

Community Safety Select Committee
Review of Community Participation Budget and Ward Transport Budget
Outline Scope

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Which of our strategic corporate objectives does this topic address? The review will contribute to the following Stockton-on-Tees Plan 2024-2028 priorities: • <i>Priority 2: Healthy & Resilient Communities:</i> We will support residents to be safe and connected to each other in their homes and communities. • <i>Priority 3: A Great Place to Live, Work and Visit:</i> We will make Stockton-on-Tees a great place to live, work and visit - a Borough that residents can be proud of. It will be a vibrant and diverse place with an environment that is well looked after and outdoor spaces to enjoy. • <i>Priority 5: A Sustainable Council:</i> We will ensure our council is financially sustainable and manages our assets effectively to enhance their local impact. We will be a well-run council across areas of our business and continue to improve outcomes for communities.	
What are the main issues and overall aim of this review? Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) provides Elected Members with two budget schemes that, through engagement with the local community, can be used to fund project ideas within their wards: • The Community Participation Budget (CPB) can be used to fund a variety of developments ranging from small engineering schemes that improve the function of the space on or adjacent to the highway, to small projects that improve the local amenity space. The CPB is divided between wards on the basis of population-per-ward. • The Ward Transport Budget (WTB) is an allocation of the Council's City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement budget that is allocated on a ward-by-ward basis to undertake potential projects identified to address transport-related issues raised by members of the public via their local Ward Councillors.	

The projects that the CPB and WTB are typically used for are those that generate resident interest and engagement, albeit at a local level. Whilst these are generally small-scale and local in character, they connect directly with resident concerns and can have a significant impact on social and environmental wellbeing. Through the direct involvement of Ward Councillors and the input of the communities they represent, interventions should be well focused and likely to meet a genuine community concern.

Although there are a number of examples where both the CPB and WTB has been utilised to make positive differences across the Borough, several issues have arisen over the years in relation to these budget schemes. Ward Councillors can feel frustrated about what projects are deemed eligible / not eligible, the costs associated with a proposal, and the time taken from submission of a proposals to it being realised. In some cases, the completion of a project has created future revenue implications around maintaining / sustaining work developed via CPB or WTB funds. From an administrative perspective, there is also a need to be mindful of the officer time spent on developing schemes which then are not progressed through to implementation.

The main aims for this review will be to:

- understand the scope of interventions that are eligible through these two budget schemes, the processes for determining the priorities for use of the funds, and the management of the projects that are funded through CPB and WTB.
- establish the effectiveness of these two budgets and whether projects funded through the CPB and WTB have had genuine and sustained impact.
- ascertain the communication of the CPB and WTB to Ward Councillors and wider public awareness of these two funding streams.
- consider the value of CPB and WTB in the context of significant ongoing budget pressures for the Council as a whole.

The Committee will undertake the following key lines of enquiry:

What are the underlying aims of the CPB and WTB, have these changed since they were introduced, and how are the two budget schemes different / interlinked?

How much does each Ward / Ward Councillor have access to, and has this changed over time (if so, why)? How much has been spent by Wards / Ward Councillors in recent years, and what available funds have not been used (and what happens to these)?

What is considered an eligible / ineligible proposal, and how is this determined? Have criteria changed over the years?

What is the process for submitting, considering and deciding upon proposals? Who is involved and what is the timeframe for determining the validity and progression of a project?

How effective have completed projects been and how are these assessed? Have they created future revenue pressures?

How aware are Ward Councillors about these schemes – how are they communicated, and how are they kept updated on any submitted proposals?

Are residents of the Borough made aware about these potential funding opportunities and how they can submit ideas / proposals?

Is there an appetite to maintain existing CPB / WTB arrangements?

Can the Council learn anything from similar schemes being used in other Local Authorities?	
Who will the Committee be trying to influence as part of its work?	
Council, Cabinet, all Ward Councillors, residents of the Borough.	
Expected duration of review and key milestones:	
5 months (report to Cabinet in October 2026)	
What information do we need?	
Existing information (background information, existing reports, legislation, central government documents, etc.):	
- SBC People Select Committee – Community Participation Budget Update, including CPB Guidance (2017-2018)) (Dec 17): Community Participation Budget - SBC Place Select Committee – Scrutiny Review of Area Transport Strategy (Dec 19): https://moderngov.stockton.gov.uk/Data/Cabinet/202001231630/Agenda/att37948.pdf - SBC Ward Transport Budget Guidance (2020-2021): Ward Transport Budget Guidance	
<i>Who can provide us with further relevant evidence? (Cabinet Member, officer, service user, general public, expert witness, etc.)</i>	<i>What specific areas do we want them to cover when they give evidence?</i>
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC)	
Community Services, Environment and Culture	➤ CPB / WTB origins, aims, differences / links ➤ Processes / timelines / funding allocations ➤ Eligible / ineligible projects ➤ Effectiveness of completed work ➤ Communication to Ward Councillors / public
Ward Councillors	➤ Awareness of / views on CPB / WTB ➤ Promotion of these schemes to their residents ➤ Experience of using these schemes ➤ Views on continuing these arrangements
Local Residents (via SBC Communities Powering Our Future / Viewpoint panel)	➤ Awareness of / views on CPB / WTB ➤ Experience of using these schemes
Town / Parish Councils	➤ Examples of joint-working with SBC on CPB / WTB-related schemes ➤ Examples of non-CPB / WTB-related schemes undertaken / completed that have reduced pressure on the Local Authority budget
Other Local Authorities	➤ Examples / effectiveness of similar schemes
How will this information be gathered? (eg. financial baselining and analysis, benchmarking, site visits, face-to-face questioning, telephone survey, survey)	
Committee meetings, reports, research, case studies, Ward Councillor survey, site visits (TBC).	

How will key partners and the public be involved in the review?
Committee meetings, information submissions.
How will the review help the Council meet the Public Sector Equality Duty?
The Public Sector Equality Duty requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities. This review will be mindful of these factors.
How will the review contribute towards the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, or the implementation of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy?
<u>Stockton-on-Tees Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025-2030: <i>Everyone lives in health and sustainable places and communities</i></u> (focus area 3): Commitments – Community Safety (To make Stockton-on-Tees a safer place where people are protected from serious harm and live in communities which are safer and welcoming).
Provide an initial view as to how this review could lead to efficiencies, improvements and / or transformation:
• Clarity about the criteria and eligibility of work and the avoidance of unfunded future revenue pressures arising from the one-off capital works. • Confidence that the level of investment made through the CPB and WTB represents value for money and is justifiable in the context of overall budget pressures.

Project Plan

Key Task	Details/Activities	Date	Responsibility
Scoping of Review	Information gathering	February 2026	Scrutiny Officer Link Officer
Tri-Partite Meeting	Meeting to discuss aims and objectives of review	05.03.26	Select Committee Chair and Vice Chair, Cabinet Member(s), Director(s), Scrutiny Officer, Link Officer
Agree Project Plan	Scope and Project Plan agreed by Committee	26.03.26	Select Committee
Publicity of Review	Determine whether Communications Plan needed	TBC	Link Officer, Scrutiny Officer
Obtaining Evidence	• SBC Community Services, Environment and Culture • SBC Community Services, Environment and Culture • Ward Councillor Survey • SBC Digital Services and Systems • Town / Parish Council Survey • Local Residents Survey	30.04.26 28.05.26 02.07.26	Select Committee
Members decide recommendations and findings	Review summary of findings and formulate draft recommendations	30.07.26	Select Committee
Circulate Draft Report to Stakeholders	Circulation of Report	August 2026	Scrutiny Officer
Tri-Partite Meeting	Meeting to discuss findings of review and draft recommendations	TBC	Select Committee Chair and Vice Chair, Cabinet Member(s), Director(s), Scrutiny Officer, Link Officer
Final Agreement of Report	Approval of final report by Committee	01.10.26	Select Committee, Cabinet Member, Director
Consideration of Report by Executive Scrutiny Committee	Consideration of report	[17.11.26]	Executive Scrutiny Committee
Report to Cabinet / Approving Body	Presentation of final report with recommendations for approval to Cabinet	15.10.26	Cabinet / Approving Body