

Area Forum Development
Appendix A: Participatory Budgeting Protocol

1.0 PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING APPROACH

- 1.1 In June 2012, the Area Forum meetings will be used primarily to agree with the community a list of key priorities which they would like to see addressed in their communities, through the funding allocated to them in the Council Budget 2012/13. These priorities will then be published and promoted to the community, voluntary and faith sectors to encourage those groups to submit bids to perform activity to address one or more of the priorities. Council and partner services will also have the opportunity to bid for this funding.
- 1.2 Upon receipt of the expressions of interest, it then falls to the Area Forum to allocate their funding, as resolved at Council in February. There are a number of suggested conditions to enable participatory budgeting to be implemented in a Forum area, which is outlined later in this report. If these are met, it is suggested that the participatory budgeting approach for 2012/13 follows a 5-stage process, as follows:
- 1.3 **Stage 1: Project Proposal Stage** – Interested parties submit expressions of interest (or 'Project Proposals') to the Council's community engagement team. These applications are assessed against the funding criteria for the applicable forum area by Council Officers, with successful applications moving on to the next stage of the process. Successful and unsuccessful bids will be informed in writing of the decision and outlining the next stage.
- 1.4 **Stage 2: Inviting comments on Project Proposals** – All Project Proposals are published online and promoted via email, local media and Council premises. Community Engagement officers and Community Reps in each Forum area are asked to collect feedback through their networks. Members of the community are able to 'rate' and comment on the proposals and make suggestions for improvement. For example, specific activities for young people will be first shared with local schools, youth groups and clubs to encourage young people to provide their views. This information is then made available for discussion at stage 3.
- 1.5 **Stage 3: Forum Budget Events** – Neighbourhood Forum budget events will be arranged, in place of the regular round of Area Forum meetings in October. These meetings will be used to identify which 'project proposals' are most supported by residents. In order to be considered for funding two representatives from each group will be invited to attend the workshop to discuss the project with other participants and give a short 'pitch' on what their project is hoping to deliver. After the presentations and workshops the audience will be asked to give feedback on each project, either in the form of a score or

a voting process. The results of this process will then be progressed to stage 4. A minimum of 35 residents, who are not connected to any applicant group, must be in attendance for participatory budgeting to go ahead.

- 1.6 **Stage 4: Final Approval** – After the meetings, elected Members in each forum area will be provided with the ‘voting’ results together with the ‘pre-consultation’ information. Members will then be asked to give final approval to the results before the successful applicants are detailed in a report to Cabinet in November requesting the release of the funding.
- 1.7 **Stage 5: Project Delivery & monitoring of progress** – Successful applicants are asked to attend the February round of Forum events to give an update on progress. These events will also serve to explain the plan of activity for 2013/14.
- 1.8 Groups and organisations applying for funding of less than £1,000 will not be required to present at the October events, and funding will be considered by Ward Members in the form of a panel meeting.
- 1.9 Once ‘voting’ results have been collated and results have been determined, they will be given to local Ward Members for final approval before being submitted to Cabinet in November 2012.

2.0 PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING GUIDELINES – SINGLE APPLICATIONS

- 2.1 In this context, a single application is considered to be an application for funding to one, two or three forum areas.
- 2.2 Applicants who have applied for funding from (3 or less) Area Forums will be required to attend the October 2012 events to present their proposed project.
- 2.3 Attending and presenting at every Area Forum from which the applicant is requesting funding is a pre-requisite to being approved for funding.
- 2.4 Applicants must also be prepared to have portions of their application published online in advance of the meeting. This is to enable the community to comment on the proposed projects before the meetings, and for those comments to be considered by elected members, residents attending the meeting and the applicants themselves.
- 2.5 These comments will be provided to elected Members and applicants in advance of the meeting and will be available for residents on the day.
- 2.6 Dates, times and locations of all October events will be given during July 2012.

- 2.7 If there are fewer than 35 people attending the events, who are not connected to any applicant, then it is proposed that applicants still present their projects and residents can still give feedback but elected Members will decide whether the application should be funded or not. This will be completed in the form of a 'panel meeting' organised by Councillors, the composition of which is at the Members' discretion.
- 2.8 Applicants will not be able to vote for their own project but will be able to vote for other projects if they are a resident in the area. Their 'own' project is defined by being an official member of the applying organisation.
- 2.9 Each application will have a total of 10 minutes to present and take questions from the audience. It is down to the applicant to decide how they present their proposal; power point, videos, display boards or written information.
- 2.10 All attendees at the events who are residents from the forum area will be handed a voting sheet on arrival which will include a brief overview of the projects, funding requested and project benefits. They will also be provided with a summary of the comments and feed back already received on each proposal.
- 2.11 Attendees will be asked to provide their postcode to verify that they live with the forum area and are therefore eligible to vote.
- 2.12 The voting sheet will enable local residents to vote as to whether each of the projects presented should receive funding. This will enable a ranking approach to be considered should there be more applications than available funding. If there is a tie in the results then they will be referred to the ward Councillors to agree how funding should be awarded.
- 2.13 The voting sheets must be completed for each project and will be collected by the Community Engagement Team at the end of the event. The sheets will then be analysed to determine whether the projects have received support from local residents to receive funding. It is recommended that the threshold for support is 50% of eligible voters. If a project receives less than 50% support, and funding is remaining to fund the project, it will be referred to ward Councillors for approval.
- 2.14 It will not be possible to announce the results of the voting at the meeting due to the time needed to analyse the voting sheets and ensure appropriate validation. The results will be made available to ward Councillors at the earliest opportunity for final approval before being collated into a Cabinet report to request the release of the funding to successful applicants.

3.0 PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING GUIDELINES – MULTIPLE APPLICATIONS

- 3.1 In this context, a multiple application is considered to be an application for funding to four or more forum areas.
- 3.2 Applicants who have applied to four or more forums to request funding will not be requested to attend forum meetings to present their projects.
- 3.3 Applicants must, however, be prepared to have portions of their application published online during September 2012. This is to enable the community to comment on the proposed projects before the meetings, and for those comments to be considered by elected members.
- 3.4 These comments will be provided to elected members alongside the results of the voting exercises from the October events for consideration and decisions regarding which proposals they would be prepared to recommend for funding.