

## **Housing Environmental Improvement Programme proposals (HEIP)**

This is a discussion document which proposes a set of principles for an alternative ward wide Housing Services Environmental Improvement Programme to replace the existing estate improvement grant (EIG). Funding that is currently allocated to the EIG will be renamed Housing Environmental Improvement Programme (HEIP) and allocated as set out below.

The current EIG is very officer intensive, not always focused on addressing those major issues that affect our communities, not joined up with other funding streams available to communities and at times runs contrary to corporate priorities. The aim of any revised / new approach should be to address these issue and to focus on citywide themes that have high visual and community impact and have been clearly identified as priorities in Local Estate Action Plans, Estate Walkabouts, Ward committees, Tenant Satisfaction surveys and resident groups / other interested residents. It is intended to ensure that any programme captures the views of a wider audience giving greater legitimacy to schemes.

The principle behind any proposal needs to:

- Maximise VFM through bringing together different pots of money to deliver bigger, impactful, planned and coordinated schemes.
- Increase the legitimacy of programmes by increasing wider community ownership.
- Reduce administration and duplication.
- Have a positive environmental impact, improve appearance and enhance quality of life.
- Compliment and align with wider council priorities.
- Ensure funding for schemes matches the tenure diversity of estates.

## **Proposal for discussion**

### **Defining the improvement priorities:**

The ward teams, led by the councillor(s) would undertake an audit of the ward highlighting areas for investment such as (but not limited to):

- Parking provision
- Improved security and defensible space
- Extra storage for blocks of flats
- Improved waste management resources and facilities

The priorities for the ward on these matters could then be determined e.g.:

- |    |   |     |
|----|---|-----|
| a) | Parking schemes   | 1st |
| b) | Storage   | 2nd |
| c) | Environmental improvements<br>e.g. fencing, security / CCTV etc | 3rd |

### **Joined up investment:**

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 .

Ward and council wide spending, initiatives and priorities would be considered as part of this process shaping final spending decisions.

Funding to support the delivery of the priority areas would be drawn from all ward based funding and funding from other sources where available e.g. through grant bids.

Where there are programmed capital works i.e. highways improvements, consideration should be given to see how any of the delivery of the identified environmental improvements could be complemented by bringing the two together.

For example: new foot paths being laid by highways against an area that could be turned into parking: - 60% council housing in area, 40% private housing, additional cost (over and above that covered in the original capital programme) to be split 60/40 between the HEIP and other ward funding.

The panel could be coordinated by the Housing Equalities and Engagement facilitator and meet every 6 months to review progress.

### **Funding period:**

HEIP funding will be allocated on a 4 year basis (mirroring the 4 year administration term) to allow the potential for annual allocation to be pooled into a bigger pot to enable larger more impactful schemes to be delivered. Once a ward has spent its 4 year allocation no other HEIP funding will be available until the next 4 year period.

The priorities would remain unchanged for 4 years and be reviewed in the final year.

The 4 year plan would negate the need for annual exercises to determine schemes which involves a lot of administration and little actual participation by local residents.

### **Allocation by ward:**

The spending should be allocated across all wards which include council housing except where no determination of local needs has been submitted from within that ward for areas where there is council housing.

The Community Involvement Officer will coordinate implementation of the initiatives agreed on and this will be specified, procured and delivered by appropriate officers.

The allocation for each ward could be:

- based on the number of council homes within that ward (see below).
- by additional measure or combination of measures such as index of deprivation, urgency of need for improvements etc
- or a combination of the two.



HEIP indicative  
ward amounts v...

The priorities would remain unchanged for 4 years (or remainder of the administration) and be reviewed in the first year of a new administration.

The 4 year plan would negate the need for annual exercises to determine schemes which involves a lot of costly and time consuming administration and little actual participation by local residents.

This approach would also ensure that the budget could be allocated to any area of the city with council housing and not rely on there being a resident association.

### **Spending criteria:**

The criteria for spending of HRA money issued has been amended from the EIG version and a draft attached for consultation. Once agreed this will be used to help determine the appropriateness and legality of any initiatives if the scheme is agreed.



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As stated above, funding could be used to match ward committee money but it would need to be of demonstrable benefit to council tenants.

By taking this approach there is recognition that most council estates are now mixed tenure.

No scheme would be implemented which contradicts wider council priorities e.g. use of skips, but it is acknowledged that other wider initiatives will be needed and developed to mitigate the impact of not funding these schemes e.g. support around recycling, education and enforcement around refuse, fly tipping and recycling.

### **The 'Fed pot'**

It is proposed that the Fed pot be retained and the process around this, with further focus on the Fed and RAs taking ownership of this.

An annual pot, 15% of total HEIP (currently £30k) to be retained by the Fed for smaller estate improvements. The Fed to determine how this is allocated in line with HRA spending ruling.

RAs may choose to support wider initiatives set out in the HEIP.

RAs will administer, specify, procure and oversee these improvements and report bimonthly to the Fed on progress. Officer advice and support could be called on as needed.