1 Executive Summary

1.1 Cabinet is requested to approve the detail of the allocation of Community Infrastructure Levy Funds (CIL) and the expenditure of £250,000 of those funds 2019 – 2020 towards the facilitation of Citizens’ Assemblies and delivery of eight Community Plans.

1.2 Citizens’ Assemblies are forums in which citizens discuss matters of local and national importance and where they identify development and infrastructure proposals within their areas as a response.

1.3 In March 2019, a set of community plans was signed off by the relevant stakeholders. These plans set out a range of infrastructure programmes and projects. Cabinet is requested to approve the allocation of CIL resources to deliver these projects.

1.4 In 2019-20, the intention is to hold 2 large citizens’ assemblies in each community neighbourhood area in order for residents to input into the monitoring and evaluation of the programmes and projects. Cabinet is requested to approve the allocation of CIL resources to deliver these assemblies.
2 Recommendations

2.1 For the reasons set out in the report and its appendices, Cabinet is recommended to:

2.1.1 Approve the provision of CIL funding of £25,000 to each of the 8 Community Neighbourhoods to enable the implementation of projects identified within community plans, the sum of which totals £200,000 in the 2019/20 financial year.

2.1.2 Approve the provision of CIL funding allocation of £50,000 towards the costs of enabling the Citizens’ Assemblies, in 2019/20, specifically to introduce digital democracy through the development and sourcing of a range of electronic platforms.

3 Background

3.1 The establishment of Citizens’ Assemblies by the current administration is a flagship programme to achieve the Mayoral pledge of enabling participatory democracy in Newham.

3.2 The Citizens’ Assemblies held to date have engaged over 3000 residents on the matters that are important to them. Communities have been empowered to co-design community plans which will consider the way the Council delivers services in the relevant community neighbourhoods and the types of projects which are important locally. The Community Citizens’ Assemblies have been the central vehicle of the new participatory culture in Newham. They have followed a process that has agreed a suite of projects that have been shaped and designed by residents.

3.3 In February and March 2019, the 8 Community Citizens’ Assemblies voted on a variety of projects which are set out at Appendix 1. The approved community plans are to be facilitated by a contribution from the borough’s Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding, in recognition of the plans seeking to enable convergence across the borough and contribute towards addressing the demands that development places on an area. The Citizens’ Assembly programme will consist of 4 resident engagement cycles moving forward, which are set out at in Appendix 2. These cycles will produce community plans that include the delivery of infrastructure projects related to open and public spaces, sports areas and transport.

4 Key Considerations & Proposals

4.1 The Council adopted the Developer Contributions: Governance and Funding Allocation Strategy (the ‘Strategy’) on 5 March 2019.

4.2 The strategy agreed the process for the allocation of monies collected during 2019/20 and 2020/21. It established the principle of the neighbourhood element of CIL being ring-fenced for the first time by the current administration to be spent in consultation with the community.

4.3 This report seeks authority to spend CIL monies which accrued prior to 2019/20
towards the continued delivery of engagement through the Citizens’ Assemblies during 2019/20; the cost to develop, procure, and implement a digital democracy platform, facilitate the assemblies’ programme and ensure it is inclusive is £50,000.

4.4 Introducing a digital democracy platform alongside the citizens’ assemblies would increase participation across the borough and enable residents to participate who are unable or unwilling to attend events. An appropriate digital platform could be made available in a range of different contexts, including libraries, community centres, youth centres, and council events, which would further open up engagement and participation for more and different residents.

4.5 An estimated £92,000 of staffing costs and space hire were covered through existing Community Neighbourhoods’ resources for the delivery of 32 Citizens’ Assemblies and the community plans in 2018/19.

4.6 A further £35,000 for room hire fees and staffing costs will be covered from existing Community Neighbourhoods’ budget for 2019/20 for the delivery of 8 Citizens’ Assemblies.

4.7 This report also seeks authority to allocate CIL monies towards the approved delivery projects outlined in the co-designed community plans in each of the Community Neighbourhoods in 2019 - 2020.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposed approach</th>
<th>Alternative funding considered</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£50,000 towards facilitation/operational and inclusiveness costs associated with the Citizens’ Assemblies in 2019/20 and to also introduce digital democracy.</td>
<td>The 2019/20 revenue budget covers the costs of Community Neighbourhood staff to facilitate this engagement, but additional operation/facilities costs cannot be accommodated. There are no other sources of funding identified.</td>
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<tr>
<td>£25,000 (total of £200,000) applied to each of the following 8 Community Neighbourhoods teams in 2019/20, and to be managed by the Community Neighbourhoods teams, towards the delivery of the community plans: Beckton and Royal Docks, Custom House &amp; Canning Town, East Ham, Forest Gate, Green Street</td>
<td>The administration and facilitation of the delivery of the projects must be undertaken by the Community Neighbourhoods Team on behalf of the Council to ensure that there are robust controls on the application of the funding proportionately to each community neighbourhood and in accordance with the co-designed community plans. No other funding sources have been identified for the delivery of the projects outlined in the community plans; however some community plans include: the intention to bid for or lobby</td>
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- Manor Park
- Plaistow
- Stratford and West Ham

third parties for funding;
- programmes to utilise volunteers to facilitate the delivery of community projects with negligible costs to the Council
- programmes delivered in partnership with third sector providers

4.8 The proposal for the expenditure of monies is that each community neighbourhood (as listed in Table 1) will be allocated £25,000 to help deliver the initiatives established in its co-designed community plan. The Community Neighbourhoods Team will facilitate the expenditure of these monies in accordance with the community plans.

4.9 This paper seeks approval for the implementation of a cycle of citizens’ assemblies and the resulting community plans between 2019 and 2020

5 Policy Implications & Corporate Priorities

5.1 The application of funding has been verified by the Chief Planning Officer as being in accordance with the charging authority’s obligations has to how CIL monies must be applied. The Chief Planning Officer has agreed that this funding may be applied towards this project, subject to this key decision by Members.

5.2 Newham is the most ethnically diverse local authority in the country - a place where people of all backgrounds and from all over the world come together. However, despite significant improvements in recent years, Newham remains a relatively deprived borough. There are some areas where this creates inequalities and where we have fallen behind the rest of London on particular measures of social integration. The borough has lower levels of volunteering (21%) and associational membership (30%) than the London average (26% and 51% respectively). Whilst 68% of people say they trust people in their neighbourhood, this is lower than the London average (78%).

6 Alternatives considered

6.1 The following two options have been considered:

1. Delivery of the Citizens’ Assemblies programme is secured externally. This would require sourcing external funding to cover additional staffing costs and the community plan budget for each of the eight neighbourhoods. There are considerable advantages to running the programme externally – project ideas would be more transparent, would be costed by non council personnel and have minimal influence from the Community Neighbourhood teams, however dependant on the funding secured, the spend on community plans and projects may be restricted to a smaller range of activities and priorities. The programme may also be postponed by a further six months to allow time to secure an appropriate service provider.
2. Community Neighbourhood teams facilitate borough wide assemblies. This would require the service to deliver one community plan representing the whole borough that sets out a programme of activities that are delivered in each neighbourhood. An enhanced community plan budget may be required to deliver the activities and a borough wide plan may mitigate against residents from talking about matters important to them in their local area and have a negative impact on the participatory culture that is a priority ambition in Newham.

6.2 Both these options have been appraised and the recommended approach is for the council to deliver a programme of assemblies in the 8 community neighbourhoods.

7 Consultation

7.1 Name of Cabinet Member consulted: Cllr Charlene McLean
Position: Lead cabinet Member Community Neighbourhoods
Date: 6 March 2019

8 Implications

8.1 Financial Implications
Finance Comments (developed by Finance, but need to be approved by, Section 151 and Interim Executive Director of Financial Sustainability)

8.1.1. This report seeks approval to spend £250,000 of the borough’s accrued Community Infrastructure (CIL) Levy funds towards the facilitation of Citizens’ Assemblies and funding towards delivering eight Community Plans

8.1.2. The investment into Citizens’ Assemblies to enable the proper involvement of our residents in the things that matter most to them and support the development of a brand new model of participatory democracy to be established. £200,000 will be allocated as discretionary budgets to fund activities aligned to the priorities emerging from those assemblies. £50,000 is the budget for additional costs from facilitating the assemblies and introducing digital democracy.

8.1.3. The proposal for the expenditure of CIL neighbourhood monies is that each community neighbourhood will be allocated £25,000 to help deliver the initiatives established in their co-designed community plans and the Council will not transfer monies directly to the community.

8.1.4. The ‘Developer Contributions Governance and Funding Allocation Strategy’ report that was agreed at Cabinet on the 5th March identifies the proportion of the CIL monies which will be allocated to be spent with the Community (‘Neighbourhood CIL’).

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Proposals</th>
<th>2019/20</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood CIL</td>
<td>£250k</td>
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8.1.5. All activities that are funded by CIL contributions are governed by the CIL Regulations, if Central Government choose to change these then there maybe an impact on the Council’s financial position. 

8.2 Legal Implications

8.2.1 This report requests that the Cabinet approve that the projects are suitable for the allocation of Community Infrastructure Levy Funding as set out in paragraph 8.2.2 of this report. Going forward, officers state that the programme will consist of 4 resident engagement cycles that will produce Community Plans to enable the community to participate in the decision making that includes delivery of infrastructure open spaces, public sports areas and transport infrastructure as set out in Appendix 1 and 2.

8.2.2 The legislation governing the development, adoption and administration of a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is contained within the Planning Act (2008) and the Community Infrastructure Levy regulations 2010 (as amended) (CIL Regulations 2010). CIL may be used to help deliver infrastructure to support development in an area. The levy is charged on new development to fund the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure that addresses the demands that development places on an area (Regulation 59c).

8.2.3 CIL spend is governed by Part 7 of the CIL Regulations and for any financial period in which CIL receipts are received a report outlining CIL receipts and expenditure must be prepared and published on the Council website.

8.2.4 The London Borough of Newham Regulation 123 list dated 2014 is published on the Council’s website. The officers and CIL allocation team correctly assess the funding allocation request as being within the “provision/improvement/replacement/ operation or maintenance of:

- Infrastructure within or enabling access to Strategic Sites;
- community infrastructure (as defined by Core Strategy Policy INF8)
- public open space outside Strategic Sites;
- public sports and leisure centres outside Strategic Sites;
- local transport infrastructure outside Strategic Sites.

8.2.5 In this case, the allocation of the CIL funds have been evaluated by a clearance process and Head of Planning and Development, attached at Appendix 3 is agreed that the proposed expenditure is in accordance with the CIL Regulations.
8.3 Equalities Implications

8.4 The council respects, values and celebrates diversity. There have been 44 citizens’ assemblies and open forums held to date and the intention throughout has been to deliver a programme which engages a range of stakeholders, including disabled and younger residents. There have been 4 youth assemblies and one deaf assembly (which was BSL interpreted), one disabled assembly (which used a range of assistive technology) and a number of resident forums which addressed specific content, including budgets and transport & parking forums as set out in Appendix 4.

8.5 The venue for the assemblies are fully accessible and all accessibility requirements of Assembly Members are taken into account. This included, where needed, providing materials in large print and sign language interpretation.

8.6 The Assembly proceedings are carefully designed to enable the full participation of all members. Small round table discussions are supported by skilled facilitators. This enables all participants to contribute and have time to reflect and develop their own opinions, particularly those less confident in public speaking.

8.7 The exercises and techniques that are used are specifically designed to support Assembly Members to engage with complex information and feel able to put their opinion forward, with no prior knowledge needed.

8.8 Other Implications relevant to this report:

8.8.1 Funding cuts.

Mitigation: Apply for external funding/scale back project.

9 Background Information used in the preparation of this report

9.1 The following information was utilised in the preparation of this report and the associated appendices: