

Streetpride Devolved Budgets to Neighbourhood Boards

SUMMARY

- 1.1 This proposal allows each of the Neighbourhood Boards to make spending decisions against a portion of the Streetpride revenue budget annually.
- 1.2 The proposal is to aggregate the budget released at 1.1 with the current “Highways” devolved budget to produce a larger and more useful budget for use by Neighbourhood Boards on Streetpride issues in their areas.
- 1.3 The management of devolved budgets will be rationalised and streamlined.

RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To approve the proposal to devolve £10,000 from the Streetpride budget to each Neighbourhood Board.
- 2.2 To approve the aggregation of the £10,000 from the Streetpride budget as referred to in 2.1 with the current £10,000, which is currently devolved to Boards for spending on Highways issues to produce a £20,000 budget for each Board to spend on Streetpride issues.
- 2.3 To approve the amended management arrangements for the new Streetpride Devolved Budgets.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 This proposal will allow residents, through their Neighbourhood Forums and Boards, to make changes to their local environment which under normal considerations may not otherwise be prioritised.
- 3.2 This proposal will promote higher levels of community engagement which will, in turn, hopefully increase levels of resident pride and responsibility in the neighbourhood areas
- 3.3 The amended management arrangements and rationalised devolved budgets will result in improved project management and a better managed workload for service deliverers.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

4.1 Background

The idea of devolving budget choice to communities is not new in Derby. Currently, some £26,000 per annum is devolved to each of the Neighbourhood Boards as follows:

- a) £6,000 – on any activity
- b) £10,000 – on highways, youth or anti-social behaviour
- c) £10,000 – on highway related issues

This means that currently, some £442,000 is devolved to communities per annum.

In terms of managing these devolved budgets, there have been issues in the past with Category c) projects where the lead-in times can be such that it is difficult to complete the works within the in-year programme.

4.2 Proposal

The proposal is to devolve a further £10,000 per annum from within the existing Streetpride budget to each Neighbourhood Board. It is also proposed that this £10,000 be combined with the £10,000 at c) above resulting in a £20,000 per annum Streetpride Devolved Budget (SDB) to each Neighbourhood Board which can be spent on ANY Streetpride related issue.

It is important to note that this proposal relates to spending on jobs/activities which will be implemented in the next financial year, i.e. as outlined in the process below, Boards will produce spending plans by 31 January 2011 relating to jobs and activities that will be implemented from 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012 and funded from the Streetpride Devolved Budget allocated for 2011/12.

4.3 Process

It is proposed that the 17 new £20,000 Streetpride devolved budgets will be managed by the new Streetpride Area Co-ordinators assisted as necessary and appropriate by the relevant Neighbourhood Managers. The proposed process would be as follows:

- Each year, around Autumn time, there will be an “event” in the Neighbourhood area to determine local needs and aspirations. This could take the form of a pre-arranged walkabout or meeting, but the objective would be to produce a list of jobs for the local area in priority order. The “event” would be advertised in advance within the community. The Area Coordinator and Neighbourhood Manager will organise the “event”, attend it and assist the community to determine its priorities.
- This list would be taken away by the Area Coordinator who would cost it up and turn it into a Neighbourhood Spending Plan.

- Each Board will be asked to nominate two City Council Members who would have authority to sign off the spending plan on behalf of the Neighbourhood Board. This is necessary as the cycle of Board meetings in some Neighbourhoods is such that it would be difficult to make real progress just using established Board meetings. In addition, having two City Council Members sign off the spending plan will ensure probity of the process. The relevant Head of Service would also be required to sign off spending plans.
- The spending plan should over commit the budget of £20,000 just in case some of the jobs on it could not be carried out due to “external” issues which might crop up, for example Statutory Undertakers apparatus needing diverting, or a land ownership issue. In this way, a particular job could be “shelved” and another brought forward. This will ensure that the full budget is spent but it must be stressed that it would never be overspent.
- The spending plan for each Neighbourhood must be complete by 31 January. This allows plenty of time for local negotiations to get the plan right, but just as importantly, it allows Streetpride managers two months to programme the works associated with 17 plans, reorganise schedules etc so that the delivery against the 17 plans can start promptly on 1 April of the financial year following.
- During the year of implementation, the Area Co-ordinator will keep detailed out-turn costs against each of the jobs so that the current health of the devolved budget is known at any time. He/she will liaise with the Board throughout the process and if necessary, reprioritise the jobs on the spending plan so that the budget is spent but not overspent.

This proposed approach has been discussed with the Head of Neighbourhood Management and other key Neighbourhood Management staff and they are supportive of the proposals.

Annual bench marking of prices will take place to ensure value for money.

4.4 Link with LTP priorities

It is important to note that the proposal and process outlined above is entirely separate from the initiative whereby Neighbourhood Boards are asked, on an annual basis, to identify their LTP related priorities. The LTP priorities are implemented using capital funding from the Local Transport Plan whereas these proposals are funded from the Council’s revenue budget.

Notwithstanding this, there is a link between the two initiatives since if, say, one of the LTP priorities in an area did not meet the relevant criteria and was not supported for funding, it could be considered for implementation under the Streetpride Devolved Budget initiative . The community would need to decide, through the Neighbourhood Board, if it wanted the project to go on the Streetpride Devolved Budget spending plan.

Similarly, the £16,000 mentioned at a) and b) in 4.1 above is not part of this initiative but there would be no reason why a Board could not decide in a particular year to add this to its “pot” and in theory, make up to £36,000 available to spend on Streetpride issues.

4.5 What can the Streetpride Devolved Budget be spent on?

The Streetpride Devolved Budget can be spent on any function or service currently operated by Streetpride. As a general principle, the budget is there for the community, through the Neighbourhood Board, to spend on the local environment. It will normally be spent on those issues which would probably not be prioritised under the Council's normal criteria. Conversely, if a piece of work could be prioritised using the Council's current criteria then that piece of work should be implemented using the mainstream budget rather than the devolved budget.

Generally, spending plans would be costed using the base cost of providing the feature or service. It is not envisaged that there would be any on-costs for management and administration of the system or for future maintenance of the feature. Both of these would be absorbed in the mainstream budget. For example, if the community asked for some new benches in a public space, only the cost of the provision and installation of the benches would be charged to the devolved budget with no addition for future painting of the benches or for any staff time involved in organising the job. This aspect of the scheme will need to be kept under review since a proliferation of a particular feature (e.g. extra litter bins) may give rise to a significant impact on the mainstream budget. However, at this stage, it is intended to keep things simple and not take account these impacts unless they prove to be unreasonable and unmanageable.

In an attempt to be helpful, a suggested "Shopping List" is shown at Appendix 2. This list is not claimed to be exhaustive but is offered as a guide to the kind of things which can be implemented using the devolved budgets. Streetpride staff will supply estimates for any work not on the shopping list. Clearly, in producing a shopping list of this nature, some assumptions have to be made and whilst it is the intention to charge the amounts shown against the devolved budgets, there may be cases where this is not applicable and where a separate estimate would need to be produced.

4.6 Ramifications for staff.

As stated above, it is intended that Streetpride will receive 17 spending plans by 31 January each year. There is a fair amount of work required to process these and programme the requisite works so that they can be carried out throughout the following financial year in an efficient and effective manner. In addition, the inclusion of all the tasks on the plans may affect existing service delivery schedules and this too will need to be taken into account. Staff will deal with the inevitable disruption but there will be a learning process involved. Notwithstanding this disruption, the proposed scheme is well worth implementing as the advantages of the scheme for the community far outweigh any disadvantages for the staff. In the longer term, staff will benefit from being able to give residents what they want rather than what can be justified.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 This proposal is the extension of an existing initiative.

This report has been approved by the following officers:

Legal officer	N/A
Financial officer	Toni Heathcote
Human Resources officer	Celia Dyson
Service Director(s)	Christine Durrant – Director of Planning and Transportation
Other(s)	Andy Thomas – Head of Neighbourhood Management

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Background papers:	None
List of appendices:	Appendix 1 – Implications Appendix 2 – Suggested Shopping List

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

- 1.1 There are no financial implications regarding this proposal. It is simply about giving the community the choice of how £170,000 of the Streetpride budget is spent.

The £170,000 will be funded from all of the budget heads within the Streetpride budget with the exception of the refuse collection, waste disposal and street lighting PFI budgets. The precise apportionment is being worked on by Finance officers and this work will be complete by the time this initiative goes “live”. The apportionment will need to be re-visited when the details of the 2011/12 budget are known but the principle of funding the devolved budget across all costs centres (subject to the exceptions shown above) would not change.

Legal

- 2.1 Each spending plan will be signed off by two elected members and the relevant Head of Service to ensure probity of the system.

Personnel

- 3.1 None.

Equalities Impact

- 4.1 None

Health and Safety

- 5.1 None.

Carbon commitment

- 6.1 None.

Value for money

- 7.1 This proposal will be perceived as good value for money by residents who will be able to change their local environment.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 8.1 This proposal links directly with the Corporate Objectives SSC 1 and SSC 2 as follows:

SSC 1: To promote local democracy and active citizenship.

Outcome – Wider local representation and involvement in local decision-making

Clearly, the very essence of this proposal is that communities will decide for themselves how they want their local environment improved.

SSC 2: To improve levels of safety and cleanliness and to develop confidence and pride across our communities and neighbourhoods

Outcome – Improved community engagement across a wider range of local people and a move towards real ownership of neighbourhoods by local people.

The fact that communities can change their environments themselves will encourage more ownership of the neighbourhood and it should give rise to an increased sense of community responsibility and pride.

Neighbourhood Board Funding

Proposed use of the Streetpride Devolved Budget

As part of the 2011/12 budget setting process each Neighbourhood Board is to be allocated an additional £10,000 per annum from the Streetpride budget. This new £10,000 is to be combined with the existing £10,000 allocated for highways issues to produce a £20,000 budget for each Neighbourhood Board. The funding is being made available to enable Neighbourhood Boards to target those Streetpride related issues which, for whatever reason, are unable to be delivered within existing resources.

Streetpride staff, in conjunction with Neighbourhood Managers, will work constructively with Neighbourhood Boards to deliver activities or work in an efficient and effective manner so that the full benefit of this additional funding can be realised. To do this, we have set out below a suggested simple process to be followed and a “shopping list” showing those activities or work areas where we believe we are able to respond quickly and positively and where we would encourage Neighbourhood Boards to focus their efforts and expectations. The list is not intended to be exhaustive but will hopefully provide sufficient guidance to assist Boards. We have also indicated areas where we would not expect the funding to be targeted.

It is important, in all instances where Neighbourhood Boards wish to consider use of the additional funding, that they consult with their Streetpride Area Co-ordinator at an early stage. Accordingly, the following process is suggested:

- Each year, around Autumn time, there will be an “event” in the Neighbourhood area to determine local needs and aspirations. This could take the form of a pre-arranged walkabout or meeting, but the objective would be to produce a list of jobs for the local area in priority order. The “event” would be advertised in advance within the community. The Area Co-ordinator and Neighbourhood Manager will organise the “event”, attend it and assist the community to determine its priorities.
- This list would be taken away by the Area Co-ordinator who would cost it up and turn it into a Neighbourhood Spending Plan.
- Each Board will be asked to nominate two City Council Members who would have authority to sign off the spending plan on behalf of the Neighbourhood Board. This is necessary as the cycle of Board meetings in some Neighbourhoods is such that it would be difficult to make real progress just using established Board meetings. In addition, having two City Council Members sign off the spending plan will ensure probity of the process. The relevant Head of Service would also be required to sign off spending plans.
- The spending plan should over commit the budget of £20,000 just in case some of the jobs on it could not be carried out due to “external” issues which might crop up, for example, Statutory Undertaker’s apparatus needing diverting or land ownership issue. In this way, a particular job could be “shelved” and another brought forward. This will ensure that the full budget is spent but it must be stressed that it would never be overspent.

- The spending plan for each Neighbourhood must be complete by 31 January. This allows plenty of time for local negotiations to get the plan right, but just as importantly, it allows Streetpride managers two months to programme the works associated with 17 plans, reorganise schedules etc, so that the delivery against the 17 plans can start promptly on 1 April of the financial year following.
- During the year of implementation, the Area Co-ordinator will keep detailed out-turn costs against each of the jobs so that the current health of the devolved budget is known at any time. He/she will liaise with the Board throughout the process and if necessary, reprioritise the jobs on the spending plan so that the budget is spent but not overspent.

Streetpride staff and Neighbourhood Managers will provide Neighbourhood Boards with information and advice about a variety of issues and early engagement will ensure that the most appropriate solutions are identified and that these solutions are delivered efficiently and effectively.

Streetpride Devolved Budget – Suggested “Shopping List”

Improvement	Cost	
Dropped Kerbs for pedestrians	£1700 per pair	
Cycle Stand	£250	
Small surfacing works	£85 per square metre	
Verge repair and maintenance	£500 for 20 square metre	
New street lights within highway	Price on application	
New street lighting off highway	Price on application	
Bus stop access kerbs	From £1000 per location	
Replacement/enhancement of existing bus shelters	£4000	
Additional parking enforcement activity	£21 per hour for Civil Enforcement Officer	
Speed and volume surveys	£200 per location	
Road Safety Theatre in Education Schools Tour	One week for 1500 pupils - £4000	
School safety competition	£2000 per ward	
Child pedestrian safety training	£4500 for around 6 schools in a ward – based on 300 pupils	
Cycle training in schools	£20 per child for 6 sessions – based on 12 pupils per course.	
School travel plan project	£2000 per ward	
Young driver safety campaign	£2000 per ward	
Barriers to deter motor cycles	£600 per standard pair of 1.2 hoop, subject to site survey and suitability.	
Bench	£600 - £1100, exact price on application	
Bin for dog waste	£364	
Bin for street litter	£426	Standard Square
	£514	City Centre Round
	£643	Double Recycling Bin
Bollards	£77 - Standard soft wood £110 - Standard concrete Cast iron – price on application due to variance of types for different areas.	
Hedge pruning	£28 per 100 square metre by hand or machine	
Litter pick	£15 per hour per operative	
Footway sweeping (mechanical)	£40 per hour	
Road sweeping (mechanical)	£50 per hour	
Railings painting	£25 per hour plus materials	
Shrub bed maintenance	£79 per 100 square metre	
Shrub planting	£25 per square metre dependant on species/location	
Skip	To be advised	
Street name sign (new)	£120 standard pole mounted. Price on application for specific requirements, eg cast iron	
Tree planting	£120 each dependant on species/location	
Tree planting – small bare rooted tree whip	£5 each (minimum quantity 10)	
Tree planting around base	£30 per tree	
Arborist Team, vehicle and equipment	£75 per hour	
Gully Emptying	£20 per single gully £10 per gully if more 5 close together	

Other items and activities priced on request

Works not appropriate for this Neighbourhood funding

- Activities requiring community engagement or consultation unless undertaken by the Neighbourhood Board
- Activities which generate **significant** ongoing revenue or other liabilities
- Any work which includes the need for Traffic Regulation Orders
- Any work that would entail changing the established refuse collection and waste disposal regimes