

**REPORT TO CABINET**

**15 OCTOBER 2026**

**REPORT OF  
COMMUNITY SAFETY  
SELECT COMMITTEE**

**CABINET DECISION**

**Lead Cabinet Member: Housing and Transport – Councillor Richard Eglington**

## **Scrutiny Review of Community Participation Budget and Ward Transport Budget**

### **Summary**

The attached report presents the outcomes of the Community Safety Select Committee's review of Community Participation Budget and Ward Transport Budget.

### **Reasons for Recommendation(s) / Decision(s)**

This topic was included on the Scrutiny Work Programme for 2025-2026 and continued into the 2026-2027 municipal year. The review is now complete, and the recommendations have been endorsed by the Community Safety Select Committee for submission to Cabinet.

### **Recommendations**

The Committee recommend that:

- 1) Both the Community Participation Budget (CPB) and the Ward Transport Budget (WTB) should remain as separate Member-led schemes.
- 2) With due regard to the Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) Ward Councillor survey feedback, SBC reviews and refreshes the guidance available to SBC Ward Councillors on CPB and WTB eligibility criteria and scheme delivery processes (which should include approximate timelines involved in the most common project proposals).
- 3) SBC considers how existing resources can best support and improve the timely processing of CPB / WTB proposals and ensure effective communication with SBC Ward Councillors throughout the process.
- 4) SBC continues to develop, and then implements, its new CPB / WTB-related digital case management and submission system (to include a Members Briefing at the appropriate time).

- 5) SBC strengthens processes around communication between relevant SBC Ward Councillors and officers designing a CPB / WTB scheme if, after feasibility checks are undertaken, environmental or other factors mean the original scope cannot be achieved.
- 6) Annual updates be provided to all SBC Ward Councillors on the state of CPB / WTB proposals (including the in-year and full four-year Council term budget position).
- 7) SBC Ward Councillors be supported to increase engagement with local resident and community groups to generate and discuss project proposals at ward level via Ward surgeries and Members newsletters.
- 8) To increase wider understanding and promotion of these budget schemes, SBC:
  - a) publishes a short annual summary on its website of projects funded through CPB and WTB in each ward.
  - b) uses its website to confirm budget allocations, processes for applications, any deadlines for season-specific works, and principal contacts for enquiries.
  - c) periodically advertises its CPB / WTB website link to the Borough's Town and Parish Councils, and local residents, via all available communication mediums.
- 9) SBC introduces an annual report to the relevant SBC scrutiny committee on the CPB and WTB (allocations, proposals, spend, carry-forward, etc.).

## Detail

1. Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) provides Elected Members (also known as Ward Councillors) 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) offers opportunities 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 a share 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.
2. 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.

3. 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 proposal 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 shaping schemes which are then not progressed through to implementation.
4. The main aims for this review were to understand the scope of interventions that were eligible through these two budget schemes, the processes for determining the priorities for use of the funds, and the management of the projects that were funded through CPB and WTB. In addition, the Committee sought to establish the effectiveness of these two budgets and whether projects funded through the CPB and WTB had seen genuine and sustained impact. Ascertaining the communication of the CPB and WTB to Ward Councillors (as well as wider public awareness of these two funding streams) and exploring the value of CPB and WTB in the context of significant ongoing budget pressures for the Council were also important considerations.
5. The Committee took evidence from the SBC Neighbourhoods (formerly SBC Community Services, Environment and Culture) and SBC Corporate Services directorates, and surveys were issued to SBC Ward Councillors, the Borough's Town and Parish Councils, and local residents (circulated to existing engagement mechanisms via the SBC Community Engagement Team). Similar Member-led budget schemes offered by other Local Authorities were also considered.

### **Community Impact and Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment**

6. As referenced within the Committee's final report, 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.
7. The Committee's recommendations seek to strengthen understanding and communication of eligibility criteria and scheme delivery processes, as well as increase awareness and transparency of these budget schemes to the Borough's residents.

### **Corporate Parenting Implications**

8. There are no direct implications in the report.

### **Financial Implications**

9. There are no direct implications in the report. The Committee's recommendation for consideration around how the Council can best support the timely processing of CPB / WTB proposals (and ensure effective communication with SBC Ward Councillors throughout the process) focuses on the utilisation of existing, not additional, resources.

### **Legal Implications**

10. There are no direct implications in the report.

### **Risk Assessment**

11. The review is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

### **Wards Affected and Consultation with Ward / Councillors**

12. This review is relevant to all wards across the Borough and all SBC Ward Councillors were given an opportunity to provide their views on this scrutiny topic.

### **Background Papers**

13. None.

**Name of Contact Officer:** Gary Woods

**Post Title:** Senior Scrutiny Officer

**Telephone Number:** 01642 526187

**Email Address:** [gary.woods@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:gary.woods@stockton.gov.uk)