



Report of the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods

Inner West Area Committee

Date: 6th December 2007

Subject: Participatory Budget Pilot in West Leeds

<p>Electoral Wards Affected: Armley Bramley & Stanningley</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ward Members consulted (referred to in report)</p>	<p>Specific Implications For:</p> <p>Equality and Diversity <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Community Cohesion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Narrowing the Gap <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p>Council Function <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Delegated Executive Function available for Call In <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Delegated Executive Function not available for Call In Details set out in the report <input type="checkbox"/></p>

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to outline the aims and purpose of the Participatory Budget process and seek approval for a pilot to be carried out on the Broadleas estate working with partners under the leadership of local councilors.

1.0 Purpose of This Report

1.1 To inform the Inner West Area Committee of potential Participatory Budget pilot projects that might take place in the city and seek approval / support for selection of Broadleas estate as a pilot operating within the overall guidelines.

2.0 Background Information

2.1 This proposal is based on the outline approach attached as appendix 1 developed for the Members Narrowing the Gap Group. Comments made by members at that meeting have been incorporated into this revised version of that report. A subsequent, earlier draft of this report was considered and supported by CLT at its meeting on 30th October. A key objective of the pilot is to test this approach before considering the wider use of participatory budgeting (PB) in the city. PB aims to involve the public in decisions about prioritizing and allocating funding managed by public or third sector organizations. It can take a number of forms varying between direct public consultation about mainstream spending by public authorities to a form of co-operative evaluation by voluntary and community groups of proposals for grant aid. The objectives for this pilot will be:

- To develop the community leadership role of ward members

- To build the capacity and confidence of local residents in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in the city to take action to improve their neighbourhood
- To contribute to mixed communities objectives
- To test the PB approach in different contexts
- To build on existing neighbourhood working
- To raise awareness about public service budgeting

3.0 Selection of Target Neighbourhoods

- 3.1 Following the outline approach, it has been recommended to ask the Area Managers for West and South to select, in consultation with relevant elected members, one neighbourhood in each area in which to carry out the PB pilot. The neighbourhood must include super output areas within the 10% most deprived category. Members have suggested also that there would be benefit in having 2 contrasting pilots with one focusing more on capacity building in an area with little existing community infrastructure and another including residents from disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged backgrounds to test the possibility of achieving a 'mixed community' approach to PB.2
- 3.2 In considering potential areas for West it was felt that there were two viable neighbourhoods that might benefit from this approach, the Wythers and the Broadleas. Initial discussions with partner agencies re: priority areas have indicated that the Broadleas area might best serve as the target on this occasion given crime figures and the existence of a partnership group, Broadleas Improvement Group (BIG), which has an additional £10,000 at its disposal which might be combined with the PB monies available to enable a more responsive approach to local identification of need.

4.0 Funding the Pilot

- 4.1 The response to the pilot will clearly be influenced by the amount of funding to be made available for each Neighbourhood Budget, at the same time the process of community engagement needs to be about the benefit to be achieved and not simply about the amount of cash. It is proposed that each neighbourhood be given a core budget of £10,000 to allocate and that a further amount of up to a maximum of £1000 be made available to each to support the process itself (venue hire, publicity, etc). Matching resources from other sources will be explicitly sought and Area Committees benefiting from the pilots will be strongly encouraged to match the contribution from the Narrowing the Gap group budget. This level of funding should allow for meaningful initiatives to be supported at the neighbourhood level. In the case of the Broadleas estate BIG has an unspent allocation of £5,000 Inner Area Committee monies and a similar amount allowed by Highways for local improvements which has not been committed. At the last meeting of BIG partner agencies were in full agreement with utilizing these funds to maximize the potential success of the scheme if members are in agreement with the target area selected.

5.0 Objectives, Criteria and Process For the Pilot

- 5.1 In order to allocate the Neighbourhood Budget a set of objectives for proposals to meet will need to be agreed for each neighbourhood. These should be developed by ward members on the basis of existing priorities agreed through consultation with residents and local stakeholders; for example in any neighbourhood plan. BIG has a Local Area Management Plan (LAMP) that highlights key priorities to be addressed. Other criteria including matched funding or 'sweat equity'; feasibility and value for money should also be agreed to score proposals. Area Management Teams already have existing models for the allocation of small grants to community schemes which can be adapted for this purpose. Supported by an effective publicity campaign for which local media backing will be sought, local groups and individuals will be invited to put forward ideas to achieve the objectives of the Neighbourhood Budget.
- 5.2 The Members' Narrowing the Gap Group have also suggested that the PB pilot should be presented as a 'Community Budget' mirroring the Council Budget setting process, in order to raise public awareness of the way decisions have to be made by the Council about competing priorities.

- 5.3 Together the objectives and criteria will be used to determine which proposals should go forward for the PB event. This stage will be undertaken by Ward Members with support from Area Management. The members will also agree the process for publicising and managing the PB event, following the guidelines set out in the outline approach. Proposals selected for the PB event should be capable of meeting objectives within 6 months of funding being agreed. Terms and Conditions governing the use of the money and a simple funding agreement setting out the objectives to be achieved and a requirement for evidence to be provided for achievement and expenditure, will also be required.
- 5.4 Within this proposal it is vital that an estate wide approach is taken and the opportunity used to work with a broad range of residents, agencies and groups coming forward. It can not depend upon the “usual suspects” and should include an advertising strategy that seeks to involve as wide a cross section of people / ages as possible over and above the existing tenants / service delivery groups already in existence.

6.0 **Timetable**

- 6.1 The following indicative implementation timetable is proposed for the pilot project:

PB Proposal considered and agreed by LMT	late November
Member consultation and selection of target neighbourhoods	Early December
Agreement of criteria and process by ward members	December
Consultation with neighbourhood stakeholders	December
Launch and publicizing of PB pilot	Early January `08
Closing date for proposals for funding	Early February
Selection of proposals to go forward for PB event	Late February
PB Event and Budget Allocation	Early March
Funding Agreements finalized	End March
Evaluation of Process	April
Projects Underway	April-September
Evaluation of Projects	October

7.0 **Evaluation and Next Steps**

- 7.1 Each Area Management team will be asked to evaluate the PB process with a simple report covering each stage of the process recording effectiveness of communication, levels of participation, quality of proposals and discussion, issues raised, perceptions of the relative priority of local needs and aspirations and experience of the PB event. All projects awarded funds should be asked to complete a simple evaluation form describing their experience and the objectives which their project achieved, including building their capacity, which the Area team can collate and include in an overview report at the end of the pilot. The process and projects evaluation reports should be referred to the Narrowing the Gap Group in the first instance and then shared with other stakeholders including relevant Area Committees. Following comment from Area Committees and the Narrowing the Gap Group, a full report on the feasibility of wider application of PB will be prepared for consideration by LMT and CLT.

5.0 **Implications for Council Policy and Governance**

- 5.1 This proposal is clearly in support of the narrowing the gap initiative and seeking to bring about increased community involvement and further develop the member's community leadership role

6.0 **Legal and Resource Implications.**

- 6.1 The scheme will be monitored closely and reported back to Area committee and the Narrowing the Gap member group within a full evaluation of project delivery. Proposals will be measured against an agreed criteria as outlined in this proposal.

7.0 Conclusions

- 7.1** This proposal offers an opportunity to test out the principles of a participatory budget exercise at a local level within limited resources as a pilot project. It will also serve to further develop community involvement levels on a priority estate within the west wedge with added chance of success offered by the matched funding of £10,000 available through BIG

8.0 Recommendations

- 8.1** That the Inner West Area Committee support the proposal to carry out this pilot on the Broadleas estate
- 8.2** That members agree that the Broadleas Improvement Group be the partnership body through which to develop this scheme
- 8.3** That elected members in the Bramley area be nominated to play a key role in leading this pilot working in conjunction with Area management staff and other partner agencies

Appendix 1

Outline Approach for Participatory Budgeting Pilot

1. Selection of an area for the pilot

It seems most appropriate given the focus of the NtG group for the pilot to be in an area of the city which contains disadvantaged households. In order to avoid to narrow a focus on areas already likely to be benefiting from intervention the suggestion is to include those that are ranked in the 10% nationally in the index of multiple deprivation. It may also be sensible to identify a neighbourhood with a neighbourhood improvement plan (NIP) and where there is some capacity to support implementation. This would suggest south and west areas of the city.

2. Funding

Funding needs to be of a level both to attract sufficient local interest and to ensure the implementation of ideas submitted can create some worthwhile projects/ schemes. It is suggested therefore that the amount for the pilot is between £10 - 30,000.

3. Criteria for ideas

It is proposed that Elected Members in the selected area play a lead role in developing the criteria against which ideas for projects/schemes will be invited. These could pick up themes in the Neighbourhood Improvement Plan for the area e.g. clean and green or safer streets.

4. Participatory Budgeting Process

Ideas for projects/schemes could be sought from local residents, community/ voluntary sector groups. Everyone who makes a successful application will attend an all day participatory budgeting event where each application will be presented and voted on. All invited to attend will vote on the ideas submitted together.

5. Evaluation

This pilot would be evaluated in terms of its impact both in terms of community cohesion and improvements to the local neighbourhood. If the pilot is successful, the offer could be extended to all areas experiencing the most deprivation in the city where there is the capacity to support the process.