

CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

1 DECEMBER 2011

REPORT OF CORPORATE MANAGEMENT TEAM

COUNCIL/CABINET DECISION

Regeneration and Transport – Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Mike Smith

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION BUDGET – A WAY FORWARD

1. Summary

The Community Participation Budget, previously known as the Small Environmental Improvements Budget, was established in 2007 as an outcome of the Members Advisory Panel which looked at the operation of the Minor Highway Improvements budget.

The principle of the budget was that each ward would be allocated a small budget to enable ward members to deliver small improvements to their ward such as the provision of litter/dog bins, street lights, tree planting, verge parking etc.

In 2008 the budget was renamed to reflect the principle of community engagement and involvement in the prioritisation and delivery of the projects and became the Community Participation Budget (CPB).

The total budget in 2010/11 is £400K and is allocated to each ward on a population basis. Projects funded via this budget have diversified over the years and include street lighting, footpath links, dropped crossings, bus shelters, litter bins, dog bins, tree planting, park improvements, planting schemes and installation of mobile CCTV.

CPB is often used to match other funding streams such as the Local Transport Plan budget allocation to the Area Transport Groups and thereby levers in sometimes much more significant funding.

The budget for CPB ends in March 2012 and this report considers options for the future.

2. Recommendations

1. Cabinet approve the continuation of the Community Participation Budget at the current level of £400K beyond 2011/12.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision(s)

The Community Participation Budget has been very successful in enabling ward members to work with the community to deliver small, local improvement schemes. It has been used

in many cases to lever in other funding from a variety of sources and in innovative ways to secure community benefits.

4. Members' Interests

Members (including co-opted Members with voting rights) should consider whether they have a personal interest in the item as defined in the Council's code of conduct (**paragraph 8**) and, if so, declare the existence and nature of that interest in accordance with paragraph 9 of the code.

Where a Member regards him/herself as having a personal interest in the item, he/she must then consider whether that interest is one which a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest (**paragraphs 10 and 11 of the code of conduct**).

A Member with a prejudicial interest in any matter must withdraw from the room where the meeting considering the business is being held -

- in a case where the Member is attending a meeting (including a meeting of a select committee) but only for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence, provided the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose whether under statutory right or otherwise, immediately after making representations, answering questions or giving evidence as the case may be;
- in any other case, whenever it becomes apparent that the business is being considered at the meeting;

and must not exercise executive functions in relation to the matter and not seek improperly to influence the decision about the matter (**paragraph 12 of the Code**).

Further to the above, it should be noted that any Member attending a meeting of Cabinet, Select Committee etc; whether or not they are a Member of the Cabinet or Select Committee concerned, must declare any personal interest which they have in the business being considered at the meeting (unless the interest arises solely from the Member's membership of, or position of control or management on any other body to which the Member was appointed or nominated by the Council, or on any other body exercising functions of a public nature, when the interest only needs to be declared if and when the Member speaks on the matter), and if their interest is prejudicial, they must also leave the meeting room, subject to and in accordance with the provisions referred to above.

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MANAGEMENT TEAM**

COUNCIL/CABINET DECISION

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION BUDGET – A WAY FORWARD

SUMMARY

This report considers options for the future of the Community Participation Budget (CPB) which is currently set at £400K for 2011/12 and due to come to an end in March 2012.

CPB is allocated to ward members on the basis of population numbers in that ward and is used for a variety of small improvement schemes which range from dog bins to road safety initiatives and planting schemes. In many cases it has been used to lever in funds from a variety of other sources to deliver larger projects.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Cabinet approve the continuation of the Community Participation Budget at the current level of £400K beyond 2011/12.

DETAIL

Background

1. In 2007 the Small Environmental Improvements Budget was established as an outcome of a review of the Minor Highway Improvements budget by the Members Advisory Panel.
2. In 2008 the Small Environmental Improvements Budget was renamed the Community Participation Budget to reflect a broader remit and the strong links to community involvement and engagement in the process.
3. Since its inception in 2007 the CPB has demonstrated real value in local level democracy ensuring that residents and ward councillors have a resource that is available to target specific issues that may not otherwise attract mainstream funding. There are many examples of the successes that the project has brought which have ranged from resolving neighbourhood feuds by introducing additional car parking and CCTV to the contribution to wider accolades such as Britain in Bloom through enhanced bulb planting. **Appendix 1** contains two case studies that demonstrate the impact the budget has had and there are numerous other examples that ward councillors do recall.

Examples of Projects

4. Budget is allocated on the basis of population so the amount per ward varies from £22,690 in Ingleby Barwick West to £6,848 in Western Parishes with the average being £15K.

5. With this small budget it limits the scale of project delivery, however, in many examples this has been utilised to match fund schemes and deliver more significant improvements.
6. In broad terms the examples of projects that are listed below show the range of impact that the budget has had and these are shown with the total spend from CPB:

• Litter Bins	£32,361
• Dog Bins	£47,800
• Tree Planting	£24,635
• Bulb Planting	£37,677
• Greenspace Improvements	£34,663
• Park Improvements	£115,587
• CCTV	£37,395
• Additional Street Lighting	£85,625
• New Footpath Links	£79,217
• Bus Shelters	£23,309
• Verge Parking	£568,368

Process

7. Ward Members undertake consultation with the residents by a variety of methods to assess the need and nature of a particular proposal. This, coupled with their local knowledge of the issues in the ward, demonstrates a clear community link to delivery of minor improvements which would not otherwise have been fully funded.
8. The CPB fits well with many of the principles of the local and national policies on community engagement in decision making and delivery of local projects and is a clear demonstration of how devolved community budgets can and continue to make a real difference.
9. The ability of members to take decisions on budget allocation to resolve local issues is an efficient and very effective use of resources as the disaggregation of such small budgets to a wide number of service areas would limit the overall impact of the funds available.
10. The eligibility criteria for funding of projects needs to be reviewed periodically to reflect changing circumstances and issues that arise locally. The process for reviewing the criteria is to be annual via a delegated decision to Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Transport. **Appendix 2** shows the eligibility criteria that evolved in 2007 and has subsequently been added to over the years. This remains as a guidance document for all Members in making decisions about allocating funding.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

11. The £400K CPB budget was not allocated in the MTFP beyond March 2012 however, should the recommendation for the funding be continued this will be considered by Cabinet in line with budget setting recommendations reported separately.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

12. None.

RISK ASSESSMENT

13. Any risks are included in the financial assessment.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS

14. Fits within the principles of delivery of local community based initiatives through a properly constituted decision making process.

Safer Communities

15. Projects can Include installation of mobile CCTV where deemed necessary by ward members.

Environment and Housing

16. Many of the projects delivered via CPB are aimed at environmental improvements.

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

17. This report is not subject to an Equality Impact Assessment.

CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS

18. All wards are eligible for an element of CPB.

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Education related?

No

Background Papers

None

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:

All

Property

Many of the eligible schemes through the Community Participation Budget impact on the Council's Highway assets. Full consultation will be carried out with the appropriate sections regarding the relevant schemes.