

## **Reviewing what we've heard so far – Themed table discussions and flipchart recording**

### **Table I – Overarching principles for this review**

We think that we've heard:

- It's not just about the Council's formal governance arrangements. Not everyone will want to take part in our formal meetings and processes. We should develop our approach to community engagement so that there's a range of ways to get involved in decisions at an earlier stage, accessible beyond the Town Hall.
- We should describe our new way of doing things, setting out rights and responsibilities on both sides. This will include the Council's wider commitments to involve people in designing services and policies. This would be referenced in the Council's constitution and be widely publicised as a standalone charter. It would be reviewed every four years alongside the Council Plan. (Note: the term 'Residents' Charter' is already taken by the Tenants' Consultative Committee!)
- Changing the way that the Council (its members and its officers) behave is as important as changing processes and structures. This change should be linked to the Council's new values (Putting Communities First, Respect, Integrity and Working Together)

### **Questions for discussion and capture of flipchart notes:**

#### **1. *Have we heard correctly that these are the most important principles for this review?***

- Paper from Notting Dale Board has not been discussed/addressed.
- Principles fine – this is more about how the Council behaves going forward.

#### **2. *What should be in the description of rights/ responsibilities? The Council's current constitution contains a section on local people's rights. How should we build on or amend this? What should we call it?***

- Duty of the Council to keep local people informed. Can sign up for alerts but Council has a duty to let people know (more generally and routinely).
- Need something that is beyond 'consultation'.
- Being informed is the foundation of resident involvement.
- Not just hear and consult, need them to take on board and respond.
- Complaints – people often labelled as a trouble-maker. Find ways of listening to people so they're not deferred from complaining. It's how you communicate.
- Better explain/teach residents how to complain.
- How you keep councillors to account on service decisions.
- Resident input in spending.
- Role of Councillors in complaints.
- Rights should not need to be stated (other than very briefly) worried about unintended consequences.
- The language used in documents is not the language used by many residents.

- Housing Associations – don't want to get into having a 'Charter'. Charters mean trouble. Just modernise what's already there.
  - Last bullet point on last sheet is most important.
  - Bullet point 3 – Yes – but need to monitor this qualitatively in whatever ways possible in all areas.
  - 3.03 Really needs to be reworked! Don't want to talk in terms of conflict. Language is crucial.
  - Every communication is an opportunity to demonstrate the new values and behaviours.
- 3. *How should the Council measure and report its progress against whatever comes out of this review?***
- Make sure complaints go through the process.
  - Values key – so that Council actions can be measured against these.
  - [Send new values and behaviours to BAG distribution list]
  - If what you do exemplifies your values, you don't need to write item down (as a 'Charter')
  - We only know we've succeeded when all service users give and receive feedback.

## **ARTICLE 3 – LOCAL PEOPLE AND THE COUNCIL**

### **3.01 People's Rights**

People's rights to information and to participate are explained in more detail in the Access to Information Rules in part 4 of this Constitution. Local people have the following rights:

#### **(a) Voting and Petitions**

People on the electoral roll of the Royal Borough have the right to vote and to sign a petition to request a referendum for an elected mayor form of Constitution. All residents have the right to sign a petition on any matter within the Council's purview and for any such petition to be considered by the Council.

#### **(b) Information**

Local people have the right to:

1. attend meetings of the Council and its committees except where confidential or exempt information is likely to be disclosed, and the meeting is therefore held in private;
2. attend meetings of the Executive when key decisions are being considered;
3. find out from the Executive's Forward Plan what key decisions will be made by whom and when;
4. see reports and background papers, and any records of decisions made by the Council and the Executive;
5. inspect the Council's accounts and make their views known to the external auditor;
6. know how to contact all Councillors; and
7. the name and telephone number of the Council officer responsible for the provision of any Council service.

(c) Local people can, with the permission of and at the discretion of the chairman, speak at committee meetings.

(d) The Council is committed to conducting good quality, co-ordinated consultation with its key stakeholders. The Council has a detailed set of good practice guidelines for consulting with the public. Any consultation carried out by the Council, or in partnership with any other organisation, will be conducted within the spirit of these guidelines. The Council will use a variety of methods to hear the voice of residents including the Residents' Panel and the Resident Reviewers mystery shopping project.

### **3.02 Complaints**

People have the right to complain to:

- (a) the Council itself under its complaints scheme;
- (b) the Ombudsman after using the Council's own complaints scheme;
- (c) the Monitoring Officer and Independent Person about a breach of the members Code of Conduct.
- (d) the Data Commissioner or Freedom of Information Commissioner.

### **3.03 Responsibilities**

With rights come responsibilities. The Council expects its Council tax payers, and any person who uses a Council service for which there is a charge, to pay promptly. When exercising their rights to attend meetings, local people have the responsibility to ensure that their behaviour does not disrupt the conduct of the meeting and that the business being discussed can be carried out. Local people must not be violent, abusive or threatening to Councillors or officers, and must not wilfully harm property owned by the Council, Councillors or officers.

## **Table 2 – Borough-wide governance**

We think that we've heard:

- There are improvements that the Council can make to the current Leader and Cabinet model before making a decision on whether or not to change this system.
- Scrutiny needs to be more effective if the Leader/ Cabinet model is to work. We're considering how we can ensure that Scrutiny focuses on the things that matter most to local people, and how to create new and better ways for local people to contribute to scrutiny reviews
- We should make sure there's a range of ways for people to get involved in decisions at an earlier stage, accessible beyond the Town Hall. This means ensuring that services across the Council do this consistently, co-ordinate their activities to avoid duplication, and communicate the opportunities in good time.
- The Council can make better use of new technologies to let people know
  - what decisions are coming up
  - how they can get involved
  - how to give us their views
- We need to get better at involving people appropriately in Planning decisions. We're consulting on a new Statement of Community Involvement, we're scrutinising the pre-application process and piloting new arrangements for Planning Committees so that both supporters and opponents of planning applications can be questioned.

### **Questions for discussion and capture of flipchart notes:**

#### **1. *Have we heard correctly these points relating to the Council's borough-wide governance?***

- There is a divide between Borough-wide and area Governance.
- What works in the South isn't necessarily what's needed in the North of the Borough?
- Practical and sensible summary of what has been heard.
- Improve what we have and make it work better.
- Is change in formal process the starting point or at the local/resident level?

#### **2. *How would you like to be involved in Council decision making?***

- The Council website really needs improvement.
- How do we find the 'other' people who don't engage? Key part of this is the language.
- Participatory budgeting.
- Put service users at the heart of decisions at the start of the process, not just 'consulted' once a decision has been made.
- Talk to users when making service decisions.
- Be clear 'being informed' rather than 'being consulted' to manage expectations.

- Honest communication to rebuild trust.
  - Expose people to the realities of the choices being made.
  - Co-design and participation in decisions.
  - Have a mechanism for consulting on Borough-wide issues and for local 'theme' issues.
  - Move away from 'consultation.'
  - Frame what you are consulting on.
  - Be clear in the objective of the consultation.
  - Language was important - find words for 'participatory' and 'co-design' which is easy for the public to understand.
  - Need to listen more and be more responsive.
  - Have a community approach to decision making?
  - Councillors should decide after consulting with their residents.
  - Investment in community development.
  - Scrutiny should be going to users/community and providing evidence to the Executive.
  - Use social media to reach residents i.e. Snapchat and Next door
  - When signing off decisions ask 'where are the people.'
  - There are barriers to coming to the Town Hall i.e. language, confidence in speaking up. Get out more.
  - Focus on things that people really care about and that affects them and they must want or be able to influence.
- 3. Specifically, is there anything else we could do to involve people in planning decisions?**
- Make e-notify much better known (better publicise).
  - Lots can be done but not enough time to discuss.

**Table 3 – Area governance**

We think that we've heard:

- Throughout the borough, the public must have opportunities to be involved in decision-making, and councillors have an important role as community leaders
- It is ward councillors' role to:
  - understand their local communities by listening to all views and interests
  - advocate on behalf of local communities
  - bring local people and organisations together to find solutions to local problems
- The Council will support councillors as they find the right way for their area to:
  - Listen to and understand local views and priorities, and feed these back to inform decision-making by the Leadership Team
  - Bring people together with public agencies to find solutions to local issues
  - Identify local issues for Scrutiny to consider when planning its work programme
  - Involve local people in deciding how money devolved to their ward is spent. This means taking a new approach to City Living Local Life, including revenue and capital funding.
- If ward councillors want to hold a kind of forum to facilitate this, we will provide logistical and clerking support, and help to follow up on issues raised
- We expect the way this happens to look different in different places, in response to local needs and preferences: a 'one size fits all' approach won't be appropriate

### **Questions for discussion and capture of flipchart notes:**

#### **1. *Have we heard correctly these points relating to the Council's area-level governance?***

- Ward councillors bring people together to discuss local issues

#### **2. *Have we missed anything important in this summary?***

- What works in the South isn't necessarily what's needed in the North.
- Cluster wards for issues with budgets.
- A particular request for a local strategic partnership in the North.
- Not just people in the north feeling alienated- need for their voices to be amplified.
- Got to be real money in North Kensington with shared/pooled budget
- How do non-politically engaged people get involved?
- People may come to local meeting if a) a pot of money or b) a big local issue – call meeting as needed
- Pool City Living Local Life (CLLL) money if there's a shared interest across wards.
- Roll over CLLL to enable a big project?
- CLLL needs to address local needs – look again at criteria.
- CLLL is too small. Developed budgets in a tangible way of involving people.

- Different wards should have different amounts – go where it is needed.
- Councillors send out ward surveys asking for local priorities
- Councillor newsletters to keep people informed.
- The ‘Rich Middle’ of the Borough doesn’t need special Governance.
- Must involve police/health.

### **3. *How would you like to be involved?***

- Councillors knock on doors to get people involved.
- Use social media to promote – next door can create geographical boundaries.
- Ward is the building block – don’t impose a structure – react to the circumstances needed
- Help set up meeting and follow up actions.
- Hold the meeting where its relevant for the issue.
- Residents don’t know their Councillor or how to contact - share information.
- Papers put forward said decisions should come from community – This proposal is asking people.
- People in private rented sector don’t have a voice.
- The opportunity to have a say needs to be defined by community – need to empower this.
- Social benefits of coming together to discuss issues that matter to them.
- How do the single mums get involved, will they be compensated?
- People want to coalesce around themes not long general meetings.
- Have meetings on topics, not general listening forums – make sure all those interested – different geographies/demographics can attend.
- Possible topics – school exclusions, cocaine on the high street, traffic, how to know what services available.
- Advertise in languages people understand, promote through community groups.
- Universal training for community development.
- Council’ is listening to people until they don’t want to listen – things have to tangibly happen.