



Agenda Item No. 5

HENGROVE AND STOCKWOOD NEIGHBOURHOOD PARTNERSHIP

20 JUNE 2012

Report of: Norman Cornthwaite, Democratic Services / Ariaf Hussain,
Area Co-ordinator

Title: Annual Report

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RECOMMENDATION

To:

- (a) note / agree the membership of the Partnership and the chairing arrangements.
- (b) note the terms of reference.
- (c) note the devolved powers that the Partnership has.
- (d) agree / note appointments to sub-groups and other bodies.
- (e) confirm dates and times of meetings of the Partnership in 2012/13.

Context

Membership and chairing arrangements

1. Each neighbourhood partnership comprises (a) the councillors for each of the wards which make up the Partnership (who serve for their term of elected office) (b) local resident representatives and (c) representatives of partner organisations. The membership of this partnership is:

a) Councillors:

Councillors Barry Clark and Sylvia Doubell (Hengrove Ward);
Councillors Jay Jethwa and David Morris (Stockwood Ward)

b) Partnership and local resident representatives:

List of partnership members names:

Inspector Colin Salmon - Avon and Somerset Police
Kerry Vosper - Environmental Rep
Peter Goodwin – Friends of Stockwood Open Spaces
Dave Reeve – Stockwood Community Group Rep
Jenny Hall - Stockwood Resident
Judith Barnhurst - Stockwood resident
Robert Harris – Stockwood resident
Norma Davies – Hengrove resident
Anne Day – Hengrove Resident
Toni Massari - Equalities Rep
Trevor Hilliar – Hengrove resident
Joyce Wooster – Older Person’s Rep

2. The Partnership is asked to note its membership, as above.
3. The Partnership is asked to confirm chairing arrangements for the Neighbourhood Committee and the Neighbourhood Partnership.

Note: on previous occasions, it has been agreed that the councillor Chair of the Neighbourhood Committee should “rotate” from one meeting to the next.

Terms of Reference

4. The Councillors on each neighbourhood partnership comprise a Committee, which has been given delegated powers by the Leader of the Council.
5. The Committee sits within the Partnership and takes its decisions as part of the Partnership meeting, and taking fully into account the views expressed by the other Partners. The terms of reference of the Committee are set out at Appendix A.
6. The wider Partnership also has terms of reference, which are set out at Appendix B. These are currently common to all neighbourhood partnerships.
7. The Partnership is asked to note the terms of reference.

Devolved powers

8. The Partnership is asked to note that the following powers are devolved to councillors for decision, following discussion at a Partnership meeting and taking account of the views expressed:
 - a) Highway maintenance and Minor Traffic works budget - £66,543
(Local Traffic Scheme – £17,143)
(Footways – £42,000)
(Surface dressing - £7,400)
 - b) Wellbeing budget - £20,000
 - c) Clean and Green budget - £1,500
 - d) Section 106 budgets - £466,554.83 (monies held as at 30 April 2012)
 - e) Recycling Bring Banks
 - f) The Street Cleansing Service
 - g) The Grounds Maintenance Service
 - h) Community Safety Officers
 - i) Neighbourhood Development Officers
 - j) Area Green Space Plan Prioritisation

Budget and financial operating framework

9. Appendix C sets out, for information, details of this Partnership's overall budget and the financial operating framework. During the year, council officers who present reports on spending proposals, will include budget details in their papers and explain how any agreed spend impacts on the overall money available.
10. The Partnership is asked to note its budget.

Appointments to sub-groups and other bodies

11. During 2011/12 the Partnership established the following sub-groups to assist it in its work:
 - Wellbeing panel
 - Environment subgroup
 - Transport subgroup
12. It is recommended that these bodies be re-established for 2012/13 and the Partnership is asked to confirm the membership arrangements for the groups.

13. During 2012/13 the Partnership may need additional subgroups to assist with the work. It is recommended that the Partnership consider whether additional groups are needed and identifies these groups.

Dates and times of Partnership meetings for 2012/13

14. The following dates and times for formal meetings of the Partnership (including the councillor committee) are as follows:

7.00 pm, 17 October 2012

7.00 pm, 23 January 2013

7.00 pm, 20 March 2013

15. The Partnership is asked to confirm these dates.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Neighbourhood Committee terms of reference

Appendix B – Partnership terms of reference

Appendix C - Details of the Partnership's overall budget and the financial operating framework.

Background Papers:

None

NEIGHBOURHOOD COMMITTEES TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Overview

1.1 There is a Neighbourhood Partnership (NP) for each of the following 14 areas (each to be known as a “Neighbourhood”):

- Avonmouth and Kingsweston wards
- Henbury and Southmead wards
- Henleaze, Westbury-on-Trym and Stoke Bishop wards
- Horfield and Lockleaze wards
- Redland, Cotham and Bishopston wards
- Frome Vale, Hillfields and Eastville wards
- Cabot, Clifton and Clifton East wards
- Ashley, Easton and Lawrence Hill wards
- St George East and St George West wards
- Brislington East and Brislington West wards
- Bedminster and Southville wards
- Knowle, Filwood and Windmill Hill wards
- Hengrove and Stockwood wards
- Hartcliffe, Bishopsworth and Whitchurch Park wards

1.2 The councillors elected to serve the wards in a Neighbourhood are members of the corresponding NP, along with other individuals who live and work in the Neighbourhood. For the purposes of the council constitution, all of the councillors on a NP comprise a council committee known as a “Neighbourhood Committee” and have delegated power to take certain local decisions on behalf of the council.

1.3 The Neighbourhood Committee sits within the Neighbourhood Partnership and is expected to take its decisions as part of a public meeting. When taking decisions, the Neighbourhood Committee should take into account any relevant views expressed by other members of the Neighbourhood Partnership.

1.4 Non-councillor members of NPs do not have delegated authority to make decisions on behalf of the council. Council decisions include decisions to spend council monies, award a grant or contract on behalf of the council, or determine the materials or methods to be used by the council or its contractors in carrying out works (this is not an exhaustive list). Non-councillor members of an NP may consider such matters and express a view to its councillors, the Cabinet or council officers in relation to decisions that are relevant to their Neighbourhood. For example, they may identify priorities for service delivery in their area, or agree how to respond to a consultation.

2. Functions delegated to Neighbourhood Committees

2.1 Executive functions

The Leader of the Council shall determine from time to time the executive functions that may be exercised by Neighbourhood Committees and will set out these functions in the Leader’s Scheme of Delegation .

2.3 Non-executive functions

Full council has not yet delegated any non-executive functions to Neighbourhood Committees. (Non-executive functions include regulatory functions such as planning decisions and licensing as well as nominations to outside bodies.)

3. **Membership**

- 3.1 The membership of each Neighbourhood Partnership will include all councillors who have been elected for wards in the Neighbourhood and no other councillors. All NP councillors for a Neighbourhood will constitute the Neighbourhood Committee for that Neighbourhood. It is expected that all NP councillors will attend each meeting of their respective Neighbourhood Partnership.

4. **Procedure rules**

Meeting arrangements

- 4.1 Neighbourhood Partnership meetings will normally be held quarterly. The expectation is that Neighbourhood Committees will make their decisions within Neighbourhood Partnership meetings. Agenda items which require a decision by the Neighbourhood Committee will be chaired by the Neighbourhood Committee Chair, all other agenda items will be chaired by the Neighbourhood Partnership chair.

Election of Neighbourhood Committee Chair

- 4.2 A Neighbourhood Committee Chair will be elected by the Neighbourhood Committee at the first NP meeting of the Municipal Year.
- 4.3 The Neighbourhood Committee Chair will be elected by overall majority. Where there is no overall majority of votes, the Neighbourhood Committee Chair shall be either: a member of the political group with the most councillors on the Neighbourhood Committee; or where there is no such largest group, a member of whichever political group represented on the Neighbourhood Committee, is the largest group on the council.

Quorum

- 4.4 The quorum for the Neighbourhood Committee to take a delegated council decision is 50% of councillors in the Neighbourhood Committee.

Voting

- 4.5 Only elected councillors are entitled to vote on delegated council decisions taken by Neighbourhood Committees.
- 4.6 In the event of an equality of votes the Neighbourhood Committee Chair will have a second, or casting vote.

Substitute arrangements

- 4.7 Neighbourhood Committee councillors cannot be substituted.

Agenda

- 4.8 A model agenda is set out in the notes to this document. Each agenda must include Declarations of Interests of councillor members.

Minutes of meetings

- 4.9 The meeting of Neighbourhood Partnerships shall be minuted and such minutes will be made available to the public in accordance with the Access to Information Procedure Rules (in part 4 of the council's constitution).

Right to submit statements

- 4.10 Members of the public may submit statements that relate to issues that are on the agenda for the meeting or any other issues, provided sufficient advance notice is given.

Statements may be submitted by e-mail to: democratic.sevices@bristol.gov.uk
or:

Post to: Bristol City Council, Democratic Services Section, Room 220, Council House, College Green, Bristol, BS1 5TR; or Fax: 0117 9222146

5. Access to Information Rules

Neighbourhood Committees will comply with the Access to Information Rules contained in part 4 of the council's constitution, which means, among other things, that:

- Meetings must be held in public
- 5 days notice of meetings must be given
- Agendas and reports must be published 5 days in advance of meetings
- Minutes and records of decisions with reasons must be published.

6. Code of Conduct

- 6.1 Neighbourhood Committee councillors shall comply with the Members' Code of Conduct and any other code of conduct or protocol relating to the conduct of councillors which may be adopted by the council (eg. officer member protocol).

7. Reports to full Council

- 7.1 The Neighbourhood Committee Chair, on behalf of the Neighbourhood Partnership, may bring a report to full Council on the work of their Neighbourhood Partnership. Full Council will normally only receive one such report at each of its meetings (unless otherwise agreed by the Lord Mayor).

8. Decision making

8.1 Neighbourhood Committees must make decisions:

- in accordance with the council's budget and policy framework;
- in accordance with the approved budget for its area for the relevant function;
- in accordance with all relevant procedure rules within the constitution including -
 - financial regulations
 - contract procedure regulations
 - procurement regulations;
- in accordance with any other council policy, plan or criteria approved by cabinet and with any relevant contractual arrangements; and
- in a meeting following consideration of a report from a strategic director or his/her nominee.

8.2 A Neighbourhood Committee may only exercise a function in so far as the function impacts on its own area.

8.3 Neighbourhood Committees may not make a decision which impacts in a significant way on another Neighbourhood without first consulting with the committee for that area. If they cannot secure the agreement of that neighbouring committee, then the matter should be referred to either the relevant strategic director or cabinet for decision.

8.4 A Neighbourhood Committee, or two or more Neighbourhood Committees jointly, may refer a matter to either the relevant strategic director or cabinet for a decision.

8.5 The Leader may require a matter in relation to an executive function due to be considered by a Neighbourhood Committee to be determined by herself, cabinet or the relevant strategic director.

8.6 Where the Monitoring Officer or Chief Finance Officer is of the opinion that a proposal, decision, or omission of a Neighbourhood Committee is or if made would be:

- (a) outside its terms of reference; or
- (b) outside its approved budget; or
- (c) outside any relevant policy, plan or criteria approved by cabinet or with any relevant contractual arrangements; or
- (d) outside the budget and policy framework; or
- (e) not in accordance with any relevant procedure rules,

the Monitoring Officer or Chief Finance Officer shall refer the matter to cabinet or full Council as appropriate for consideration at the next available meeting.

8.7 Where a matter has been referred to cabinet or full Council under section 8.6, the implementation of the proposal or decision shall be suspended until the matter is considered by cabinet and/or full Council.

Where a matter has been referred to cabinet under 8.6 (a) (b) or (c) cabinet may:

- decide the matter itself; or
- endorse any decision already made; or
- refer the matter back to the Neighbourhood Committee for determination; and/or
- make any other decision it considers appropriate.

8.8 Where a matter has been referred to cabinet under 8.6 (d) or (e), then Cabinet may:

- (a) refer the matter to full Council for consideration; or
- (b) decide the matter within the budget and policy framework or in accordance with the procedure rules; or
- (c) refer the matter back to the Neighbourhood Committee for determination within the budget and policy framework, or in accordance with the procedure rules.

8.9 Before deciding any matter in accordance with section 8.6 to 8.8, cabinet will consider a report from a statutory officer or strategic director.

Guidance notes

- i. The Neighbourhood Committees are established pursuant to regulation 6 of the The Local Authorities (Arrangements for the Discharge of Functions (England) Regulations and are “area committees” as defined by s.18 Local Government Act 2000.
- ii. Councillors will be expected to work closely together with other members of their Neighbourhood Partnership to promote their area and help in the improvement of services in the area. Non-councillor NP members will have the opportunity to put their comments/recommendations/views in relation to decisions to be made to the Councillors. Whilst Councillors will be expected to take into account these, this should not compromise their independence as Councillors and not constrain them from making decisions that they deem to be in the interests of the wider community.
- iii. The Neighbourhood Committee may decide to appoint Neighbourhood Committee Chairs on a rotating, or other temporary basis, in which case the Neighbourhood Committee Chair appointed at one meeting holds office until another Neighbourhood Committee Chair assumes the role at a subsequent meeting.
- iv. Agendas of meetings will normally include the following items:
 - a) Apologies for absence
 - b) Approval of minutes from previous meeting.
 - c) Declarations of Interest (of councillors)
 - d) Chair’s announcements
 - e) Public Forum statements (maximum time of 30 minutes)
 - f) Reports on proposed decisions for councillors and on other matters to be considered by the Neighbourhood Partnership (to include a report from the Area

Coordinator)

- g) Consider matters that the Chair of the Neighbourhood Partnership has agreed are urgent

Sometime prior to the public meeting the NP Chair, Neighbourhood Committee Chair and other interested parties as appropriate, may meet with relevant officers in private to plan and agree what business is to be transacted during the coming and future meetings.

- (v) The statements should normally be no longer than one side of A4 paper. Members of the public may then address the meeting (the chair may wish to set a time limit, eg. a maximum of three minutes). Anyone wishing to submit a statement is expected to contact the Democratic Services Officer named on the agenda and submit their statement by no later than 12.00 noon the working day before the meeting. The Chair has the discretion to allow any member of the public, whether or not they have submitted a written statement, to speak during the meeting.

Neighbourhood Partnerships in Bristol

Terms of Reference

Introduction:

The 14 Neighbourhood Partnerships in Bristol are each unique, having developed in response to local needs, in different ways and at different rates. The distinctiveness of Neighbourhood Partnerships is acknowledged and this document seeks to provide a stronger foundation for this distinctiveness to grow and develop.

However, there is a general view that some consistency is needed so that Neighbourhood Partnerships can step up to their expanding role, as a Neighbourhood approach in Bristol is strengthened significantly. However this is not an attempt to standardise, but a framework which sets a “floor” and a “core” which all can recognise.

Throughout, maximum discretion and flexibility is built in, so that each NP can make its own decisions to suit the local realities of its own neighbourhood.

1. Name

a. The name of the Neighbourhood Partnership shall be Hengrove and Stockwood and it will cover the wards of Hengrove and Stockwood known as “the Neighbourhood”.

2. Purpose

The Hengrove and Stockwood Neighbourhood Partnership (hereafter “the Partnership”) aims to improve the quality of life for residents in the neighbourhood so that satisfaction levels increase, and also increase civic pride, community cohesion and community involvement by:

- Developing local solutions to local problems wherever possible
- Encouraging public, private and community and voluntary organisations to work together to deliver improvements to residents’ quality of life.
- Tackling deprivation and discrimination in the neighbourhood, and promoting equality of opportunity for all those living or working there.
- Considering proposed decisions of the Neighbourhood Committee and influencing such so as to use resources to best meet the needs of the neighbourhood.
- Receiving reports from service delivery bodies and influencing service priorities within the neighbourhood in accordance with identified needs and priorities

- Actively engaging with local people across the neighbourhood, seeking their views and active participation in improving their quality of life. This includes seeking the views and participation of residents that are hard to reach.
- Co-ordinating community engagement, approving an annual multi-agency community engagement plan for the Neighbourhood, accompanied by a local communication strategy to raise awareness of engagement opportunities as widely as possible, in accordance with the Bristol Community Engagement framework.
- Considering regularly the results of community engagement activities, ensuring that wherever possible action is taken in response to the issues raised
- Supporting and promoting locally the aims of the Bristol Partnership as set out in the Bristol 20:20 Plan.

We Value:

- Civic pride, protecting our public realm and making it better
- Respect and Compassion
- Aspiration, energy, enthusiasm and creativity
- Personal responsibility and accountability
- Community development / involvement and ‘grass-roots’ action

3. Membership of the Neighbourhood Partnership

Set out below are the requirements for all Neighbourhood Partnerships, which many already have in place. It is important to try to ensure that each locality within the neighbourhood has a voice, hence the requirement to have two resident representatives per ward.

a. Bristol has 14 Neighbourhood Partnerships , each covering two or three wards. Accordingly, it is proposed that the membership composition and numbers will vary according to the size of the neighbourhood:

Neighbourhood Partnership (NP)	2 Ward	3 Ward
(i) All ward councillors	4	6
(ii) Equalities Forum representative	1	1
(iii) Young Persons representative	1	1
(iv) 2 Representatives from each ward <i>(may be from Residents or local voluntary group)</i>	4	6
(v) Other members as decided by the NP <i>(eg vol sector, business, arts, environment etc)</i>	NP decides	NP decides
<i>NB This gives every NP full flexibility to include members to suit local needs and preferences</i>		

- b. All Members of the NP, except elected councillors, will be expected to live or work in the neighbourhood concerned.
- c. The size and composition of the Neighbourhood Partnership should be decided and recorded at the Annual Meeting. The size of the Partnership is for local decision, but for practical reasons, it is recommended to number approximately 20 in total, excluding officers of statutory bodies.
- d. The Partnership may co-opt up to two non-voting members during the year to provide specialist expertise from the time of the appointment to the next Annual meeting.
- e. The quorum for meetings of the Neighbourhood Partnership will be one half of voting members, to include at least two ward councillors and two other members.
- f. Observers are always welcome at Neighbourhood Partnership meetings, which are public partnerships, of course subject to the capacity of the venue.

4. Officers of Statutory Bodies

- The following officers are expected to attend all meetings of the Neighbourhood Partnership in a non voting capacity to provide support and assistance as required:
 - Bristol City Council Area Coordinator (or their representative)
 - The Neighbourhood Police Inspector (or their representative)
 - NHS Bristol
 - Avon and Somerset Fire and Rescue
 - A representative of the most relevant Children and Young People's Partnership (CYPP)
- Officers of other bodies (eg Environment Agency, Registered Social Landlords) may choose to attend Neighbourhood Partnership meetings if aspects of the agenda are relevant to them, or if invited by the Neighbourhood Partnership.

5. Neighbourhood Committees

Neighbourhood Committees are committees of Bristol City Council. They comprise the councillors elected to serve the wards within the Neighbourhood. Neighbourhood Committee meetings will normally take place jointly with meetings of the Neighbourhood Partnership. All Neighbourhood Committee members will also be members of the Neighbourhood Partnership.

Neighbourhood Committees have delegated power to take a range of council decisions relating to their respective Neighbourhoods (eg. expenditure of certain council budgets). Neighbourhood Partnerships may

consider matters that are to be decided by its Neighbourhood Committee and may seek to influence the Neighbourhood Committee as to how it exercises its powers. The Neighbourhood Committee must take into account any relevant views of the Neighbourhood Partnership, but the final decision is taken by the councillors in the Neighbourhood Committee.

6. Working arrangements

- a) The Neighbourhood Partnership will meet in public at least four times per year, but may of course choose to meet more frequently. (see *guidance note 2*)
- b) One of these meetings will include an Annual Meeting, for which the quorum shall be at least 50% of voting members.
- c) The Partnership will elect a Chair and Vice Chair from its membership at the Annual meeting, by simple majority of those present and eligible to vote. (In the event of a tie, each shall take each office for 6 months.)
- d) The Partnership may elect other officers as it decides are required (eg treasurer, secretary etc.)
- e) The Partnership may establish sub groups, task groups etc as required and not limited to Neighbourhood Partnership members only.
- f) Minutes of the meetings will be taken by Bristol City Council officers and made public (on the website of both the Council and Bristol Partnership) within one month of the Partnership meeting.
- g) An agenda showing time and place of the meeting will be published (as above) at least two weeks prior to the Partnership meeting.
- h) All meetings will be open to the public, unless there is a specific reason (such as data protection) and formal vote to allow closed session. This should be avoided wherever possible.

7. Complaints

Anyone wishing to make a complaint about the NP may put their concerns in writing to Bristol City Council, Democratic Services Section, Room 220, Council House, College Green, Bristol BS1 5TR or by email to democratic.services@bristol.gov.uk).

Complaints about councillors or any person employed by a statutory agency should be submitted in the usual way to the council or the relevant agency.

The Chief Executive of Bristol City Council, or her representative, may access any records held by a Neighbourhood Partnership on receipt by the Chair/ Vice Chair of a written request setting out why such a request is made. Such documents will be made available within a reasonable period, and not longer than 14 days.

Neighbourhood Partnership Terms of Reference - Guidance notes

1. Name: The Neighbourhood Partnership name will be decided by the Neighbourhood Partnership at its annual meeting
2. Frequency of meetings: Based on current practice, up to 6 meetings per year can be supported by the Council, in terms of room rental and note-taking, although it is expected that most will opt for 4 per year. This will be reviewed at the end of the year.

Neighbourhood Partnership membership

3. Resident representatives from wards: It is recommended that such representatives are agreed where possible by the relevant Neighbourhood Forum prior to the Partnership AGM. It is hoped that such representatives may be from local residents or community organisations, but they may be individual Neighbourhood Forum nominees.
4. Each Neighbourhood Partnership should decide at its annual meeting the number and composition of other members not set out within the framework Terms of Reference. The following are given as examples, being already in place in some NPs:-
 - *Voluntary or community sector*
 - *Local businesses*
 - *Environmental groups*
 - *More resident representatives than specified*
5. Some Neighbourhood Partnerships keep a simple register of all voluntary, community and faith organisations and local businesses that become members of the Partnership (providing they agree to support it's aims and values). This assists communication and also enables an election process if needed to select NP representatives. Membership will be free.
6. These registered voluntary, community and faith organisations and local businesses are invited to nominate representatives to the Neighbourhood Partnership, in accordance with the categories decided by the Partnership usually at the annual meeting (*for example: 2 voluntary sector representatives and 1 business representative*). An election will be held if the numbers of nominees exceeds places available. In the interests of securing the broadest possible input, community organisations should be discouraged from "upping" their representation by seeking nomination in more than one section – ie as a resident representative and as a voluntary sector
7. The Bristol Equalities Forum will nominate a representative from the Neighbourhood who will seek to make a contribution for all equalities groups. Support will be provided.
8. Neighbourhood Partnerships may also wish to consider co-options in order to make the partnership more balanced eg by gender, age, ethnicity, geography.

9. The officers (Chair, Vice-Chair etc) can be elected from any member of the Neighbourhood Partnership. This may result in a different Neighbourhood Committee Chair (who must be a ward councillor by law) and Neighbourhood Partnership Chair sitting on the same Neighbourhood Partnership. Partnerships may wish to consider making them the Chair and Vice Chair of the NP, although this is not prescribed.
10. Theme groups may be convened by the Neighbourhood Partnership and will be expected to report to the Neighbourhood Partnership and, if directed, to the Neighbourhood Forums. All theme group recommendations must be agreed by the Neighbourhood Partnership before they are actioned, unless they are explicitly empowered to act by the Neighbourhood Partnership.

Note on Community engagement, Neighbourhood Forums

The Council and the Police agreed in 2010 to merge their community engagement mechanisms (Neighbourhood Forums/ PACTs). This is on the basis that

1. Neighbourhood Forums will be held at ward level, four times per year.
2. The Police will provide administrative support and provide a note taking service.
3. The Neighbourhood Partnership may decide that other formats are more effective for enabling resident engagement than a standard meeting format. Whilst it will need to ensure that agreed elements, such as progress updates from previous, or consultation activities are retained, the emphasis should be on providing opportunities that provide the greatest level of engagement. (*For example, neighbourhood walkabouts with agencies in attendance, marketplace drop-in sessions, or meetings led by young people, may from time to time be deemed more appropriate formats.*)
4. Twice a year, the Partnership will receive a report highlighting the issues raised during community engagement activities in the Neighbourhood.

The Partnership has lead responsibility for the quality of community engagement in its neighbourhood, and is advised to regularly consider how it may improve further.

**BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL
FINANCIAL OPERATING FRAMEWORK
NEIGHBOURHOOD COMMITTEES**

Contact Officer: Mike Harding, Finance Business Partner, Neighbourhoods & City Development

1 Summary

1.1 This operating framework describes the financial arrangements which will apply to devolved budgets for Neighbourhood Committees.

1.2 The framework outlines:

- Adherence to financial regulations
- Approach to spending the resources allocated to each Neighbourhood Committee
- Arrangements for keeping Neighbourhood Committees aware of spending commitments
- Restrictions on the application of funds
- Treatment of year end surpluses or deficits
- Roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders

1.3 This document provides summary guidance only. Any financial queries outside of the scope of this framework should be directed to the designated person in the appropriate finance team, in the first instance.

2 Financial and Procurement Regulations

- All expenditure decisions must be conducted in line with the Council's Financial and Procurement Regulations, which can be viewed on the intranet. This will ensure compliance with the principles of decision-making under the Council's constitution and be consistent with the Council's budget and policy framework. It should also enable Neighbourhood Committees to demonstrate that value for money is being demonstrated in the use of public funds.
- External Partnership Arrangements, including:
 - a) ensuring that partnership arrangements are underpinned by clear and well documented internal controls.
 - (b) risk management processes are in place to identify, assess and allocate all known risks.
 - (c) appraisal processes are in place to assess the viability of the partnership in terms of resources, staffing and expertise.
 - (d) adequate arrangements are in place to ensure the accountability of other organisations for Council money, and that such money is only released against proper controls.
- Where the anticipated value of a contract for any works or service contract is more than £100,000 the client must assess the operational risk to which the Council will be exposed and whether therefore to require a performance bond and/or a parent company guarantee from some or all potential tenderers.

3 Spending budgets

3.1 The rationale by which budgets have been apportioned across Neighbourhood Committees will be shown for each separate budget. Apart from those budgets which are divided equally, the allocation formulae will be flexible and may change each year as part of annual policy and budget-setting process and in consultation with Neighbourhood Committees.

3.2 There are two types of resources devolved to Neighbourhood Committees:

- Devolved budget allocations: these will be directly controlled by committees, i.e. they will make the actual spending decisions for these budgets to be implemented by Officers and Area Co-ordinators.
- Influenced budgets: these will be influenced by committees at a local level through consultation and debate with Officers.

3.3 All resources allocated to Neighbourhood Committees must be spent on the purposes for which the existing budgets are intended. This means that committees cannot transfer funds between services e.g. the budget for mini recycling sites cannot be redirected to minor traffic schemes.

3.4 The Area Co-ordinator is the first point of contact for these budgets and will work closely with Finance staff across directorates. They will be given access and training in the Council's finance and procurement systems for the purposes of monitoring budgets and contracting (whether internal or external). The accountable officer for budgetary purposes will be the existing Officers responsible for each service (under the relevant Strategic Director) and they will be required to ensure that the Authority's regulatory framework is adhered to.

3.5 Expenditure in each Neighbourhood Committee must focus on local priorities that are significant in terms of improving service delivery and environmental conditions, community safety, promoting well-being, encouraging, community engagement and involvement, and creating a sustainable legacy and identity within neighbourhoods. Officers will provide Neighbourhood Committees with operational and strategic information to inform the use of funding.

3.6 Devolved budgets cannot be used to provide charitable donations or purchase gifts for individuals. Nor can they be applied to any activities or projects that would have a detrimental effect upon Council service delivery, policies or performance.

4 Financial monitoring

4.1 For the Council to establish an accurate picture of its financial status, plan and make effective decisions, correct and consistent classification of expenditure is necessary, as is accurate financial forecasting.

4.2 Consolidated financial monitoring information relating to all apportioned revenue budgets will be reported to each committee at the start of the financial year, mid-year and at year end.

4.3 At interim periods, the Area Co-ordinators may report the financial position or respond to queries from the Neighbourhood Committee through use of the finance system, verified if necessary by Finance staff.

5 Restrictions on the application of funds

5.1 As part of the process of apportioning funds, Officers have identified any restrictions governing the use of the resources (such as statutory duties) and this information will be made available to Neighbourhood Committees.

5.2 Budgets devolved to Committees will be either revenue or capital funds. There is flexibility in that revenue monies can be allocated to capital purposes (although not vice versa) but such items of expenditure have to be accounted for differently. This is an important distinction. Expenditure for capital purposes results in the acquisition or construction of a fixed asset (e.g. land, building, vehicle or equipment) or the enhancement of an existing fixed asset. Fixed assets have an expected useful life of longer than one year.

5.3 Area Co-ordinators should consult Finance staff to ensure that the correct accounting treatment is applied to expenditure for capital purposes and further guidance on the difference between revenue and capital expenditure can be distributed. It should be noted that should the project abort, the costs would need to be re-charged back to a revenue budget, not a capital budget. Only assets with a value greater than £20k are entered on the Council's fixed asset register. This is the "de minimis" level.

5.4 Neighbourhood Committees need to be aware of the potential ongoing revenue implications arising from capital schemes (e.g. maintenance, security, etc.) as they will also need to be funded from their revenue budget and could represent a limiting factor in future years. Equally, some capital investment may generate revenue savings, energy efficiency measures for example, which would have a positive financial impact in future years and can be retained by the Committee should they exceed increased energy prices. Therefore, when considering the feasibility of a particular scheme, the revenue consequences must be identified, understood (and provided for in the case of ongoing costs) before any capital spend is committed. In such instances, Committees should request guidance from Officers and Finance staff.

6 Treatment of year end surpluses or deficits

6.1 At the end of each financial year, any revenue surplus (underspend) or deficit (overspend) will be carried forward to the next financial year in the form of a budget adjustment. This will apply to each allocated budget separately (i.e. an underspend on one budget cannot be used to offset an overspend on another).

6.2 The year end out-turn against each budget will be reported to Neighbourhood Committees as part of the half-yearly reporting process.

7 Roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders

7.1 The constitutional basis of Neighbourhood Committees is separately described in their Terms of Reference.

7.2 Members of Neighbourhood Partnerships who are not ward councillors are unable legally to vote on delegated decisions. (This is a matter of the legal framework for all Local Authorities and is not a decision by BCC.) However the view of Neighbourhood Partnership members are very important and will be given careful consideration by Neighbourhood Committees when taking such a decision.

- 7.3 Each Neighbourhood Committee must maintain proper accountability over the use of resources to ensure that public accountability and high standards of financial integrity are exercised. To this end, supplementary financial training will be provided to committee members, as required, and financial monitoring information will be provided in a simple and consistent format.
- 7.4 Area Co-ordinators will be the primary point of contact for monitoring and reporting on budgets to Neighbourhood Committees. They will be supported in this by Finance staff, and the restructuring of the existing budgets on the finance system to enable transparent and efficient access to information across directorates.
- 7.5 Area Co-ordinators will be required to submit or sign off forecast expenditure figures, as per the quarterly reporting cycle, for consolidation by Finance staff as part of the corporate financial monitoring process. This timetable will be clearly communicated at the start of each financial year. Where forecasting responsibility continues to sit with the existing service manager, then this information will need to be communicated to the Area Co-ordinator for monitoring purposes.
- 7.6 Officers and Area Co-ordinators will ensure there are adequate segregation of duties in the ordering and paying for goods and services and that appropriate records are kept of expenditure decisions as may be required for inspection by Internal Audit or Audit Committee.