



Report of the Director of Environment & Neighbourhoods Directorate

South Leeds (Inner) Area Committee

Date: Tuesday 24th June 2008

Subject: Participatory Budgeting Report

Electoral Wards Affected:
Beeston Hill & Holbeck
City & Hunslet
Middleton Park

Specific Implications For:

Ethnic minorities

Women

Disabled people

Narrowing the Gap

Council Function

Delegated Executive Function available for Call In

Delegated Executive Function not available for Call In Details set out in the report

Executive Summary

Following an invitation from the Narrowing the Gap Group, two Participatory Budgeting (PB) Pilot schemes have been completed in South and West Leeds in 2008. These schemes provided a pot of funding to local communities, that local groups, residents and service providers could apply to. Support sessions were held to explain the PB process and residents role. Sessions carried out consultation to identify local issues that projects should target and on how to apply for funding. This level of engagement successfully developed capacity of the residents. Applicants then presented their projects to local residents, who voted on which projects they wanted to see delivered in their neighbourhood. Presentations and voting took place on a Decision Day at a local venue and the results were announced to the community on the same day.

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 This report outlines the background and recommendations on the attached evaluation of the PB Pilot schemes in South and West Leeds in 2008. It is presented to the South (Inner) Area Committee for information and discussion.

2.0 Participatory Budgeting in Leeds

2.1 The PB pilots were identified by the Narrowing the Gap Group as a means of testing PB effectiveness in engaging with the community to develop capacity and contribute towards the Narrowing the Gap agenda.

2.2 The two pilot areas were in Drighlington, South Leeds and Broadleas, West Leeds. A steering group was created and chaired by the South East Area Manager and had

representatives from Regeneration, Chief Executives, Aire Valley Homes, Corporate Services and a lead member from the Narrowing the Gap Group.

3.0 Recommendations

3.1 The evaluation of the Leeds pilots produced recommendations for future PB schemes in Leeds.

3.2 Community Engagement

- Support sessions vital to train residents in PB, consult on priority issues and develop community capacity.
- Offer support in presentation skills.
- Videoing the process captured the enthusiasm and passion of the residents towards their community and the decision making.
- Show previous pilots videos to residents of new PB area to demonstrate principle in practice.
- All residents from the targeted area invited to Decision Day.
- Confident that, when asked, residents will make an informed decision.
- Improved public opinion of local authority and increased residents understanding of budget constraints.
- Developed community capacity to apply for funding and identify service provider to solve local issues,
- Ensure consultation is carried out to prioritise issues in area and ensure projects applying for funding meet these needs.
- PB process allows for better engagement with local people and it offers great potential for working at face to face level in deprived neighbourhoods and challenging negative perceptions of members and council services.

3.3 Partnership Engagement

- Engage and confirm support of partners as both funders, promoters, applicants and community supporters.
- A Coordinated approach needs to be developed by all agencies who are interested in developing their own PB approaches

3.4 Ward Member Involvement

- Ensure Ward Members are sufficiently briefed on PB schemes in their area.
- Identify key roles within the process for Ward Members at the beginning of the scheme.

3.5 Funding

- A minimum pot of £10,000 required to deliver a scheme.
- The funding amount promoted to the community is allocated only for projects and a separate budget is used for delivery e.g. printing, venue hire, catering.
- Future projects should explore sponsorship and other matched funding to potentially draw in business support and raise local profiles further. Match funders also have an investment to make the scheme a success.
- Future initiatives to carry out cost benefit analysis of postage to number of households against staff time spent door knocking.
- Confirm partners support of staff time being utilised to target the identified area.

3.6 Promotion and Publicity

- Planned and targeted publicity and promotion is a key aspect to the success of PB.

- All promotion costs need to be budgeted and recognition given to the levels of staff time needed to successfully promote and develop the scheme.
- Materials must be available in a range of formats.
- Mailouts to targeted area, local press coverage, door knocking, consultation boxes in key community venues and postal comments are key consultation and promotional activities required to achieve a successful initiative.

3.7 Voting System

- No Proxy Voting allowed as voting based on presentations.
- Residents had to attend the whole of Decision Day to vote
- Residents must attend the whole event otherwise score card is void.
- Keep scoring to its simplest form but ensure that the process will provide you with a ranking to allocate funding to.

4.0 Implications For Council Policy and Governance

4.1 There are no direct implications for the above as a result of this report.

5.0 Legal and Resource Implications

5.1 There are no direct legal implications. It is noted that legally only a meeting of full council can decide a local authority's overall budget, so participatory budgeting cannot affect that, but rather be a means of assisting elected councils in arriving at their decisions or of how to allocate parts of the agreed budget.

5.2 There are resource implications on the Well Being Budget if the Area Committee identify PB as a process to support community engagement activities.

6.0 Conclusions

6.1 The PB pilot in South Leeds was a success in community engagement and capacity building.

6.2 Area Management identify this process as a key method to achieve the Area Committees delegated function of meaningfully and successfully engaging with the community.

7.0 Recommendations

7.1 The Area Committee is asked to note the evaluation report and make comment as appropriate.