	Community Leadership Committee 25 June 2014
Title	**Area Sub-Committees - Budget Allocation Draft Framework**
Report of	Andrew Nathan - Head of Governance Stephen Evans – Assistant Director, Commissioning Strategy
Wards	All
Status	Public
Enclosures	*Appendix 1: Area Sub-Committee - Budget Allocation Draft Framework* *Appendix 2: Report considered by the Policy and Resources Committee, 10 June 2014.*
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Summary

On June 10 2014, the Policy & Resources Committee approved a budget of £100,000 per annum to each of the Area Sub-Committees, for the next four years, and delegated responsibility for approving the detailed framework for how these budgets should be administered to the Community Leadership Committee.

The report therefore seeks approval from the Community Leadership Committee on the following:

- The framework setting out the guiding principles that will support the Area Sub-Committees in deciding how and where the budgets they have been allocated should be spent.

Recommendations
1. **That the Community Leadership Committee approve the draft Framework set out at Appendix 1 and recommend to the Policy and Resources Committee that it be agreed.**

1.   WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

1.1   The Policy and Resources Committee, on 10 June 2014, approved the allocation of a budget of £100,000 to each of the Area Sub-Committees, and agreed that the governance arrangements detailing:

- accountability
- how the priorities will be set
- how the funding should be allocated
- how projects will be assessed and evaluated

should be delegated to the Community Leadership Committee for approval.

1.2   Because the purpose of devolving these budgets is to ensure that the Sub-Committees are able to respond effectively to needs in their local areas in the most appropriate way, attention has been taken to ensure that the proposed framework is not too onerous, prescriptive or restrictive. However, it must also be detailed enough to make sure the principles it sets out mean 'due diligence' is taken by the Area Sub-Committee during consideration and decision making on projects.

1.3   The Council's developing Community Participation Strategy, also being considered at this meeting, sets out ambitions to help residents and community groups become more independent and resilient and take on more responsibility for their local areas, aiming to achieve benefits for both the Council and the community.

1.4   If the Council can increase levels of community participation, residents would gain opportunities to develop their skills and capacity, while communities would become more cohesive. The Council's services would potentially become better and more efficient because they would be tailored more effectively to the community's needs, making use of local knowledge, and the Council could also realise benefits from lower demand on its services.

1.5   The changes governing how Area Sub-Committees operate will support these aims, bringing in local knowledge and supporting residents to take on more responsibility as well as supporting community projects, by helping them to get more involved in conversations about local priorities and in decision-making, including decisions about how resources are allocated. It is proposed that this would be done by involving residents in a steering group for each area, given support to understand budgeting and priority-setting, involved in defining their local areas and in setting the priorities themselves, and consulted on which projects should be taken forward for potential funding.

16   These arrangements for the Area Sub-Committees will support the Community Participation Strategy's work to:

- develop better information about the work that is currently going on in the community
- coordinate the Council's engagement more effectively
- consider how the Council can best support communities to become more independent.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 To help make sure that the Area Sub-Committees successfully and effectively manage their budgets, there must be a framework in place that explains and gives them guidance on the process.

2.2 The new process is about involving residents more extensively in the decision making process in their local area. The ultimate aim is to strengthen the decision making of the Council, and also to strengthen the voice of the individual in shaping the kind of place that people want to live. Transparency of information is at the heart of this process, as is providing opportunities for residents to be involved in local affairs. The framework aims to ensure that the process for allocating budgets is transparent and easily understood by its intended audience

2.3 The framework seeks to ensure that the views of residents and local communities are heard at each stage in the decision-making process, informing the Sub-Committees' understanding of local need and involving residents in delivering on local priorities. Different communities have different needs and require different provision in their local area, while patterns of diversity also differ from area to area and communities which are marginalised in one area may not be in another, so the framework must allow the Sub-Committees to respond to local circumstances and fund the most appropriate projects to meet need in each area.

2.4 In particular, it is recommended that the steering groups be made up of representatives from Ward Councillors, local residents, local voluntary and community groups, and other statutory partners, for the reasons set out below.

2.5 **Ward Councillors:** Ward Councillors are community advocates, encouraging resident participation and advocating on behalf of their local area to the Council, and community leaders, who mediate between the interests of different groups and organisations at local and strategic levels. As such they will be vital in defining priorities for the area and mobilising local interests in support of projects. They may also gain opportunities to develop additional insight into their local areas from involvement in the priority-setting process, and to forge new connections with groups in their ward.

2.6 **Residents:** Involving residents will enable the steering groups aim to make best use of local knowledge about what is needed in each area. Residents will gain opportunities to develop their skills and capacity which will enable them to take more responsibility for improvements to their local areas. They will also potentially benefit from being provided with a recognised forum where they will be able to bring forward not only their concerns but their ideas for local improvements. Being part of the steering group   is intended to ensure they are part of decisions on local expenditure and able to participate in an agreed, open and transparent co-ordinated approach to resolving local issues thorough partnership working.

2.7 **Local community groups and local voluntary sector groups:** Having these groups on the Steering Group is designed to harness the voluntary and community sector's unique skills, specialist knowledge, diversity and commitment. This would potentially allow the sector to increase its resilience

and ability to deliver against the needs of local communities, and would also aim to empower the sector to articulate their views on local concerns, facilitating community engagement at a locality/Area Partnership level.

2.8   **Other statutory partners:** Partners and stakeholders should be involved with the aim of enabling them to be able to respond directly to issues raised where this is appropriate. Being involved in this process may also help them to gain a better insight into who is using their services and how. This will potentially help increase provider awareness of the joined-up nature of problems, particularly in deprived areas, and the potential for joined-up solutions, and is an opportunity to share resources across agencies in a planned/structured way leading to the achievement of longer-term objectives.

2.9   These budgets will also play an important part in achieving the Council's ambitions with regard to increasing community involvement and participation. To do this, the Area Sub-Committees will need a framework which makes strategic links where appropriate to the Community Participation Strategy and enables the Council to coordinate other relevant funding streams with these budgets.

3.   ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

None

4.   POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION
4.1   Stage 1
Following approval of the Framework the Council will communicate with residents and other local stakeholders about the new-look Area Sub-Committees and the implications of having an allocated budget. As part of this exercise we will ask that residents put forward:
- projects, priorities or service requirements they might want to see developed in their area and why
- nominations for the membership of the steering group for their area.

The final membership of the Steering Group will be agreed by the Area Sub-Committees

Stage 2
4.2   A technical evaluation and assessment (set against the framework) of   the projects/priorities submitted will be carried out by officers with the final agreed shortlist of the viable projects circulated to the Steering Group. It will be up to the Group to decide which project(s) they would like to see taken forward.

4.3   Stage 3
The Steering Group's final recommendations, along with the Area Forward Plan will be presented to the Area Sub-Committee for their consideration and decision.

5.   IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

5.3   Corporate Priorities and Performance

5.3.1   The proposals contained in this report support the Council's strategic priorities as set out in the Corporate Plan for 2013-2016:
- To create the right environment to promote responsible growth, development and success across the borough.
- To support families and individuals that need it - promoting independence, learning and well being.
- To improve the satisfaction of residents within the borough as a place to live, work and study.

5.4   Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

5.4.1   The budget allocated to each Area Sub-Committee is £100,000 per annum and is funded from Council reserves for 4 years.

5.5   Legal and Constitutional References

5.5.1   As part of the wider localism and community empowerment agenda introduced by the Localism Act 2011, there has been a growing interest in devolving decision making for aspects of local spending.

5.5.2   Constitution, Responsibility for Functions, Annex A, sets out the terms of reference of the Community Leadership Committee

5.6   Risk Management

5.6.1   The process of managing the budgets through the Framework and the Area Sub-Committees ensures that any proposals put forward for consideration meet the needs of residents, the community and minimises the risk that the process may not achieve the desired outcomes determined at the start of the project.

5.6.2   The Framework mitigates the risk that without public involvement in the design of a scheme, opportunities for democratic engagement are lost and public confidence in the legitimacy of democratic decision making structures is weakened.

5.7   Equalities and Diversity

5.7.1   It will be important that the Area Sub Committees encourage participation from all Barnet's diverse communities and that proposals put to the Area Sub-Committees are inclusive, take account of the needs of all residents, and reflect the diversity of the area. The template for all proposals will include a section on equalities to ensure that proposals are accompanied with some analysis of the equalities impact. Engagement and participation in the Sub-Committees can be reviewed to assess participation levels. Ward Councillors will be made aware of their responsibilities to pay due regard to equalities in decision making so that due regard is paid to equalities at all stages.

5.8   Consultation and Engagement

5.8.1 As set out above.

6.   Background papers

6.1   None