

Ward Budget Guidance (May 2010)

This guidance replaces the original document issued in April 2008 and updated in March 2009. Support and advice with identifying, developing and implementing options are always available from each ward's Neighbourhood Officer.

What can Members fund through the scheme?

Ward Budgets provide Ward Members with a dedicated and flexible resource to address local issues and priorities. Members have full discretion in deciding their own local priorities, based upon their local knowledge and engagement with residents. The projects, services or facilities however need to benefit the ward, be locally derived, meet an identified need and improve social, economic or environmental well-being of residents. Projects cannot undermine council or partners' policies or service delivery and must be lawful.

What is the budget for 2010/11?

Each ward will receive an allocation of £50,000 in 2010/11; all monies which Members wish to allocate to projects in 2010/11 must be allocated by 17th December 2010. At present there is no indication that the programme will continue beyond 31 March 2011 and therefore Members should note that there is no guarantee that there will be administrative support to allocate and manage any unspent funds which might be 'rolled-over' into the next financial year.

What consultation methods are available?

The Area Forums in May and June will have dedicated sessions for Members to discuss their priorities with local residents. If Members wish to conduct any additional consultation it is advised that this should be started as soon as possible, noting the December deadline for in-year spending. Any additional consultation will have to be funded from the individual wards' budgets.

What is the process for getting approval for a proposal?

Neighbourhood Officers support the work of Members in developing proposals. They will work with departments and external providers to work up deliverable proposals. The size, complexity and mode of delivery affect how long this takes. The proposal needs to be developed in sufficient detail to allow procurement to take place. Details of the proposal need to be formally agreed by the Ward Members for sign-off. Proposals should be ideally agreed by all three ward members, although the agreement of two ward members is sufficient.

Projects under £10,000 will be signed off under delegated authority by the Head of Member Services, after approval from the legal and financial departments. Before sign-off is given the relevant portfolio-holding Cabinet Member will have 5 days to comment on any proposals. The reports will then be published on the Council website on a quarterly basis to ensure transparency.

Projects over £10,000 will be subject to the same approval process as per the pilot programme, with a Cabinet Member report being submitted to the Cabinet Member for Community Services.



What is the process for getting the service or goods delivered?

A procurement card has been issued to the Neighbourhoods Team so that individual purchases or invoices up to the value of £1,500 can be paid for immediately. For example, booking a coach or buying football kits.

For projects up to £10,000, which do not fit into the category above, a minimum of 1 quote is required, as per the Council's Procurement Code. Neighbourhood officers will however endeavour to obtain a minimum of 2 quotes for a service wherever possible to ensure best value for money.

For projects between £10,001 and £50,000 CompeteFor, the Council's approved database, will be used to obtain a minimum of 3 quotes from alternative suppliers, in line with the Council's new procurement code. This will make the obtaining of quotes speedier and ensure the organisations have required health and safety and financial credentials in order to work with the Council.

For popular goods and services the team would look to procure across a number of wards to ensure value for money, for example contracting with one supplier for all the installation of all festive lights requested.

Popular and cross-City projects

Festive lights and trees, hanging baskets and sports activities have proven popular with Members over the last two years. In order to fulfil all Members' wishes and achieve value for money we would ask that early decisions are made on these projects, as per the table below:

Project	Final decision date
Summer sports activities	22 nd June 2010
Festive lights	25 th June 2010
Hanging baskets	25 th June 2010
Final deadline for 2010-11 spending reports	17 th December 2010

Ward Champions

Based on feedback from the recent brief survey, Members will not automatically be allocated a senior Council Officer to take on the ward champion role. If Members indicate that they would like someone in this role this will be provided for them. Neighbourhood Officers will arrange these if required as soon as the programme opens after 7th May 2010.

Working with providers

Providers will be told that management fees must not exceed 10% on each project and that no more than 15% of the total cost of the project can be allocated to publicity.

