

Environmental Budget Project Procedure

1.0 Introduction

Each year the Housing Service has set aside a budget from the Housing Revenue Account to make neighbourhood improvements on our council estates.

2.0 Procedure

Any tenant, leaseholder, officer or ward /TT member may make suggestions for improvements to be carried out within their neighbourhood.

All projects will need to be submitted on the Environmental Budget Application Form. Once an application form has been received, it will be processed by the Neighbourhood Officer, to ensure all the relevant sections are completed. If there are any omissions, it will be referred back to the proposer requesting further information prior to seeking approval.

The Neighbourhood Officer will liaise with the relevant services or agencies. Once this has taken place, the Neighbourhood Officer will contact the proposer and arrange for a joint visit to inspect the proposed project, if not already done.

Once inspection has taken place, the Neighbourhood Officer will advise the proposer of the outcome of the meeting and:

- advise if the project is possible
- advise if any other action needs to be taken i.e planning permission, obtain quotation etc

Where the project meets all the above criteria and is over £50 and under £10k, it will be presented to the Tenants Together (TT) for final approval. All projects under £50 will be considered by the Neighbourhood Team Leader.

3.0 Examples of Environmental Budget Projects

The Environmental Budget can be used to finance a wide variety of projects and some examples are listed below. However, this list is not an exhaustive list.

Grounds maintenance:

- Planting of flowers, shrubs and trees, pruning of trees
- Communal gardening projects

Planned maintenance:

- Painting, minor structural works and repairs, fencing, shared gates, paving tiling, flooring

Estate maintenance:

- Handrails to steps, communal bin stores, improved parking, bollards, signs, noticeboards, dog fouling bins, creating community murals

Electrical work:

- Improved lighting

Youth initiatives:

- Improved play equipment, sports coaching/equipment for local community groups, youth work
- Other community projects

4.0 Criteria of Allocation of Budget

The following criteria must be met before any individual seeks the approval from the TT:-

- The project must benefit more than one tenant or leaseholder
- Full consultation has been carried out by the proposer
- Identify if the project could be funded via a different source i.e grant
- Any Health and Safety issues have been identified and undertaken risk assessment of improvement i.e could the project cause injury or damage
- Establish if any improvements will increase insurance liability and increase in annual cost (if applicable)
- It demonstrates value for money
- Identified life span of project
- Identified on going and future maintenance costs
- Checked for any restrictions on covenants (if applicable)
- Checked for planning permission/building regulations are required and if applicable, been granted

5.0 Approval of Projects

All criteria must have been met prior to approval of project.

The financial budget year is from 1 April until 31 March annually.

Costs for each project will be checked against the available budget before any project is approved.

Any queries relating to the project will be directed to the relevant Neighbourhood Officer.

If any project is refused, there will be a full explanation given, in writing, to the proposer by the Chair of the TT within 28 days.

6.0 Monitoring and accountability

The information on all projects will be recorded centrally on an electronic database. Monies spent to date will be produced on a monthly basis to the TT.

We may publish successful projects in our newsletters, Annual Report and on our website.

This procedure will be reviewed every two years or as and when necessary.