



	Cabinet Member Report
Date:	2nd June 2014
Subject:	Ward Budgets 2014-2018
1. Summary	
1.1 This report seeks approval for the expenditure of £3.68 million to continue the ward budget programme for the next electoral cycle 2014-2018.	
1.2 This report also seeks minor changes to the process for the ward budget Programme.	
Recommendation	
1. That expenditure of £3.68 million be approved for the ward budget programme for 2014 -2018 and that the minor changes to the process in the report be agreed.	



City of Westminster

Cabinet Member Report

Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for the Sports, Leisure and Open Spaces

Date:

12 June 2014

Classification:

For General Release

Title of Report:

Ward Budgets 2014 - 2018

Report of:

Head of Cabinet Secretariat

Wards involved:

All

Policy context:

Neighbourhoods Programme

Financial summary:

This report requests the release of £3.68 million to fund the 2014-2018 ward budget programme, offering each ward £46,000 to spend on local priorities provided that each project fulfils the criteria outlined in the report.

Report Author:

Janis Best, Member Services Manager

Contact details

**This matter is being handled by:
Janis Best, Member Services Manager
020 7641 3255
Fax 020 7641 3156
jb@westminster.gov.uk**

1. Background Information

- 1.1 Ward budgets were established under the City Council's Neighbourhood Programme agreed by the Cabinet in November 2007. The extension to the ward budget programme until March 2014 was agreed in March 2010.

2. Proposed Ward Budget funding for 2014-2018

- 2.1 After consideration by the Policy & Scrutiny Committee in March 2014 there was a recommendation to continue the programme with some minor changes. The level of funding at £46,000 per ward has been included in the base budget for the next electoral cycle at a total cost of £3.68 million.
- 2.2 Officers from the Cabinet Secretariat will continue to support the programme from existing staff budgets.
- 2.3 £46,000 will be able to be drawn down each year by each ward; funds will also be able to be rolled forward if under-spent at the end of the financial year. However at the end of the 2017-2018 year all funds which are not spent will be returned to the Council reserves.

3. Proposed changes to the ward budget process for 2014-2018

- 3.1 It remains essential that Members have full discretion in deciding their own local priorities, based upon their local knowledge and engagement with residents. It is important that any projects, services or facilities provided as part of the ward budget process must:
- Benefit the ward
 - Be locally derived
 - Meet an identified need
 - Improve social, economic or environmental well-being of residents

It should be noted that all ward budget projects must not contradict existing Council policies.

- 3.2 In response to the discussions at the Children and Community Services Policy & Scrutiny Committee on 31 March 2014 a number of minor changes will be made to the process.
- 3.3 The Member Services Officers who support the process will prioritise promoting and publicising the programme across Westminster. This will include attending networking meetings, organisations' AGMs and the re-working of the programme's web presence.
- 3.4 The monitoring of the projects will be proportionate to the size of the organisation and the amount of funding they have received. Value for money and transparency of Council fund expenditure remain a priority but the amount of paper monitoring requested from organisations will be flexible. It is also

proposed that visits by the Member Services Officers to all projects will be a formal part of the monitoring process.

- 3.5 The application process will be streamlined and applications will be able to be submitted via the programme's webpage as well as to the individual Members and officers.
- 3.6 There will be an increase in the monitoring of the recognition that individual wards receive for the funds with an emphasis on the Westminster City Council logo and tagline 'supported by the Ward Budget of....' being used for all publicity relating to individual projects.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 The proposals for expenditure in this report amount to £3,680,000 and have been included in the Council's budget planning for the years 2014-2018.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 gives every local authority a power to do anything which they consider is likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of a) the economic well-being of their area, b) the social well-being of their area, and c) the environmental well-being of their area. This power can be used for the benefit of the whole or any part of a local authority's area or all or any persons resident or present in a local authority's area.
- 5.2 When ward budgets were first introduced in 2008, it was not possible as a matter of law for spending decisions to be taken by ward Members themselves. Section 236 of the Local Government and Health Act 2007, which came into force on 1 April 2009 has changed that position, in that it is now legally possible for arrangements to be made for the discharge of functions by any individual Member(s), to the extent that the function relates to the electoral division or ward for which the Member is elected. However, for the reasons set out in paragraph 5.3 below it is proposed that decisions on ward budgets be taken as set out in this report.
- 5.3 Spending decisions will be kept under the remit of the Cabinet Member for Sports, Leisure and Open Spaces because, while we envisage most decisions being taken at officer level, it is important to maintain a corporate overview of the process.

6. Outstanding Issues

- 6.1 None

7. Equalities

- 7.1 The proposals in this report will support the Council's wider equalities and diversity agenda by focusing on addressing local issues with enhanced local engagement.

8. Reason for Decision

- 8.1 The expenditure is expected to continue to address local ward priorities. The minor changes to the process will ensure that organisations have better access to the programme and that the monitoring is proportionate whilst still maintaining a level of probity needed for the spending of public funds.

If you have any queries about this report or wish to inspect one of the background papers please contact Janis Best on 020 7641 3255, fax 020 7641 3156, email jbest@westminster.gov.uk

For completion by the Cabinet Member for Sports, Leisure and Open Spaces

Declaration of Interest

- I have no interest to declare in respect of this report

Signed Date
Councillor Steve Summers, Cabinet Member for Sports, Leisure and Open Spaces

- I have to declare an interest

State nature of interest:
.....

Signed Date
Councillor Steve Summers, Cabinet Member for Sports, Leisure and Open Spaces

(N.B: If you have an interest you should seek advice as to whether it is appropriate to make a decision in relation to this matter.)

For the reasons set out above, I agree the recommendation(s) in the report entitled **Ward Budgets 2014-2018** and reject any alternative options which are referred to but not recommended.

Signed
Councillor Steve Summers, Cabinet Member for Sports, Leisure and Open Spaces

Date

<p>For Ward Specific Reports Only</p> <p>In reaching this decision I have given due regard to any representations made by relevant Ward Members.</p> <p>Signed Councillor Steve Summers, Cabinet Member for Sports, Leisure and Open Spaces</p> <p>Date</p>
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If you have any additional comment which you would want actioned in connection with your decision you should discuss this with the report author and then set out your comment below before the report and this pro-forma is returned to the Secretariat for processing.

Additional comment:
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NOTE: If you do not wish to approve the recommendations, or wish to make an alternative decision, it is important that you consult the report author, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, the Director of Finance and Performance and, if there are staffing implications, the Director of Resources (or their representatives) so that (1) you can be made aware of any further relevant considerations that you should take into account before making the decision and (2) your reasons for the decision can be properly identified and recorded, as required by law.

Note to Cabinet Member: Your decision will now be published and copied to the Members of the relevant Policy & Scrutiny Committee. If the decision falls within the criteria for call-in, it will not be implemented until five working days have elapsed for any call-in request to be received.