NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM TASK GROUP

7 September 2016

Present: Councillor S Cavinder (Chair)
             Councillors K Hastrick, A Joynes, R Martins and M Mills

Officers: Head of Democracy and Governance
             Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer

7   **Apologies for absence**

           There were no apologies for absence.

8   **Disclosures of interest**

           There were no disclosures of interest.

9   **Minutes of the previous meeting**

           The notes and agreed actions of the meeting held on the 19 July 2016 were
           submitted and signed.

10   **Historic review of previous spend**

           On behalf of the task group, the Chair thanked the Committee and Scrutiny
           Support Officer for the research which had been undertaken since the last
           meeting to inform the task group's work.

           Looking at the historic review of previous spend, task group members made the
           following observations:

           • wards pursued a variety of projects, which broadly reflected the differing
             composition and demographics of each ward

           • it would be helpful to include an explanatory cover sheet to the graphs to
             outline what had been included in each of the categories

           the costs of organising forum meetings differed widely between the two wards
           which continued to hold regular meetings (Central and Nascot). Although these
           meetings required non-political advertising to promote them i.e., not through

party newsletters, there was scope to explore more cost-effective methods, including the use of social media.

11	**Review of other funding schemes**

The review of other funding schemes was welcomed by the task group. During discussions on the review, the following points were raised:

- there was a wide range of funding criteria

- several local authorities had discontinued their locality funds or changed their focus in recent years

Hertfordshire County Council's locality budget had been reduced from £10,000 to £5,000 in the current financial year in order to fund a highway locality budget. It was unclear what would happen in subsequent years.

12	**Survey of members' views**

The Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer reported that a link to the survey had been sent to all councillors on 31 August. Subsequent to this, the Mayor had sent an email to encourage responses from as many councillors as possible.

To date seven responses had been received.

The survey closed on Monday 12 September.

In order to boost the response rate, the task group agreed the following steps:

- the chair would send a reminder to all members

- task group members would speak to their colleagues, particularly those in their wards

- Councillors Mills and Joynes would raise awareness of the survey deadline at their forthcoming group meeting.

13	**Next steps**

The task group agreed that no additional research was required. However, the results of the survey of members' views were needed before recommendations could be considered. Once the survey had been closed, the Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer would analyse the responses for the task group, drawing out the main themes and conclusions.

Agreeing recommendations from these themes and conclusions would be the main activity of the task group at its next meeting.

At this stage, the task group was interested to explore several areas:

- introducing an application form for applicants – it was suggested that this might assist value for money considerations by providing a single point of contact for feedback and updates. Hertfordshire County Council's application provided a useful example

- restricting the number of repeat submissions from organisations. However, it was acknowledged that careful consideration would need to be given to overarching organisations such as residents associations

- operating alternative arrangements for the funds, specifically establishing a cut-off date at which point remaining funds could be pooled, or removed to an alternative funding body such as Watford Borough Council's Small Grants Fund.

14   **Date of next meetings**

Tuesday 27 September at 10.30 am.

The need for any further meeting dates would be agreed on 27 September.

Chair

The Meeting started at 6.00 pm
and finished at 6.45 pm