



Walsall Area Partnerships

Agenda Item No. 6

**Report to Aldridge and Beacon Area Panel
Participatory Budgeting within Area Partnerships
01 October 2013**

1. Context

- 1.1 Through Cabinet on 22 April, 2013 and Council on 22 May 2013 seven proposals for devolution discussed in a report on "Devolution Through Area Partnerships" were approved. The agreed proposals, seek to further develop the Area Partnership model. This report further considers one of those proposals, Participatory Budgeting (PB), as it moves towards the phases of design and implementation, with respect to an opportunity to apply PB to the issue of verge parking.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Area Panel meeting is recommended to note the progress to date in relation to Participatory Budgeting through the Area Partnership structure.
- 2.2 The Area Panel views on the proposal for piloting a Participatory Budgeting verge parking initiative in the way described in this paper is sought.
- 2.3 The Area Panel views on the identified verge parking schemes as set out in table 1.
- 2.4 The Area Panel propose any additional verge parking sites for consideration

3. Background to Participatory Budgeting

- 3.1 PB directly involves local people in making decisions on the spending priorities for a specifically identified public budget. This is through the engagement of residents and the community to discuss spending priorities, making and voting on proposals, as well as opening up to the public a role in scrutiny and monitoring of the process.
- 3.2 Across the Walsall Borough we are focusing our initial PB process on issues around cleaner and greener services and highway maintenance, including verge parking. There will be a number of opportunities for the public to become involved in influencing and determining



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how and when services are delivered. There will be a variety of opportunities to engage, including consultation and engagement, internet, social media, etc.

- 3.3 Localised smaller scale activity has taken place to compliment and inform the main PB described above. For example, in the Walsall South Area Partnership a recent engagement and consultation exercise, to support a local housing provider in identifying community projects has recently taken place. This culminated in the successful selection of a range of projects for the area.
- 3.4 Further localised interventions following a PB model include the developing suggestion to utilise an element of Area Partnership's funding (should it be available) for community projects in the Willenhall and Short Heath Area Partnership, enabling local people to vote for suitable community projects in their area. This would be a matter for the Area Panel to consider supported by a firm viable proposal.
- 3.5 Noting the above, this report is seeking to take forward a PB initiative focussing on verge parking in Walsall, with further updates to inform on work towards Highways and Cleaner and Greener PB exercises reserved for a later date.

4. Participatory Budgeting - Verge Parking

- 4.1 It is proposed, following initial consultation with the former Transport and Environment Portfolio Holder, that a verge parking PB project / exercise be piloted as part of the Council's devolution agenda, through Area Partnerships. The intention would be to empower local people to influence where resources are directed at a local level for verge parking schemes.
- 4.2 For financial year 2013 - 14, there is a borough-wide allocation of £250,000 for verge parking schemes, providing additional parking spaces. If devolved to each Area Partnership on an equal basis this provides an indicative budget of £41,600 per Area Partnership, this will be dependent on what proposals are put forward and will include design, supervision and associated planning costs. If any further funding is identified by the Area Partnership Panel, it is possible to add this to the allocated verge parking funding for your area to include this within the overall scheme costs.
- 4.3 It was originally intended (provided representatives of the Area Panel (Chair / Vice Chair) were content) to commence PB work, using the above funding during late summer and utilising an existing list of potential verge parking sites. It is however, evident that there is great benefit from involving Area Panels in the initial design of the project for their area as well as shaping the delivery of this proposed work. Members views not only on the concept, but on how the process can be enhanced for their Area is therefore sought at this area panel meeting prior to any roll out.



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- 4.4 It is proposed that the PB exercises in each Area Partnership, will inform residents of what budget / resources they are able to have an influence on, presenting a variety of verge parking schemes that have previously been suggested through a range of routes (including requests from members of the public), a comprehensive list of all known potentially viable verge parking schemes (which are provided by the Council's Road Traffic Network Service Team, including the exact location of proposed schemes detailed in section 5), the number of additional parking spaces it would provide, an estimate of financial cost and a brief outline of the scheme.
- 4.5 Over a minimum two week period, utilising a range of media (e-mail, attendance at events, social media, internet etc), residents will be asked to "vote" / indicate their preferred schemes. The Area Partnership team, in partnership with the Engineering and Transportation Service, will produce a range of documents to support the process and will undertake the engagement and consultation in each area. This will provide the community with the opportunity to view and understand potential verge parking schemes prior to "voting". As part of this work there will be a "vote and count" event, which will provide a final opportunity for residents that haven't "voted" to do so and for all "votes" built up over the period and at this session to be counted.
 - 4.5.1 During the consultation and engagement process, where any new / additional schemes are proposed, residents will be informed that an initial assessment will need to be undertaken to ensure that expectations are managed appropriately.
- 4.6 The results of the "vote" will go to the next appropriate Area Panel for ratification, as appropriate. This may also involve, where agreed with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Area Panel, a special meeting of the Panel being convened.
- 4.7 The prioritised verge parking schemes will then be subject to the necessary in-depth checks to consider issues such as ground conditions, proximity to services, (eg, gas, water, utilities), any relevant / required permissions, etc, and that the scheme is fully viable.
- 4.8 Following the prioritisation and viability checks, the finalised schemes will be confirmed and work should commence early 2014. This is subject to planning permission and land owner permission.
- 4.9 Through the learning from undertaking this pilot, it will inform how we undertake PB to influence and inform expenditure during 2014 / 15, to provide a improved process for PB to inform local priorities, within the Clean and Green service area, focusing on street cleansing and grounds maintenance, and Highways Maintenance, focussing on road safety and maintenance.



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4.10 It should be noted that these pilots will run alongside a set of core services that the Council undertakes to ensure the Authority meets its obligations to local communities.

5. Participatory Budgeting - Verge Parking in Aldridge and Beacon Area Partnership

5.1 The Area Panel is requested to consider the process detailed in section 4 of above and identify local variations where necessary.

5.2 Detailed at Table 2 is a list of identified verge parking schemes in the Aldridge and Beacon Area Partnership;

Table 2.

Location	Ward	Scheme outline	Spaces provided	Estimated cost
Bonner Grove	Aldridge	320m Lay By	54	£54,000
Beacon Road	Pheasey	270m Lay By	45	£45,000
Inglewood Grove	Streetly	570m Lay By	95	£95,000
Broadmeadow	Aldridge	155m Echelon Parking	62	£62,000
Sussex Avenue	Aldridge	140m Lay By	24	£42,000
Poxon road	Aldridge	10 Space Car Park	10	£20,000

5.3 The Area Panel can view the location of the identified scheme attached at appendix 1.

5.4 The Area Panel is asked, having viewed their potential list of sites, to propose any additional sites for consideration.

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