

Name of meeting: District Committee - Kirklees Rural Public Meeting

Date: 24th September 2015

Title of report: District Committees and Estates & Environmental Works Budget

Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	Yes
Is it in the Council's Forward Plan?	No
Is it eligible for "call in" by Scrutiny?	Yes
Date signed off by <u>Director</u> & name	15/09/15 Jacqui Gedman
Is it signed off by the Director of Resources?	Original Cabinet report signed off
Is it signed off by the Assistant Director – Legal, Governance & Monitoring?	Original Cabinet report signed off
Cabinet member portfolio	Cllr Cathy Scott

Electoral [wards](#) affected: All

Ward councillors consulted: Rural Councillors

Public or private: Public

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 Provide background including spending restrictions and opportunities for the estates and environment budget.
- 1.2 Confirm approach, process and timelines.

2. Key points

Background

- 2.1 This budget has been known as 'Tenant led budget'. The line in the budget has always been 'Environmental works budget'.
- 2.2 The idea has been, and still is, to gain ideas, engagement and involvement in decision making from a range of sources – including councillors, tenants, leaseholders and residents.

2.3 Cabinet have recently confirmed the re-introduction of the budget with District Committees central to the governance. This will help to provide a more strategic view and make more innovative use of the funding by joining up with other budgets as well as funding some short term, quicker fix responses.

The intentions and restrictions on the use of the budget

2.4 The outcomes of any works commissioned must mainly benefit Council tenants.

2.5 The budget cannot be used to prop up the General fund and is meant for one off works or as pump priming.

2.6 It has been used to improve 'lettability', reduce nuisance, harassment and anti-social behaviour and enhance the environmental impact of the estate.

2.7 The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) can be used for repair and maintenance of Council housing; general tenancy management; general estate management; policy and management; core plus HRA services - contribution to corporate anti-social behaviour services.

2.8 Applications which would be particularly encouraged will include those that :-

- a. Form part of wider initiatives that receive or contribute to joint funding in line with the criteria
- b. Provide a low maintenance solution
- c. Offer value for money and are appropriate to the current climate (e.g. no hanging baskets / CCTV)

2.9 The budget cannot be used for :-

- a. Maintenance of tenant gardens – unless a separate charge is made for the service.
- b. Street lighting.
- c. Dog wardens.
- d. Personal care services.
- e. Homeless administration.
- f. Housing advisory service

2.10 There are grey areas at the margins e.g. neighbourhood management. What this means in practice is if there is another piece of work planned, we can look to see whether it would be appropriate to use this HRA budget to support the scheme.

Resource allocation

2.11 The resource has been allocated based on number of properties in each district. It has been provided at district level in order to enable the most impact to be made.

District Committee	Number of Council Properties	Resource
Batley & Spen	5807	£179,150
Dewsbury and Mirfield	5521	£170,324
Huddersfield	8212	£253,347
Kirklees Rural	3150	£97,179

2.12 Roll over is approached on the same basis as the General fund with decisions as part of the usual budget process.

Governance / approach

Gathering ideas

2.13 Previously, proposals only came through for prioritising once a year. The new approach will be more flexible with approval gained twice a year.

2.14 Councillors, tenants, residents and leaseholders and officers will be able to propose ideas which will be gathered all year round.

2.15 KNH officers will provide support throughout and people will be enabled to progress their ideas where possible.

2.16 Initial checks will be made to confirm viability and that the proposal is within the HRA rules.

Wider engagement

2.17 The worked up proposals together with initial costings will be presented at KNH area forums. Where these don't align with District Committee boundaries a special forum may be called to enable appropriate and wide engagement. Attendance of Councillors, tenants, leaseholders and residents will be encouraged and is fundamental to the approach.

2.18 A simple, interactive method for engaging people in prioritising the proposals will take place and a scoring mechanism introduced to enable transparency.

2.19 Each Councillor, TRA and community voice will have 1 vote.

Decision

2.20 District Committees will be provided with the schemes for consideration and the feedback on their perceived priority from the forums. They will then confirm which of the schemes is to be commissioned.

2.21 It is to be noted that once a scheme is commissioned, more detailed costings will be confirmed. To enable maximum progress to be made, a budget contingency level of +/- 20% will be given to schemes. This means if a scheme comes in under or over the original amount, but within tolerance, further approval is not required and delivery time is not delayed.

2.22 Progress on previous schemes commissioned will also be provided as well as examples of ideas which did not meet the required criteria. This is to both help understanding of what the HRA can fund and also in case other opportunities are available to progress the idea.

3. Implications for the Council

3.1 Wider thinking and bigger schemes which are linked to other monies / initiatives take longer to come to fruition. This is likely to particularly impact on year 1 deliverables.

3.2 Varied engagement levels in current area forums. It is noted that the introduction of this budget is likely to increase engagement and support the approach to devolution.

4. Consultees and their opinions

4.1 Initial feedback from KFTRA has been very positive. KFTRA are looking forward to working with partners to progress this initiative.

5. Next steps

5.1 Ideas collated; worked up; prioritised through special area forums; presented to District Committees in the January / February cycle for decision.

6. Officer recommendations and reasons

6.1 The above approach builds on previously agreed Cabinet decisions.

6.2 The recommendation is to implement the proposed approach and review in one year to enable learning to be incorporated and adjustments made where appropriate.

7. Contact officer and relevant papers

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8. Assistant Director responsible

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