

Agenda Item 4

Ashley, Easton and Lawrence Hill Neighbourhood Partnership 25th June 2014 Discussion Paper

At the last NP it was agreed to consider:

1. How the Neighbourhood Partnership makes decisions about what it spends its money on.
2. How the Neighbourhood Partnership spends its money.

With a view to coming up with some sort of guidelines for the NP.

Context:

- a) By law only Councillors can make spending commitments on behalf of the Council within the agreed limits of 'devolved' funding. The wider community can inform and influence these decisions but it must be clear that the Councillors made the decision. These decisions must be made at a Neighbourhood Partnership meeting and there must be at least 50% of Councillors present.
- b) Neighbourhood Partnerships are about the wider community influencing council decisions – people working together.
- c) The Neighbourhood Partnership has a number of 'devolved budgets' including Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy or CIL. The Neighbourhood Partnership has agreed that these devolved budgets should be spent to pursue the NP priorities. For example, money for green space must be spent against delivering the agreed Green Space Investment Plan. This means the priorities are worked out and then the money allocated.
- d) Section 106 and CIL are allocated to the NP. The NP/Councillors can choose to spend the money outside the NP area. The CIL is 'free money' it can be used to support any of the NP priorities. The NP receives 15% of the total CIL and 25% if there is a neighbourhood plan.

- e) The NP can agree its own *guidance* about how it wants to make decisions and how to use its funding. Any agreement between the Councillors and the wider NP about how decisions will be made is between the people concerned. It is not legally binding and would have to be renegotiated with new Councillors.

For consideration

The process

1. First we will have a discussion as a whole group
2. We will then break into small groups
3. We will then share the conclusions of each group to arrive at an agreement.

SECTION A - About money and how it's used

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

1. The NP will only allocate money to projects within the NP boundary (on the boundary this would mean on the NP side of the road only).
Agree/Disagree
2. The NP will prioritise the area within the NP boundary when making decisions about funding before considering initiatives outside the NP.
Agree/Disagree
3. The NP will consider spending commitments on a case by case basis.
Agree/Disagree
4. There are times when investing in something on the boundary or just beyond the boundary may be necessary. It is unhelpful to create a hard and fast rule. **Agree/Disagree**

SECTION B - How to make decisions

1. The NP will decide its priorities for the year and will use its resources to deliver against these priorities. Therefore all spend decisions will be about delivering against the priorities. **Agree/Disagree**
2. **Advice /role of sub groups** - In many cases Sub groups or working groups will be established to do the detailed work and make

recommendations to the NP. This requires all sub group members to work within the interests of the NP area as a whole. The NP will accept the advice and recommendations of the sub group. *(Any concerns about the ability of the sub group to do its work should be raised with the chair or Neighbourhood Partnership Coordinator).* **Agree/Disagree**

SECTION C - Choose one of the following

3. If the NP is asked to add a priority (during the year/outside if the usual review cycle) it must have the majority support of Councillors and NP members to become a priority. **Or,**
4. If the NP is asked to add a priority (during the year/outside if the usual review cycle) it must have unanimous support of Councillors and NP members to become a priority. **Or,**
5. New priorities will only be considered when all the priorities are reviewed as part of the formal NP cycle.

SECTION D - Choose one of the following:

6. **One debate** - Before there is a vote of the NP or Councillors there will be a debate involving all members of the NP including Councillors. This will be followed by a vote of the whole NP followed by a vote of the Cllrs.

Or,

7. **Two debates** - Before there is a vote of the NP or Councillors there will be a debate of the wider NP (not councillors) only. This will be followed by a vote of the wider NP. This will then be followed by a debate between councillors and then a vote.

SECTION E - Choose 1 of the following:

8. Good decisions are where there is broad agreement about what to do. For a decision to be carried Councillors will have the support of the majority of the voting NP members (over 50%).
9. Good decisions are where there is a unanimous decision. Councillors will have the support of all voting members of the NP.

10. Councillors are democratically elected by their constituents. How they vote is up to them. It should not matter how the wider NP votes.