

Scoping Document as amended following Members comments during consideration of the draft scoping document, 29 June 2015

Template Scoping Document

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| <u>Community Select Committee</u> | |
| <u>Scrutiny Review Title:</u> | Local Community Budgets |
| <u>Background issues</u> to review – rationale for scrutinising this issue: | <p>Members have raised the issue of wanting to scrutinise LCB's for some time. During canvassing for scrutiny themes Members made the following comments:</p> <p><i>“LCB – Budgets –what should be considered value for money? A scrutiny of what LCB Budget money is spent on and where it may arise – to hold members to account on their decisions and ask recipients of LCB money what in fact the money has done to further their cause or how the community has benefitted. (possibly jointly with O&S Committee)”</i></p> <p>Community Select Committee Members have been informed by officers that the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Neighbourhoods (now Community Health & Older People) was undertaking a review of some aspects of the LCBs and advised that the results of the review could be included in, or supplement any subsequent reviews undertaken by the Committee. Therefore the review timing will need to fit in with the internal Portfolio Holders review.</p> |
| Is the issue highlighted as one of the Council's corporate aims and objectives of the Council's draft <u>Corporate Strategy</u> , – ‘Sharing the Dividends’? If so which one: | Within the Council's Corporate Strategy there are various commitments in the document that can be linked to the use of Local Community Budgets such as: “Shape our Community - Encourage Community Involvement” , “Create Sustainable Communities - Focus on neighbourhoods” , “Move towards Excellence” & “Use resources effectively” |
| Is this issue one that raises interest with the public via complaints or Members' surgeries?: | The Head of Business Strategy, Community and Customer Services has reported that there are no history of recorded complaints regarding LCBs from external groups |

Focus of the review: (State what the review focus will be)

To be identified by the Committee at the scoping meeting. Officers have suggested the following possible Options:

Suggested areas to cover:

- *Establish the purpose and focus of LCBs*
- *Test the level of discretion and how budgets are used*
- *Look at alignment with corporate, local and town wide priorities and needs?*
- *Provide analysis of LCB allocations by project*
- *Consider Value for Money and use of resources*

Some questions that Members may wish to ask:

Establish the purpose and focus of LCBs -

- What criteria are applied to assess whether a bid is acceptable?
- What explanation and training is provided to new Members/refresher training/guidance for existing Members re LCBs?
- What level of discretion do Ward Members have in allocating LCBs?

Analysis of LCB allocations by project -

- Which groups have been helped by LCBs since the commencement of these funds?
- Is there a mechanism in place to spread around funding from the LCBs so that no particular groups or sections of the community receive disproportionately more than other areas? If not why not? How are they publicised?
- What level of monitoring is in place regarding the successful LCB bids? Look at the current analysis of random testing

Value for Money – use of resources –

- How much underspend is there each year?
- Is the LCB scheme a more cost effective way of allocating funds to community groups/projects than its predecessors Action Teams/Area Committees?
- Are some successful LCB bids more obviously benefiting the community over others?

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| | <p>– can a value judgement be made against bids? – <i>This is subjective but all bids should stand up to public scrutiny</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What happens to partially funded bids, where the required value for the project is not met? • How secure are LCB funds for future years? Are Community Groups dependent on receiving these grants and what would happen to these groups if less money was available in future years? <p><u>LCB spend alignment with corporate, local and town wide needs -</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the LCB spend align with corporate priorities? • Is the award of LCB’s making a difference to local communities? • How proactive are ward members in looking at local needs? Should the scheme encourage Ward Members to meet and jointly agree which bids to support that address local needs? • Town wide vs Local - Should there be a separate budget/process for town wide bids? <p><u>Possible area of Risk to the Council</u> - LCB funding is provided to community groups where it could be argued that potentially insufficient safeguarding risk assessments are carried out, due to only 10% random check on funding bids by officers. This leaves a risk that bids could be awarded to groups working with older people, younger people, disabled groups and other vulnerable people. Is the funding being used for group’s revenue funding and not for standalone projects?</p> |
| <p><u>Timing issues:</u> Are there any timing constraints to when the review can be carried out?</p> | <p>Officers will advise at the meeting if there are any timing issues to consider. As stated above the review will need to co-ordinate with the Portfolio Holders internal review. The review will have to fit in with the timing of the other Select Committee review work programme items.</p> |
| <p>The Committee will meet on (provide <u>dates</u> if known):</p> | <p>Dates: Day/Month/Time/Venue 29 June 2015 – Discuss scoping with Members for LCB review 18 November 2015– agree draft scope & receive presentation</p> |

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| | <p>10 December 2015 – Interview witnesses <i>A further date(s) for interviews will be required due to the extra witnesses that Members have requested.</i></p> <p>Date to be agreed – agree recommendations & final report</p> |
| <p><u>SBC Leads</u> (list the Executive Portfolio Holders and SD’s Heads of Service who should appear as witnesses):</p> | <p><i>Officers have suggested the following people:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Executive Portfolio Holder(s) for Resources, Cllr Joan Lloyd; Community, Health and Older People, Cllr Jeannette Thomas, Neighbourhoods & Co-operative Council, Cllr Simon Speller</i> • <i>Leader of the Council, Cllr Sharon Taylor</i> • <i>Chief Executive, Scott Crudgington</i> • <i>Strategic Director Community, Matt Partridge</i> • <i>Head of Business Strategy, Community and Customer Services, Richard Protheroe</i> • <i>Community Development Officer, Fiona Rolfe</i> • <i>Ward Councillor(s) – (to be identified – at least one from each political group)</i> |
| <p>Any <u>other witnesses</u> (external persons/critical friend)?:</p> | <p>To be identified by the Committee at the scoping meeting. <i>Possible options identified by officers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A selection of LCB recipient groups – (a criteria for invitation would need to be agreed, but it should include both successful and non-successful bids if they are willing to attend/submit a response)</i> • <i>Critical Friend – Officers discussed how appropriate it would be to invite in an officer from another local authority to speak as a “critical friend”. HCC’s scheme is administered by a group of officers and is not directly comparable to SBC’s scheme and there is no other similar scheme running in neighbouring authorities. It is therefore suggested that in this instances it is not a suitable issue for a critical friend witness.</i> • <i>David Kissane – as a former Councillor, David would have a good understanding of the way the scheme is operated and would be able to provide his views on the scheme which could be helpful to the review</i> |

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| <p>too broad/detailed to be covered by the review):</p> | |
| <p><u>Background Documents/data</u> that can be provided to the review</p> | <p><i>As identified by the Committee at the draft scoping meeting 29 June 2015:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Previous internal reviews into LCBs</i> • <i>Shared Internal Audit Service audit of LCBs</i> • <i>Percentage of monies paid to bids inside & outside their wards by Members</i> • <i>Guidance on whether bids from other statutory bodies and outside agencies should be considered</i> • <i>a list of recipient of LCB awards in 2013/14, 2014/15 and 2015/16 to date</i> • <i>a breakdown of LCB awards by ethnicity, religion and age</i> • <i>some desk top research of other LCB schemes</i> • <i>Analysis of allocations by project – looking at some examples to determine possible risks to the Council around issues such as financial status, safeguarding etc</i> |
| <p><u>Agreed Milestones and review sign off</u> -To be agreed by Members and officers</p> | <p><i>Formal response from Executive Portfolio Holder (Executives have a Statutory requirement to respond to Scrutiny review recommendations two months after receiving a final report and recommendations of a review: Date Executive Portfolio responses are expected (dependent on the final report & executive portfolio response template publishing date): DD MM YY</i></p> <p><i>Date for monitoring implementation of recommendations – final sign off (typically one year from completion of the review): DD MM YY</i> (Close to this date the Select Committee will receive a report at a Committee meeting to agree the final sign off of the review recommendations)</p> |