



## Factsheet 5 – Public Realm Budgets

**This topic sheet is designed to provide a script for ward councillors to use for engaging residents and partners about the allocation of budgets devolved to wards.**

The council has decided to give wards more control of the money that it currently spends within its communities. Each ward now has a budget made up of three components:

- A general ward fund
- The Community Care Fund
- The Pride in York Fund (annual fund and ‘one-off’ 2015/16 fund)

In addition wards are being given control of the public realm activity that the Council undertakes at ward level. This includes:

- Parks and Gardens
- Open spaces
- Grass cutting, including highways grass
- Flower beds maintenance and planting
- Cleansing

So, what does this mean for us? Here is what we are being asked to do as a ward:

- familiarise ourselves with the ward spreadsheet and how our budget is currently spent
- identify our priorities for future expenditure i.e. the things that are important to us - and identify the things that are less important i.e. areas where savings can be made
- decide how we will use our share of the ‘one-off’ Pride in York budget to develop community and volunteering schemes in our ward

The Council is having to make savings in its public realm budgets over the next few years. This means that the Council will not be able to carry out all the tasks listed on the spreadsheet. As a ward, we are best placed to work out where the reductions should be made.



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The ward spreadsheet shows all the tasks that were carried out last year (2014/15). The activities have been put into three categories:

- a) GREEN: These are tasks that the Council believes must continue in the future and that it should carry on undertaking itself
- b) RED: These are tasks that the Council can no longer undertake. As a ward, we need to decide whether these tasks are important to us and, if so, whether there is scope for them to be carried out in a different way, perhaps by volunteers
- c) AMBER: These are tasks which don't all have to stop but where there does have to be an overall reduction as soon as possible but no later than 31 December 2015. Therefore we need to make choices about identifying:
  - tasks we want the Council to carry on doing
  - tasks which stop altogether, or
  - tasks where we might be able to get volunteers to do them instead

We will now spend a few minutes:

- familiarising ourselves with the green category
- looking through the red and amber categories to see if there is anything there that we would want to make a saving

There is a savings target to meet of **x%** in **xx** ward.

**DO THE TASK!**

(Note for ward councillors: you can choose to do this task as part of your ward team meeting or you can do this with residents of your ward at an engagement event. A decision will need to be made by.....*insert date*)

### **Further information:**

The ward will need to do this task in conjunction with its ward budget and especially the Pride in York fund each year. The spreadsheet will be updated annually to show the impact of the savings for the following year. If the ward can identify more than the minimum savings needed by reducing tasks, the ward can either:

- Redirect the Council's resource to other tasks that the ward requires (subject to the necessary management arrangements, health & safety, etc. being deliverable), or



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- The Council will aim to turn the resource saved into a cash budget that the ward can then spend on other priorities. This will only be possible if the Council is able to make the saving cashable.

Two or more wards may choose to join up to create a larger saving.

If wards are not able to agree upon the required savings it will be necessary for the Director of Communities and Neighbourhoods to do it on the ward's behalf.

The 'one-off budget' (Pride in York) is only available once so it needs to be spent wisely to ensure it continues to benefit the ward into future years. New community activity will need to have an impact over future years.