



Comments on proposed changes to allocations process

The estate improvement programme has been used in York to improve the environment in Council estates for over 25 years.

Where promoted well, it has been very effective in stimulating residents to take action to improve their estates. In many cases this has been done through formal Residents Associations.

In other estates looser – but still effective – local arrangements have grown up.

In both cases, the sense of “ownership” has been enhanced.

Any changes to the current arrangements – where consultation is primarily through local Resident’s Associations – should build on previous successes.

It is acknowledged that currently there is an unfairness in the allocation of funds because some streets do not have a residents group. In some cases this is simply because the area is not big enough to sustain such a body.

A solution where this sort of area can still benefit on a per capita basis from improvements is welcomed as is the (implied) solution of delegation of powers to Ward Committees.

While it is accepted that, in the absence of a Residents Association, another mechanism for allocation is required, it is unclear how the following would actually operate;

“HEIP funding could be allocated based on the identified priorities benefitting council tenants as decided by a panel made up of:

- *Housing and other council staff*
- *involved / interested residents*
- *(Housing and Environment portfolio) Councillors”*

If this is to be pursued, then the principle of subsidiarity should be followed viz that decisions should be made at the most local, practical, level.



Where an effective Residents Association is in existence then they should continue to manage the receipt of project proposals, balloting on priorities and monitoring implementation.

Where the “panel” is involved then it should be on the basis that any proposed uses for the budget must have originated with local residents with priorities subsequently agreed through a resident’s ballot. There may be an argument for any panel to be a virtual team operating principally – and inclusively - “on line”

Any panel meetings must be transparent. Meeting agendas and supporting papers must be published on the Council web site as must meeting minutes.

Panel members must be accountable for their decisions.

Much more effective use must be made of social media channels to consult and inform residents. This is particularly true of the Councils own Ward web pages which are invariably out of date.

Local noticeboards must also be kept up to date.

Areas of agreement

- The introduction of a 4 year rolling programme is welcomed. An allowance of (say 10%) of the annual budget could be retained to deal with emerging issues such as overgrowing trees, bushes, worn grassed areas etc.
- Allocation of funding on a per capita basis is supported.
- The opportunities offered by the chance to integrate Ward Committee – and other Council budgets - with EIG projects are recognised.

Areas for change

The Council’s proposed qualification criteria are too proscriptive

- The provision of waste skips is one of the most popular uses for EIG monies. They are appreciated by non car drivers. More so in west York since the closure of the Beckfield Lane amenity site. These should continue (if tenants vote for them)



Comments on Estate Improvement Grant proposals

- There is no reason why – if favoured by a majority of residents – “no ball games” and similar advisory notices cannot continue to be displayed (the issue is that they are unenforceable but most residents understand that now).
- The Council must enter into a verifiable **Service Level Agreement** to provide an agreed standard of maintenance on all public areas – including car parks and garage sites – on Council estates.
- There needs to be an effective, transparent, escalation process available when maintenance standard targets are consistently not achieved on our estates.

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