

Practical Community Engagement

Know My Neighbours Look out for each other

Civic Involvement **Empowerment Localism**

Self-reliance **Resilience** Digital Community Organising

Make a difference Councillors Local shops

Community-run services Volunteering

Self-directed **Pride** Inclusion self-help

Cohesion Resident Association

Neighbourliness Citizenship

UPDATED
GUIDE

City Living, Local Life

Ward working initiative

Quick start guide for Councillors



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF
KENSINGTON
AND CHELSEA

It takes all of us

What is City Living, Local Life?

Councillors and communities working together to develop practical solutions to improve the quality of life and increase neighbourliness.

What will it achieve?

The initiative aims to recognise and use the many different resources that are available in the Royal Borough.

Councillors will be at the heart of this approach and will work to:

- 1) enhance understanding of local areas (including history, geography, demography, local assets and community resources)
- 2) build stronger connections and relationships within communities (networking within and beyond ward boundaries)
- 3) help to identify, assess and prioritise improvements
- 4) devise practical solutions that engage and involve local people
- 5) work with local people and organisations to deliver those solutions (funding, organisational support, experience, training, project planning, coordination and monitoring).

How does it work?

Our ambition is that over time all wards take part in this exciting initiative. Each ward that takes part will have £20,000 allocated to it each year. This is intended to help Councillors address local issues that have a genuine impact on the area as agreed by their communities.

Projects should focus on practical help and be based on evidence from residents about local need and community issues. The money isn't intended to be 'enough' to solve all problems, but rather to help get projects going or to bring in other money.

There is no limit to the number of projects that may be agreed in each ward and there is no minimum or maximum amount that can be allocated to a project, providing it does not exceed the total available ward budget.

Councillors may wish to collaborate across ward boundaries where this offers the best way to address local issues and priorities.

In addition, to complement the ward-specific projects and initiatives the Council will be commissioning some borough-wide activities to encourage and support residents' involvement in the scheme. Details of these projects will be published in due course.

How the money can be used

Projects and initiatives supported by Ward Working funding should:

- meet an identified need in the ward, as demonstrated by evidence gathered through local consultation and community engagement
- not be at odds with established Council policy and comply with general duties and procedures of the Council
- be consistent with the rules and regulations that govern public expenditure
- make appropriate efforts to secure value for money.

We will review these guidelines from time-to-time as we learn from this initiative.



How projects could look in practice

Encouraging local ownership and fostering pride

One way to guide project spend is to identify ‘priority themes’ for a local area. Councillors leading the Golborne Ward Initiative pilot used an all-household survey and discussions with local groups to determine five guiding themes: engaging the community; encouraging local pride and increasing tourism; art, design and performance; quiet spaces, walkable streets and run-able routes; and better connections. These themes were then widely publicised and used to inspire residents to create projects in response. The themes then allowed Councillors to make informed budget decisions and evaluate the initiative’s impact.

An example of one successful project is the ‘loveGolborne’ campaign, designed to encourage local pride and increase tourism. Canvas bags were produced to spark local conversations, foster a sense of community and act as mobile advertising for Portobello Road market’s lesser known sister market. Over 1,000 bags have been distributed at various community events and by local retailers, and the campaign continues to build on the ‘brand’.



Working closely with existing voluntary organisations

Ward working can help bring together a range of partners to help address local issues. Consultation with a range of groups during the St. Charles Ward Initiative pilot showed that antisocial behaviour by young people was a concern for residents in the Dalgarno area.

To address local people's concerns effectively, Councillors decided to focus on combating antisocial behaviour by funding community groups to deliver positive opportunities for young people. This included setting up an Air Cadets programme; running a local football tournament that brought together not just young people, but also their families; and commissioning the Dalgarno Neighbourhood Trust to deliver a full programme youth outreach activities.

Councillors also set up a partnership for a project called 'Step Up St. Charles'. This was designed to link residents from the more affluent areas of the ward with local charities to increase awareness and make it easier for professional residents to contribute their skills, time or money to these local charities. The project hosted an information evening every two months for local professionals where the work of five local community organisations was highlighted and residents could sign up to volunteer or donate that evening.

Increasing community participation and volunteering

Another means to identify need and develop solutions is to establish an area forum for local residents and community groups. To best involve residents in ownership of Ward Working activities, Councillors in Colville decided to create a forum to set priorities and monitor budget spend.

"The Colville Area Forum enables regular and effective consultation with an already formed and wide group of neighbourhood representatives," said Monica Press, resident co-chair of the Forum. "It enables a much quicker and informed process than trying to bring a number of small interest groups together on a case-by-case basis."

In addition to sponsoring a number of community-led projects, the forum format has increased neighbourliness and built vital links between active residents, many of whom met for the first time at the forum. For example, community members are now leading a variety of gardening projects, such as planting spring bulbs and regenerating a local square independent of forum activity.

This is public money – how will Councillors be accountable for ‘City Living, Local Life’ activities?

Councillors will ultimately be accountable to local voters for the ways in which their Ward Working funds are spent. An important element of this accountability will be effective and transparent communication through:

- an annual report and public event to showcase activities to residents and relevant partners
- update reports to Council meetings
- regular information on activity and budget spend through dedicated web pages
- invitations to the public for open enquiries and requests for information
- regular updates in the Royal Borough newspaper and other Council literature.

It is advised that ward Councillors consult the Cabinet Member for Civil Society before deciding on specific projects.



What support is in place for Councillors?

Ward Working will be supported by a small, dedicated team of officers comprising generalists and specialists in administration, policy development, communication, budget monitoring, project management and community engagement. Support will be deployed flexibly dependent on need, intensity of activity and level of spend committed to specific wards.

How to get started - the process of becoming a 'City Living, Local Life' ward

We intend to formally launch this initiative during Local Democracy Week in October. To help get Ward Working off to a strong start, the following process has been developed for a first round of wards:

- We'd like to hear expressions of interest from Councillors by 15 July 2011 for the first round of the scheme.
- Councillors will then work with officers to consult and engage with communities to identify issues and local priorities.
- Discussions will then take place with officers and relevant Councillors as well as consultation with the Cabinet Member for Civil Society to prioritise these and identify specific proposals with a checklist and toolkit to help set out detailed plans by the end of August.
- The first set of projects will then commence from September as part of the initiative's launch activities.

We envisage that round 1 will include up to six wards. Round 2 will be open from October for projects to start in January and round 3 open from January 2012 to start in March. Over time we would like to see all wards taking part. Depending on the nature of the project, circumstances and the amount being allocated for spend, it may be possible to roll over some funding into the next year. This will need to be discussed with officers as early as possible during the delivery period.



Further information

Contact the Community Engagement Team for support by phone, email or in person:

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