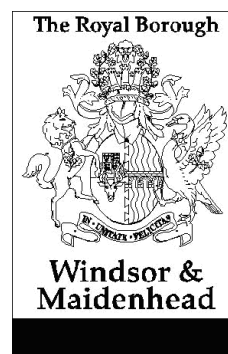


Report for: ACTION
Item Number: 4i



Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	NO – Part I
Title	Participatory Budget Consultation 2016 – Borough-wide and Geographic Areas – Potential Way Forward
Responsible Officer(s)	Andrew Elkington, Head of Policy and Performance
Contact officer, job title and phone number	Louisa Dean, Communications and Marketing Manager Tel: 01628 796410
Member reporting	Cllr Stretton, Principal Member for Culture and Communities
For Consideration By	Cabinet Participatory Budget Sub Committee
Date to be Considered	21 October 2015
Implementation Date if Not Called In	Immediately
Affected Wards	All
Keywords/Index	Participatory Budget 2016, Local Budget consultation, borough-wide, geographic areas, proposals for the future, increasing participation rates

<p>Report Summary</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This report looks at how the Royal Borough’s Participatory Budget (PB) – borough-wide and geographic areas – could be promoted for 2016 to help encourage more residents to participate. 2. It suggests continue running the consultation at the time of annual Council tax mail-out, therefore making best use of an existing communications channel with minimal additional costs to the Council. 3. The report also proposes to continue a pre-consultation process in order to ensure that the process is as relevant to local residents as is practicable. 4. The financial implications of the PB consultation would be decided through the 2016/17 budget process.
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If recommendations are adopted, how will residents benefit?	
Benefits to residents and reasons why they will benefit	Dates by which residents can expect to notice a difference
1. The scheme will enable residents to continue to have a direct say in how a potentially significant proportion of the	Within the 2016/17 financial year

2016/17 PB capital budget allocation will be spent on one-off projects they consider priorities, both borough-wide and in their specific geographic areas.	
2. The scheme would continue to offer more opportunity for engagement and participation so there would be even more local influence in how the allocated money is spent.	Within the 2016/17 financial year

**RECOMMENDATIONS: That the sub committee:
Approve the suggested process for the PB borough-wide and geographic area initiative in 2016, including the addition of specific, named projects, and delegate responsibility to the Principal Member for Culture and Communities and to finalise proposals for the 2016 PB consultation.**

2. Reason for Recommendation(s) and Options Considered

Background

- 2.1 Participatory Budgeting (PB) empowers local people to play a key role in deciding how public money is spent on projects and services in their neighbourhoods and gets people involved in determining local priorities based on need. As such, it enhances local democracy and is a key element of the Council's Big Society programme.
- 2.2 The annual borough-wide PB consultation started in 2010 (the geographic areas element was added the following year). The response rate for the six years is as follows:
- 2010 – 2,482 responses
 - 2011 – 2,963 responses
 - 2012 – 1,669 responses
 - 2013 – 1,450 responses
 - 2014 – 1,678 responses
 - 2015 – 1,743 responses

The increase in the last two years has been due to increased marketing and communications. In 2014 the consultation period was changed to coincide with the council tax bills being issued which continued in 2015. There was also tweeting and Facebook messages. This year, it is proposed that we continue with this as well as using the website, our residents' email newsletter and Around the Royal Borough.

Suggestions for the way forward

- 3.1 a) The PB consultation would continue to be carried out when the council tax bills are issued. This is at a time when people are thinking of their council tax and what it is used for.
- b) To inform the consultation, run a pre-consultation exercise asking specific stakeholders to put forward priorities and ideas for voting. This stakeholder list would include: councillors, parish councillors, town forums and internal Heads of Service.

c) The consultation would take place from Friday 23 October until Friday 27 November and would be promoted via email and phone interaction. This is the initial consultation with our key stakeholders to get ideas for what we are going to include in the consultation which will take place with our residents in February.

d) BMG (who carry out our residents' survey) would be consulted on the online and paper survey once the final list has been agreed upon. They would analyse the results before Members decide on the allocation of funding. This was successfully carried out last year.

e) An online and paper survey would then be used to highlight some specific areas where funding could be allocated as per the initial stakeholder consultation. We would also include a blank box for residents to put forward their own ideas for specific projects. Members would then be able to consider whether funding could go towards a certain project that had not been promoted through the initial stakeholder consultation.

3.2 Once we have feedback from the selected stakeholders, Members will be invited at the December CPBSC Panel to consider the options for the PB borough-wide and geographic area initiative for 2016 and delegate responsibility to the Principal Member for Culture and Communities to work further with officers on these ideas (and any others they choose) and agree the most appropriate way forward.

3.3 **Timetable for Implementation**

October 2015	Decision by Cabinet Participatory Budget Sub Committee
End of October 2015 (4 weeks)	Implementation of pre-consultation process – limited participation time will be required to meet the council tax distribution deadline.
December 2015	Analysis of results, Cabinet Participatory Budget Sub Committee to decide details of consultation for distribution
February 2016	Finalise consultation leaflet and distribute with council tax bill.
May 2016	Result of exercise collated by BMG
June 2016	Responses ready for June Cabinet Participatory Budget Sub Committee to consider.

4. OPTIONS AVAILABLE AND RISK ASSESSMENT

Option	Comments
1. Delegate responsibility to the named Cabinet Member to agree ways of refreshing the 2016 PB consultation. RECOMMENDED	This will enable the 2016 consultation to be revitalised and taken forward in time to coincide with the distribution of the Council tax bills in March.
2. Decide to end the borough-wide and geographic area PB consultation.	This could be considered a retrograde step and not in line with the Council's commitment to Big Society.
3. Dispense with the borough-wide consultation and run only the more 'personal' geographic areas consultation.	A way forward that may concentrate the attention of residents who relate to their own 'home' areas and therefore be more interested in taking part.
4. Dispense with both the borough-wide and geographic areas consultation and concentrate on other aspects of PB	This could be perceived as a reduction in the Council's commitment to Local Budget consultation across the wider community, with a negative effect on the Big Society Local Budget offer.

5. Key Implications

Defined Outcomes	Unmet	Met	Exceeded	Significantly Exceeded	Date they should be delivered by
Refreshed PB consultation run alongside council tax information mail-out	Missed opportunity to engage with residents and further decline in participation	Response meets 2015 rate.	Response rate exceeds by 2%	Response exceeds by 5%	March/April 2016

6. Financial impact on the budget

A Capital Bid for Participatory Budgets including £250,000 for this programme has been allocated in the 2016/17 budget for this exercise.

7. Legal Implications

The Cabinet Participatory Budget Sub Committee has power under the Constitution to progress the Council's Participatory Budget agenda. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

8. Value For Money

The PB public consultation provides the Council with information on residents' priorities, the value of which extends beyond PB itself by providing a barometer of local opinion that is beneficial to Council-wide service provision.

9. Sustainability Impact Appraisal

None arising from the report.

10. Risk Management

Risks	Uncontrolled Risk	Controls	Controlled Risk
Failure to refresh the existing PB scheme results in a further decline in participation and the result is less relevant to residents in general across the borough.	High	Refreshed scheme helps to encourage resident engagement.	Low
Failure to run the annual PB consultation impacts on the Council's commitment to the Big Society.	Medium	Use communications and marketing to highlight the many other areas of PB and opportunities for public participation.	Low

11. Links to Strategic Objectives

The Participatory Budget exercise is linked to the following strategic objectives:

Residents First

- Support Children and Young People
- Encourage Healthy People and Lifestyles
- Improve the Environment, Economy and Transport
- Work for safer and stronger communities

Value for Money

- Deliver Economic Services
- Improve the use of technology
- Increase non-Council Tax Revenue
- Invest in the future

Delivering Together

- Enhanced Customer Services
- Deliver Effective Services
- Strengthen Partnerships

Equipping Ourselves for the Future

- Equipping Our Workforce
- Developing Our systems and Structures
- Changing Our Culture

12. Equalities, Human Rights and Community Cohesion

It is not necessary to complete an EqlA for this exercise.

13. Staffing/Workforce and Accommodation implications:

None

14. Property and Assets

None

15. Any other implications:

None

16. Consultation

As previously set out in this report.

17. Appendices

None

18. Background Information

See 2.

19. Consultation (Mandatory)

Name of consultee	Post held and Department	Date sent	Date received	See comments in paragraph:
Internal				
Cllr Burbage	Leader of the Council	13/10/15	14/10/15	Amendments to the report
George Bathurst	Principal Member for Policy	13/10/15		
Cllr Claire Stretton	Principal Member for Culture and Communities	13/10/15	13/10/15	
Andrew Elkington	Head of Policy and Performance	08/10/15	08/10/15	Amendments to the report
Andrew Brooker	Head of Finance	8/10/15		
External				
NA				

20. Report History

Decision type:	Urgency item?
Non key decision	No.

Full name of report author	Job title	Full contact no:
Louisa Dean	Communications and Marketing Manager	01628 796410