

## AGENDA ITEM

## REPORT TO COUNCIL

18 JANUARY 2012

## REPORT OF CORPORATE MANAGEMENT TEAM

### COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION BUDGET – A WAY FORWARD

#### SUMMARY

Cabinet considered this report at its meeting held on 1 December 2011. A copy of the relevant minute is attached at the **Appendix 3**.

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

That Council 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 Council 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.