

22 June 2015

Community and Health Committee

Ward Budget Guidance 2015- 2016

Report of: *Lucy Gill, Culture, Community and Youth Development Officer.*

Wards Affected: *All wards.*

This report is: *Public report.*

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The ward budget allocation has been made available to Members since 2012. The aim of this Localism scheme is to make the process as simple as possible whilst ensuring that key principles are met, and that the Council's legal and financial positions are safeguarded. It has enabled all Councillors to have the ability to make vital contributions to projects carried out in their local communities by local organisations.
- 1.2 Following the success of previous years' Ward Budget schemes, Members will once again have an allocation to distribute to proposed community schemes within their wards.
- 1.3 It is proposed to amend the governance to accord with local elections in order to safeguard the grant for new Members.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the revised Ward Budget Allocation Guidance listed as Appendix A to this report be agreed.**

3. Introduction and Background

- 3.1 The Ward Budget Allocation programme is a Localism scheme that has been running successfully since 2012.
- 3.2 The budget should enhance the role of Councillors in their communities, by engaging with people and organisations in their area to develop the projects and schemes that will support the identified priorities in each ward. By way of direct nomination from Members, it has enabled the Council to support some very worthwhile locally- run projects and

voluntary groups whose endeavours work to increase the overall wellbeing of the local community.

- 3.3 Members are also encouraged where possible to work together on larger schemes and combine their budget allocation if schemes cover more than one ward.

4. Issue, Options and Analysis of Options

- 4.1 The current Guidance allows applications to be made at any point from 1st April to 29th February.
- 4.2 This enables Members who may not be continuing in their role to spend the new financial year's Ward Budget allowance. Consequently any newly elected Members would not have a budget to allocate for their Ward. This is clearly not the intention of the scheme.
- 4.3 In order to ensure that newly elected Members are able to propose the expenditure of their total Ward Budget allowance, it is proposed to move the launch date to 1st June 2015.

5. Reasons for Recommendation

- 5.1 The change of opening date will allow newly elected Members to be able to propose the expenditure of the whole allocation for their ward.

6. References to Corporate Plan

- 6.1 By supporting local communities to do more for themselves and increasing volunteering, the Ward Budget scheme meets the Council's priorities for localism.

7. Implications

Financial Implications

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The current Ward budget allocation is £25,000. Projects should not have any ongoing revenue costs, and expenses should be incurred in the financial year where possible.

Legal Implications

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All proposals put forward should be legal and limited to activities which are functions of the Council – either statutory or discretionary, rather than the function of another body. The proposals should support the Council's priorities and any relevant permissions should be secured prior to the proposal being submitted. Members are required under the Exercise of Functions by Local Councillors (Written Records) Regulations 2009 to record in writing their decisions made or action taken in relation to their particular ward budget and provide such record to the Council within one month of that decision or action.

Asset management - None, unless projects impact on land and buildings in which case this should be considered during project development.

Equality and Diversity – The process provides a fair and transparent process

8. Appendices to this report

Appendix A – Revised Ward Budget Allocation Guidance 2015 - 2016

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