the community led Racial Harassment Forum is one example of that. Other work such as supporting the network of Local Action Teams link closely with meeting the delivery requirements of Neighbourhood Policing and as such, have specific outcomes which are about identifying local policing priorities and delivering community safety solutions in partnership with local people. The PCST carries out targeted work with refugee and migrant individuals and communities and its programme of activities to 'build resilience to violent extremism' is a specific programme of work with Muslim and other faith based communities. Performance on this programme is measured against national indicators within the LAA process.
- 5.7 The Partnership looks forward to participating within the strategic review of neighbourhood and community engagement' and achieving a consistent approach across the City

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.8 This will be analysed through the Strengthening Communities Review.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.9 This will be analysed through the Strengthening Communities Review.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

### **Appendices**

None

### **Documents In Members' Rooms**

None

### **Background Documents:**

None