**LONDON BOROUGH OF SUTTON**

**CHEAM NORTH AND WORCESTER PARK LOCAL COMMITTEE**

**THURSDAY, 23 FEBRUARY 2012**

Sutton

**7.00 pm at the**

**St Bede's Conference Centre, St Anthony's Hospital, London Road, Worcester Park**

**SECOND DISPATCH**

To all members of Cheam North and Worcester Park Local Committee:-

*The following papers, which were not available for dispatch with the agenda, are attached. Please bring them with you to the meeting:-*

**9. AREA IMPROVMENTS** (Pages 1 - 4)

Content
The Locality Lead Officer will give an update on agreed Public Realm project. In addition the Local Committee will consider proposals to allocate the residue of the 2011/12 budget in an innovative way.

Expected Outcome
That the committee will receive updates and agree actions to take forward.

*Indicative time 10 minutes*

*Niall Bolger*
*Chief Executive*
*Civic Offices*
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*SM1 1EA*

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Copies of reports are available in large print on request

**London Borough of Sutton**

**Cheam North and Worcester Park Local Committee – 23/02/12**

**Report of the Executive Head, Policy and Customer Services**

# PUBLIC REALM – PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Ward Location:** | Stonecot, Worcester Park and Nonsuch | **Author(s) and Contact Phone Number(s):** | Bill Reed 8770 4391 |
| **Area Served:** | Local Committee area | **Lead Councillor:** | |

**Key Decision Report**

**Summary**

This report gives effect to the decision of the Local Committee on 8 December, to allocate the 2012/13 Public Realm budget in an innovative way.

**Recommendations**

I recommend the Committee to:

Approve the distribution of the 2012/13 Public Realm budget as set out in paragraph 5.0 below, through a Participatory Budgeting exercise.

## 1. Background

1.1 Local Committees are entrusted with funds to assist in improving their local area. To date these funds have been around improvements to the public realm and transport, and with the objective of improving the physical environment of local areas.

1.2 However increasingly, there is both the necessity and opportunity to use funds to promote a wider investment in the area. The Council's role will increasingly be to invest in an area, not solely to improve the physical environment but increasingly to support the development of community and voluntary groups. These groups will have the opportunity to commission public sector work, act as partners with the Council in the delivery of public services and generate the opportunity for volunteers to manage services. In the period up to March 2012 it is anticipated that these ideas will gain credence within the Council. In addition, the role of Local Committees in promoting an increased understanding of community preferences in their area is expected to increase.

1.3 The emphasis the Council puts on this dimension is evident from the allocation of £30,000 to the six Local Committees to promote community groups and community activity.

While the original emphasis of the Public Realm and Transport funds are unchanged, there is a need to give a greater emphasis to community outcomes as well as physical outcomes.

1.4 The Local Committee are thus asked to reflect this emphasis in their distribution of the funds now available to them.

**2.0 Available Funds**

2.1 The Local Committee has sums available to it from the 2012/13 Public Realm budget as follows:

- Capital Public realm - £ 42,222
- Revenue Public realm - £ 5,000
  Total £ 47,222

The Committee will also have £17,000 Transport funds allocated from TfL; it is not possible to allocate this fund to the PB exercise.

In addition funds remaining from 2011/12 total £46,000

**3.0 Decision making**

3.1 The ultimate decision on the allocation of public funds will remain with members of the Local Committee.

However, increasingly, the funds have been spent in recognition of the needs expressed by local groups, or by Ward Councillors expressing views from their constituents.

The proposed exercise extends that process, with the proviso that all funds allocated would be endorsed subsequently by a meeting of the local Committee.

**4.0 Participatory budgeting**

4.1 Participatory budgeting directly involves local people in making decisions on the spending and priorities for a defined public budget. It allows the citizens of an area to participate in the allocation of part of the local Council's available financial resources. It aims to increase transparency, accountability, understanding and social inclusion in local government affairs. In practice, PB provides citizens with information that enables them to be engaged in prioritising the needs of their neighbourhoods propose and debate new services and projects and set budgets in a democratic and transparent way.

4.2 Evidence from Participatory budgeting exercises suggests that there is greater involvement, greater trust in the decisions and greater understanding of budget making processes. Funds allocated are more closely linked to local priorities and groups and individuals are more attracted to the messages of the Council or other funding body, and more likely to be involved in subsequent activity.

4.3 More information on the approach to Participatory budgeting and examples of where it has been used can be found at http://www.participatorybudgeting.org.uk .

**5.0 Proposed course of action**

5.1 It is suggested that the Local Committee allocates a proportion of its available funds to a Participatory budgeting exercise during the Spring. A timetable for the exercise is shown as Appendix 1.

## 6.0 Implications

6.1 Financial. The funds are currently available to the Local Committee to be spent on capital projects. However, certain flexibilities can be applied when allocating this funding in any future process. A sum would need to be separately earmarked to the Local Committee for this purpose outlined in the report. Successful projects will be maintained at the expense of the project managing group, with no implications for Council revenue budgets.

6.2 Legal: Investment of capital must still be spent on projects adhering to the statutory definition of capital and not be contrary to the policies of Sutton Council and a value for money assessment will still be carried out.

Participatory Budgeting provides for an additional stream of organised participation and the ultimate decision will still be made by the Local Committee."

## 7.0 Influence of the Council's Core Values

7.1 This approach supports the Core values of:

- Working in PARTNERSHIP with the people who live and work in the borough
- Seeking INNOVATIVE approaches in order to provide better, more cost-effective services
- EMPOWERING everyone so that we can all 'take part and take pride' as active citizens and staff.

## 8.0 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Possible timetable for the PB process.

Public Realm – Participatory Budgeting Appendix 1

Draft timetable for PB exercise

| Date | Activity | Responsible Officer, Councillor or Organisation |
|---|---|---|
| 23 February | Approval by Local Committee of process and documentation | Local Committee |
| 23 February to 9 March | Development of documentation, paperwork, advertising etc. | |
| 9 March to 30 March | Invitation to organisations and groups in Cheam North and Worcester Park to submit ideas for projects, activities, events, in line with agreed criteria. | Councillors, Community Development Officer, Lead Locality Officer<br>Officers and Chair of Local Committee |
| As bids received and to 10 April | Verification of ideas and technical appraisal | |
| Weds 11 April | Publication of bids, projects etc received.<br><br>Publicity for PB event circulated. | Community Development Officer<br><br>Community Development Officer |
| To (5 May) | Develop event and paperwork, registration etc. | Community Development Officer, Lead Locality Officer |
| (Say) Saturday 5 May | PB open event, at which voting allocates funds to projects. | Councillors, CDO, LLO, Community Involvement and Innovation Manager, |
| Provisional 31 May | Local Committee endorses decisions. | Committee |