

Councillor-led Democratic and Community Engagement



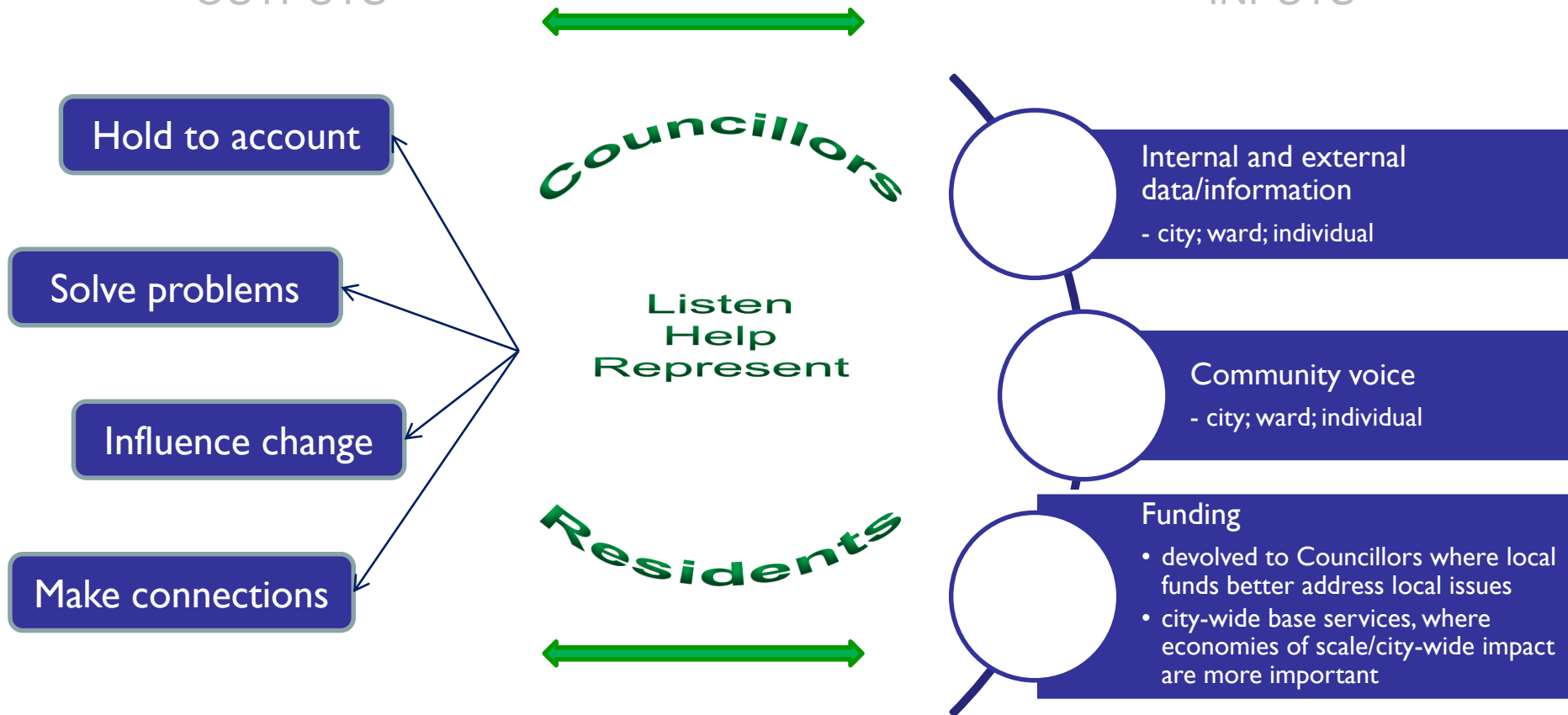
- This slide pack is presented to Council on 29 January 2018 by the Constitutional Review Group.
- It sets out a vision, guiding values and priorities for democratic and community engagement from the perspective of the front-line councillor.

Vision – Councillor-led Democratic and Community Engagement



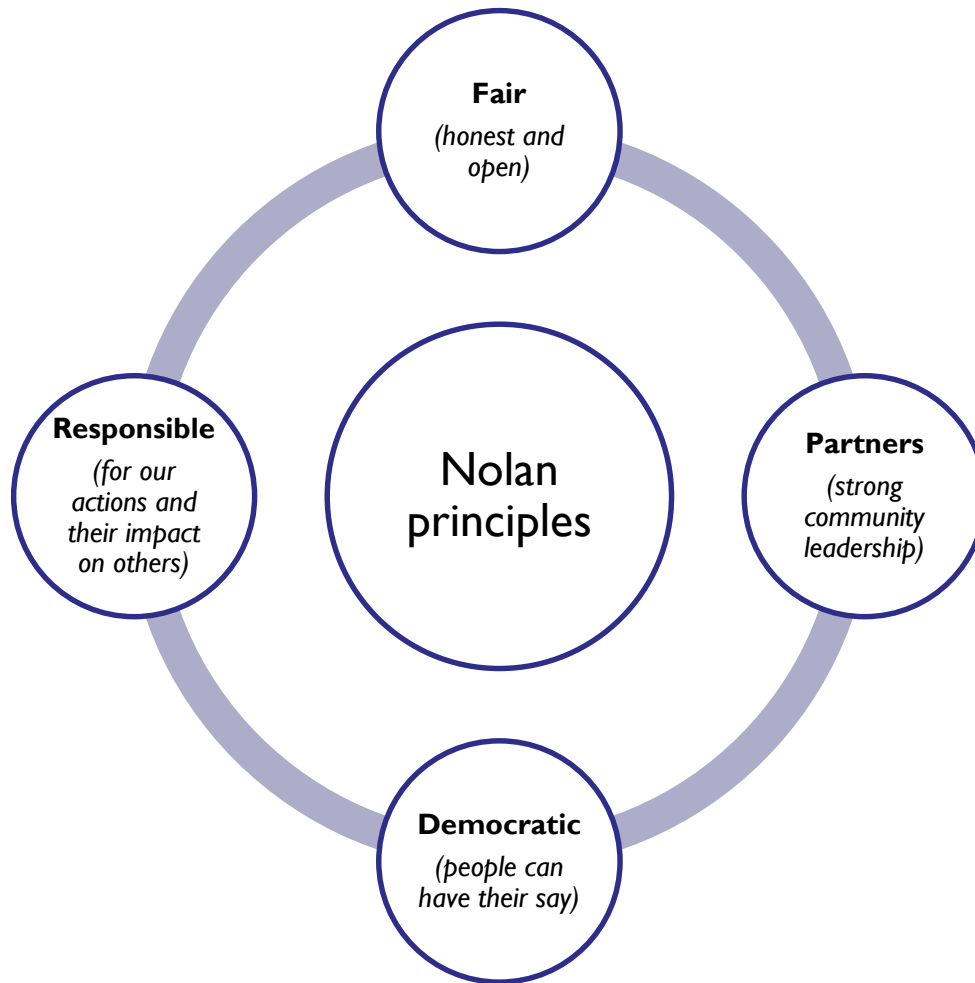
OUTPUTS

INPUTS



Bringing the work of the Council and Councillors closer to communities

Guiding values



Common values guide consistency in how Councillors choose to engage with their communities.

These are our corporate values as adopted by the Corporate Plan, which are anchored by the seven Nolan principles of Public Life which anchor our values.

Approach – from the ‘front-line’ Councillor’s perspective



- What is it that Councillors need to undertake their roles well?
 1. A solid **induction** and good opportunities for follow-up training and **development**
 2. **Information and data** about their wards/the city
 3. Ways to hear the **residents voice** and respond to their concerns
 4. An understanding of how to **connect back** to the Council through officers and democratic/governance processes
 5. **Responsiveness** from Council employees to questions raised, including a high quality **casework** service
 6. **Resources** (funds) to direct to ward priorities
 7. Good **networks** and an understanding of the work of key Council partners to help **solve problems collaboratively**
 8. To be **visible** and **accessible** to residents

I. Induction, training and development



Aim: provide a solid induction and good opportunities for follow-up training and development (*also training and development for staff to help better understand, and therefore support, the role of Councillors*)

Actions:

- 'Managing in a political environment' e-learning in development for staff (Feb/March 2018)
- Active engagement with LGiU and LGA about training and briefings offer, including to be a host location for such events
- Redevelopment of new Councillor induction – plan to CRG, Feb 2018
- Refresh of Council/Councillors webpages and Member Toolkit area (by end Feb 2018)
- Development of Councillor 'Roundup' newsletter (Feb 2018)
- Identify and sustain a Councillors training and development budget (Jan 2018)

2. Information and data – ward and city



Aim: provide Councillors with key statistics and information about their wards and the city as a whole on regular basis to help inform priorities/issues for discussion with residents

Actions:

- Produce annual 'ward data basics' profiles (complete; annual refresh)
- Establish a new 'Ward Knowledge Share' mechanism for Councillors and Officers to share with each other, in a holistic way, knowledge about things happening within wards – based on a locality model (linking to neighbourhood problem-solving)
- Councillor 'Roundup' newsletter to include updates on key stats about the city (Feb 2018)
- Ensure Councillors are informed at an early stage of local consultations and/or policy changes in their ward (and the outcomes of those)

3. Hearing residents voice (I)



- Casework
- Direct approach
- Local consultations

Social Media



- **Councillor led:** e.g. Tea and Toast; Ward Surgery; Have your Say; Issue-specific meetings
- **Community-led:** community events; governorship
- **Officer facilitated:** WardWalks

Face to Face



- Consultations
- Surveys
- Collaborative problem-solving

Email

Phone

3. Hearing residents voice (2)



Aim: enable Councillors to engage with their residents through a variety of means

Actions:

- Review with ward Councillors engagement mechanisms currently used, effectiveness of those and consider alternatives/additions
- Deliver awareness sessions for use of social media as a means to engage with residents (first sessions delivered Nov 2017)
- Propose resourcing of community engagement activities funding through existing Councillor devolved budgets which could be directed to administering such activities or, if self-administered, to their wards. e.g. could enable better connections to Voluntary and Community Sector organisations
- Clarify existing democratic mechanisms to feed-back from wards (e.g. through Portfolio Holders; to service leads; through questions at Council; by Call for Action; through casework) – see next slide...

4. Connecting back



Aim: ensure Councillors understand how to connect back to the Council through officers and democratic/governance processes

- *'Ward Knowledge Share'* (new proposed)
- Raise as casework
- Raise through Portfolio Holder
- Use the Council's formal complaints procedure (if the issue is a complaint)

Democratic processes from the Constitution:

- Questions to Cabinet Members at Council or to relevant Committee
- Part B, 14.1 - Motions on Notice to full Council
- D9.2 – Any Councillor may propose to Committee Chair any local government matter (other than excluded matters) which is relevant to the functions of the Committee
- Part G 'Councillor Call for Action' – Councillors identify concerns in their communities and try to resolve them by talking to the Council and other service providers. If they can't resolve a particular issue they can make a 'Councillor Call for Action' which asks for the matter to be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny for further investigation

5. Responsiveness to enquiries and casework



Aim: enable Councillors to serve their residents well by providing timely resolution and informative responses to enquiries and casework

Actions:

- Clarified response standards to enquiries/casework from Councillors agreed and issued to all staff (Sept 2017)
- Improve central casework provision and develop digital solution to better record, handle and respond to Councillor casework and questions (successful pilot in Dec 2017; full roll-out from Jan 2018)
- Council-wide discussions on what constitutes good customer service to help set/clarify expectations

6. Resources (devolved funds)



Aim: provide Councillors with access to funds which they can direct to priority needs within their wards

- Existing devolved funds total **£379,500** (£100k more than in 2016/17)

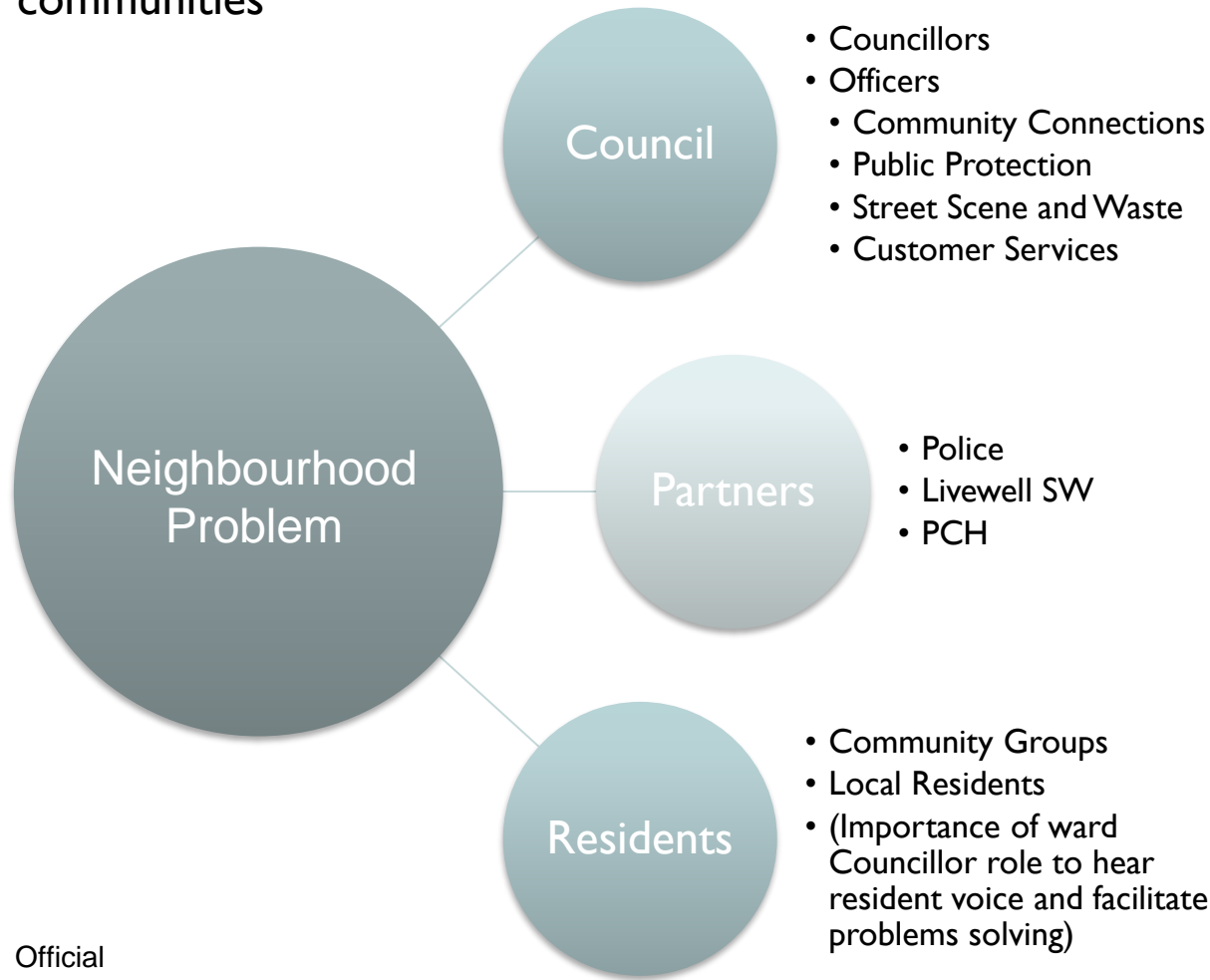
Actions:

- Streamline and simplify administration of Community Grants and Living Streets funds and better connect to Crowd-Fund Plymouth opportunities (by end Feb 2018)
- Publish spend details against **all** devolved funds on the Council's website (from Jan 2018)
- Clarify what Councillors can expect in terms of 'baseline' service for their wards to better inform priorities for spend (undertaken by each service-area)
- Proposal for ruling administration to determine use of Neighbourhood Initiative Fund (NIF) in Feb/March prior to each municipal year through the regular budget-setting process

7. Networks and collaborative problem-solving



Aim: put in place long-term solutions with partners, to problems experienced in communities



- Problems that require a long-term solution via a multi-agency collaborative response
- Short term intervention
- Leading to long term change
- Employing techniques to deal with problems in a collaborative and supportive way
- Involving officers, Councillor's, partners (including voluntary, community) and residents.

8. Accessible and visible



Aim: promote the visibility and accessibility of Councillors to residents

Actions:

- Refresh the Councillors webpages and Member Toolkit area (by end Feb 2018)
- Deliver awareness sessions for use of social media as a means to engage with residents (first sessions delivered Nov 2017)

Summary



- Through the values of **fair, democratic, partners** and **responsible**, Council's request of CRG will be met by:
 1. Providing a solid induction and good opportunities for follow-up training and development
 2. Improving information and data flow about wards/the city
 3. Engaging residents in different ways and responding to their concerns
 4. Clarifying ways to connect back to the Council through officers and democratic/governance processes
 5. Improving responsiveness from Council employees to questions and casework raised by Councillors
 6. Appropriately devolved funds that are directed to ward priorities and complement the baseline service
 7. Better utilising our networks to help solve problems collaboratively
 8. Ensuring Councillors are visible and accessible to residents