

Name of meeting: Cabinet
Date: 27 July 2021
Title of report: Place Standard Investment Fund Establishment, Funding Criteria and Decision-Making Process.

Purpose of report:

The report seeks approval of the Place Standard Investment Fund, criteria and decision-making process

Key Decision - 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
Key Decision - Is it in the <u>Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports)?</u>	Yes
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	Yes
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name	Rachel Spencer-Henshall – 13/07/2021
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?	Eamonn Croston – 12/07/2021
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?	Julie Muscroft – 12/07/2021
Cllr Cathy Scott Housing & Democracy	Cllr Cathy Scott – Housing & Democracy

Electoral wards affected: All

Ward councillors consulted: N/A

Public or private: Public.

Has GDPR been considered? Yes

1. Summary

1.1 Background

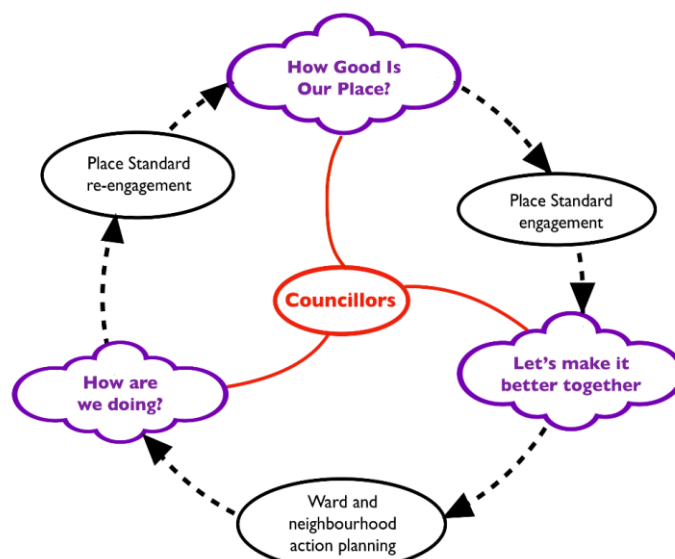
As part of its work the Kirklees Democracy Commission discovered from a wide range of sources that the council's approach to engagement and consultation with citizens and communities is no longer an effective model. What citizens felt was important was genuine engagement and dialogue designed in a way that takes citizens on an ongoing journey, that focuses on the importance of local identity and place, that provides opportunities for citizens to have a say, influence the future of their place and be able to contribute to making it better and to work in a collaborative way with the Council, Councillors and partners.

1.2 Through the Democracy Commission Cross Party Working Group work has taken place to respond to the Commission's recommendations in a number of ways. Firstly, a set of citizen engagement principles (attached at Appendix 1) have been developed and are now being used as a basis for building a different dialogue with local people and creating an environment where the notion of the Active Citizen can begin to develop and flourish. A Citizen Engagement Reference Group that brings together council officers and partners has been established to have oversight of all planned citizen engagement to ensure that it is co-ordinated, takes a place-based approach where possible and accords with the principles.

1.3 Secondly, the Council has adopted the [Place Standard](#) tool and methodology as the principle means by which place based engagement will be carried out. This step was taken following an intense cross-service pilot which took place in the Golcar Ward from 16th July 2018 to 4th August 2018. Since then, an organic approach to the use of the Place Standard has been adopted which has involved engagement being planned and commissioned based on three broad categories:

- Opportunistic - taking advantage of significant place events to undertake engagement, for example the Huddersfield Town Centre blueprint.
- Councillor-initiated - in instances where councillors wish to commission and undertake engagement in neighbourhoods or across their Ward.
- Community / citizen initiated - in instances where community groups approach the council to assist them in undertaking engagement.

1.4 The diagram below demonstrates the process taken: from place standard engagement to assess how good is our place, to action planning to make places better together, and then re-engagement to assess how we are doing, with Councillors at the heart.



1.5 To facilitate delivery of place standard engagement the Democracy and Place Based Working Service has the lead role to help plan, coordinate and oversee place standard engagement. Support is drawn from within the Council to help with the face to face (currently virtual) conversations with over 200 staff that have attended workshops or briefings to date on the use of the tool and a number of key services that have helped with the planning and coordination.

1.6 Resources are in place to give support with locally focussed engagement and promotion, deliver training activities, capture data and insight, analyse what we learn together and draft easily understandable summary reports. The service works with Councillors, citizens and services to share the findings and brings partners together to problem solve, identify priorities, develop a shared action plan and help identify or signpost to resources.

1.7 The raw data and summary reports are available publicly on the [How good is our place?](#) website. Once place standard action plans are produced, they will also be published on the website along with progress updates.

1.8 Impact of Covid on place standard engagement

At the time we went into the first national lockdown, all face-to-face engagement and action planning came to a halt as staff resources were deployed to support the community response hubs.

1.9 Virtual place standard engagement via the web, post, telephone and online discussion was undertaken for the 'How good is your home and your local place?' engagement between July and September 2020. Engagement via web and post took place in East Bierley in October 2020 and in Netherton and South Crosland in February 2021. Other engagement is currently being planned, on the whole virtual, but moving to face to face when it is safe to do so and as restrictions are relaxed. Some engagement remains on hold until face to face can be delivered, which will be planned with Councillors.

1.10 Action planning resumed in August 2020 and is beginning to progress in other areas where place standard engagement has taken place.

1.11 With this in mind, it is timely to seek a Cabinet decision on the proposed establishment, criteria and decision-making process for a Place Standard Investment Fund.

2. Information required to take a decision

2.1 To facilitate the implementation of emerging Place Standard Action Plans, it is proposed to set up an initial £500k reserve; created from slippage against the 2020/21 Place Infrastructure Capacity base budget.

2.2 The above proposal will then be incorporated into the 2020/21 financial outturn and rollover report to Cabinet on 27th July 2021.

2.2 The above Fund will subsequently be released through 2021/22 in line with emerging plans, criteria and decision-making process set out in this report. This will help focus on local priorities, for example dealing with 'grot spots', tidying streets and other local initiatives.

2.4 This funding will be prioritised only in those wards or neighbourhoods that undertake place standard engagement and develop a Place Standard Action Plan that involves Councillors working with citizens, partners and services, ensuring a collaborative and place-based approach to problem solving and priority setting.

2.5 The final report of the Place Based Working Group, presented to Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on 15 April 2021 included a recommendation that *clear resources*

should be set aside after place standard survey work to respond to residents' priorities, even where these priorities may differ from those of the corporate centre.

2.6 Councillors will be at the heart of the process in terms of engagement, action planning, priority setting and endorsing the Place Standard Action Plan for their area.

2.7 The decision to approve spend of up to £50k per ward per financial year is delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Democracy

2.8 The proposed criteria and process for the allocation of this funding is set out at Appendix 2.

2.9 It is intended that Cabinet will bring forward subsequent proposals for Place Standard Funding in future years as part of the annual budget process for 2022/23.

3. Implications for the Council

- **Working with People**

The Place Standard tool is used to facilitate a conversation about how people feel about their place - their experience of living there, their priorities and ideas and what they can contribute to improving their place.

- **Working with Partners**

The success of place-based citizen engagement is reliant on the involvement of councillors, the organisation, third sector, partners and citizens working collaboratively to deliver high quality places so that people's physical and social environments support them to live healthy, happy lives.

- **Place Based Working**

The very nature of Place Standard engagement is to better understand people's experiences of our distinct local places and to identify the networks and assets within them which could help to deliver solutions and outcomes for citizens.

Our approach is to work with Councillors and our partners to make sure geographical boundaries or organisational 'silos' do not become a barrier for people in either accessing services and support or developing their own solutions, and so that the 'whole system' of Kirklees is aligned sensibly around the local places that people identify with.

We will seek to understand individual situations to provide support, advice and guidance that is right and specific to people's lives and their environments. Solutions will not be 'one size fits all', but wherever possible tailored to meet personal and local requirements and developed through working with and alongside our citizens.

- **Climate Change and Air Quality**

No change

- **Improving outcomes for children**

Children and young people's views are sought as part of the engagement activities and will be considered as part of the action planning process and priority setting.

- **Other (e.g. Legal/Financial or Human Resources)**

The legal power for grants is section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 (general Power of Competence). Also, the council must when providing grants comply with Financial Procedure Rules contained in the Council's Constitution and in particular FPR 20.7 to 20.13.

Do you need an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)?

An IIA is not needed for this report.

4. Consultees and their opinions

4.1 The proposed criteria and process has been presented to Executive Team and responses and views have been considered and taken into account prior to finalising this report.

4.2 Engagement with Councillors will take place, subject to decision to discuss how place standard engagement and the place standard investment fund can help facilitate a collaborative and place-based approach to problem solving and priority setting in their ward.

5. Next steps and timelines

5.1 Subject to Cabinet decision the Place Standard Investment Fund will be implemented as soon as practicable, and Councillors briefed.

5.2 The Council will share the guidance and process with those groups that have undertaken place standard engagement and have developed or are developing their action plans.

5.3 The Place Standard guidance will be updated to include details of this fund, the criteria and decision-making process.

5.4 Regular briefings will be arranged with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Democracy, decisions recorded and reported to relevant ward Councillors and action planning groups, and feedback sought on the effectiveness of the approach.

5.5 The Democracy and Place Based Working service will ensure that finance monitoring is undertaken and a summary outlining decisions taken will be reported to Cabinet on an annual basis.

5.6 Officer recommendations and reasons

The Cabinet is asked to approve the establishment of a Place Standard Fund and approve the criteria and decision-making process for the Place Standard Investment Fund as set out in this report.

5.7 The Cabinet is asked to approve the creation of a specific reserve, with an initial £500k allocation, to fund endorsed action plans through 2021/22.

5.8 The Cabinet is asked to approve a delegation to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Democracy, to make decisions on the allocation of this fund up to a maximum of £50k per ward per financial year.

5.9 The Cabinet is asked to consider subsequent proposals for Place Standard Funding in future years as part of the annual budget process for 2022/23.

5.10 Reasons for recommendation:

The Place Standard Investment Fund is a new fund aimed at bringing a positive difference to communities and improving places in the Kirklees borough following Place Standard engagement. This resource will help to improve how we work together with elected members, local communities and partners in order to co-design services, maximise all available assets and resources in a place, and develop shared priorities that are informed by local people's knowledge and experience of their place.

6. Cabinet Portfolio Holder's recommendations

6.1 The Cabinet Portfolio Holder, Councillor Cathy Scott, supports the recommendations in this report

6.2 Reasons for the recommendation:

Our Place Standard engagement approach is allowing us to begin to develop a much more nuanced understanding of our diverse places in terms of the challenges they face but more importantly the aspirations they have. Over time we hope to develop a detailed picture which increases our level of understanding in a way that:

- Is based on local identity
- Facilitates a more cohesive and joined up response
- Is conversational and intended to bring citizens with us both in terms of dialogue and co-creating solutions.
- Has resources in place to help deliver aspirations
- Allows us to re-engage to understand the difference that has been made.

7. Contact officer

Vina Randhawa – Democracy Manager, Active Citizens and Places

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8. Background Papers and History of Decisions

Annual Council 22nd May 2019 – item 7 Ward and Place Partnerships – proposals to support place-based working.

Budget Council – 13 February 2021 - Budget 2021/22 and future years

9. Service Director responsible

Rachel Spencer- Henshall, Strategic Director Corporate Strategy, Commissioning & Public Health, email rachel.spencer-henshall@kirklees.gov.uk

Citizen Engagement Design Principles

- **Embracing local identity** – Kirklees is an administrative boundary. As such this presents challenges in the context of engaging with our citizens in a way that is meaningful and relevant to them. Our towns, villages and communities are the core strength of Kirklees – we need to recognise and harness this. They are an individual and collective strength which should be acknowledged and valued in the context of engagement. One size does not, and should not, fit all. Our approach to engagement should build outwards from communities not downwards. Understanding local identity will be key to making this happen.
- **Treating people as citizens not customers** – Our approach to engagement must be based around the narrative of the citizen not the customer or client. In aspiring to the notion of the Active Citizen it is dependent on the development of relationships and dialogue as opposed to a transactional one based on traditional models of service delivery. Engagement in this context will facilitate active citizens and facilitate a shift in their expectations of the Council.
- **Co-producing and changing behaviour** – Our engagement with citizens must be a means by which we develop a wider stake for them in civic society. Consulting on pre-determined options will not create an environment where citizens change their expectations and behaviours or willingly work with us to collectively problem solve. Genuine engagement that takes citizens on a journey should create an environment where they develop a wider understanding and are better placed to take ownership where that is the best approach.
- **Placing Councillors at the heart** – Our approach must make a virtue of both representative and participatory democracy. Councillors should therefore be placed at the heart of engagement with the communities they represent with a view to leading that dialogue over time. Emerging outcomes from recent workshops with councillor and officers show that this is not currently happening. Consultation and engagement is taking place in electoral Wards without the knowledge or input of the local councillors.
- **Acknowledging our staff as citizens** – A significant number of our staff are residents within the borough. Many are already active citizens who have a stake in the place that they live and work. This should be a strength from which to build our approach to citizen engagement, utilising staff insight as part of how we work on a more routine basis.
- **Deploying our staff as agents for change** – Involving our staff in a different approach to citizen engagement provides an opportunity to expose them to different ways of working and aid the move towards alternative ways to design and deliver services. Our staff are “the face of the state” and as such are key change agents in a changing relationship, particularly those who work directly in communities, neighbourhoods and Wards. Moving away from traditional models of service delivery will increasingly mean placing the citizen at the heart of service re-design. This will require an officer and service culture change.
- **Utilising new and existing networks** – The council and its partners already have extensive networks from which to develop a different approach to engagement. This is a strength. Our interaction with groups, service users and a breadth of citizens who are already engaged provides a helpful starting point. Similarly, there will be a plethora of on-line and off-line networks that thrive and exist independently of the council, doing great things within and across communities. Our approach to engagement must seek to tap into networks that already exist and seek to develop and nurture them where they do not. There needs to be a stronger feature on genuine digital engagement which seeks to grow the civic conversation.

- **Widening our engagement reach** – The Cross-Party Working Group have already been very clear that greater emphasis must be placed on undertaking engagement in a way that extends reach beyond those citizens and organisations who are visible and traditionally engage. This may well mean a move away from traditional approaches and see a greater emphasis on blending on-line and off-line techniques, some of which may be more resource intensive. This is an important consideration for the council.
- **Using intelligence and citizen insight** – In undertaking citizen engagement moving forward there is an expectation that the intelligence we have and hold is used in a way that informs and facilitates. It should be used as a basis for framing the dialogue not leading it to a pre-determined conclusion. Similarly, our engagement should be framed in a way that generates insight with a view to developing a richer understanding of our communities, their motivations and aspirations. This will inform the relationship with the council that they expect, and we would seek to develop.
- **Working in plain sight and telling stories** – If we are serious about engendering trust with our citizens our engagement with them should be open and transparent. Using the Democracy Commission methodology, it is important that we develop our approach and thinking alongside our citizens and learn with them along the journey. This will demonstrate a genuine culture of engagement from the outset and will build confidence in the process as well as the outcomes and outputs. This will require bold leadership. Furthermore, a transparent way of working should incorporate an agile approach to sharing the stories from our citizens and communities in a way that shares the great things that are happening and facilitates behavioural change.

These design principles form the building blocks for a different model of engagement. They collectively make up the ingredients of the cultural change that is required if we are serious about changing the relationship between the council and the citizens of Kirklees.

Place Standard Investment Fund Criteria and Guidance

The Place Standard Investment Fund is a new fund aimed at bringing a positive difference to communities and improving places in the Kirklees borough following Place Standard engagement.

Kirklees Council has placed a firm focus on a new approach to place based citizen engagement using the Place Standard tool that harnesses the strengths and aspirations of the towns, villages and communities of Kirklees.

Our developing approach to working in a place-based way is predicated on the need for the Council to work differently (not just more efficiently). We need to improve how we work together with elected members, local communities and partners in order to co-design services, maximise all available assets and resources in a place, and develop shared priorities that are informed by local councillor's and citizen's knowledge and experience of their place.

We want to ensure that council budgets are spent in a way that better reflects the strengths, needs and aspirations of local communities and have established the place standard investment fund to support local priorities informed by place standard engagement. Our long-term ambition is that place standard feedback gathered overtime from different places across the borough can be used to inform and influence service and council budget setting.

The underlying principles of the Place Standard Investment Fund are to: -

- Work 'with' People rather than 'doing to' them.
- Recognise the importance of local identity and how needs differ in different Places.
- Work in Partnership, with councillors at the heart, to genuinely co-produce solutions.

What can be funded and essential criteria

Criteria:

- The Place Standard Investment Fund will be prioritised only in those wards that have undertaken Place Standard* engagement.
- Feedback from Place Standard engagement will be shared with citizens, for example through *time to decide* events where they can prioritise the issues they feel are the most important.
- Priorities should be informed by the results of place standard engagement and demonstrate how they will help address the areas for improvement that will benefit that place
- Place Standard engagement and subsequent action planning should involve local Councillors and bring together communities, the public sector, private sector and third sector to work together to improve local places.
- A place standard action plan is developed that sets out shared priorities and the funding required to deliver them.
- The place standard action plan will be collectively agreed by local ward councillors and published on the [How good is our place?](#) website.
- The place standard action plan should demonstrate an ongoing commitment to support citizens and communities to become more engaged, connected, empowered and resilient.
- Priority actions should demonstrate they have been genuinely co-produced and draw on local people's experience and knowledge of their place.
- Projects should make the most of assets available in local communities and continue to develop the capacity of citizens.

- Place standard action plans should demonstrate that other local funding sources have been considered, such as: -
 - Other match funding or grants (see details of current opportunities on the Council's [Grants and funding webpage](#))
 - What local and national grant funding has been applied for and the outcome
 - That donation-based fundraising, for example through [Growing Great Places](#) (the Council's civic crowdfunding initiative) has been considered, and if this is not an option the reasons why
- The Place Standard Investment Fund can be used on local community led priorities for example dealing with 'grot spots', tidying streets and other local initiatives.
- A Maximum award of £50,000 can be made to a **ward** within the financial year.

**The Place Standard tool is the principal means by which the Council undertakes place-based engagement to better understand the strengths and aspirations of a place.*

How to apply:

- Following place standard engagement, place standard action plans will be developed that set out immediate priorities, what it will cost, timescales to deliver, partners involved and how impact will be measured.
- Place standard action plans will be collectively agreed by local ward councillors before they are published on the [How good is our place?](#) website.
- Once published the place standard action plan will be submitted for a decision. See *how will decisions be made* section below.
- Support to develop the place standard action plan, including templates, is available from the ACPT. See *support available* below for details of the officers that can provide advice and support.
- There are no deadlines for action plans to be submitted, subject to availability of funds.

Support available:

- Following place standard engagement, the ACPT will help to analyse what people said about their area and the summary report will be shared with councillors and partners
- The ACPT will work with Councillors, citizens, partners and services to use the summary report to help identify shared priorities and create a place standard action plan that sets out the priorities and the funding required to deliver them.
- The ACPT will help signpost to other funding and continue to support delivery.
- NOTE - The ACPT will help plan, coordinate and deliver place standard engagement. This includes support with local promotion, identifying other people who may be able to help with the engagement, involving local councillors, training and other resources needed.

What cannot be funded:

- Work to be provided by the Council that is already programmed to be delivered cannot be supported.
- Funding cannot be used to displace Council funding that has already been committed.
- Funding should not be used to supplement Council budgets allocated to deliver core services, unless funding is being used to pilot new approaches, respond to increased demand or to protect the most vulnerable.
- Funding should not be used to fill gaps created as a result of budget savings already approved by the Council.
- The allocation of funding should not commit the council to future maintenance liability, unless funding is being used to pilot new preventative approaches that could result in budget savings in the future.
- Activity cannot be funded retrospectively.

How will decisions be made?

- Ward councillors will be at the heart of place standard engagement and the development of place standard action plans.
- Place standard action plans will be collectively agreed by local ward councillors before they are published.
- Once the place standard action plan has been agreed by Councillors and published it will be shared with the Chief Executive and Cabinet Member for Housing and Democracy for a decision (NOTE – a maximum award of £50k per ward per financial year)
- A summary report outlining decisions taken will be reported to Cabinet on an annual basis.
- The ACPT will notify relevant ward Councillors and partners as soon as a decision has been made and ensure progress is reported on the [How good is our place?](#) website.

Active Citizens and Places Team contact details

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