

## Agenda item 4

For decision – Taking forward Participatory Budgeting via The People’s Budget: Events and The People’s Budget: Town vote into 2021/2022

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### Summary

Continuing to engage the community in democracy and to help support active citizens is a tacit thread running through our work. One of the ways that we enable this is through Participatory Budgeting.

This paper looks forward to next year with a view to announcing the opening of The People’s Budget: Events and looking to another People Budget: Town Vote

### Background

This will be the fifth year of the People’s Budget in Frome and building community engagement and participation remains an important underlying principle of this council. The People’s Budget is one means of delivering this. It gives residents meaningful choices about how a proportion of the budget is spent whilst also gaining the positive effect of well engaged community supported events and projects. The essential element is that residents have the opportunity to in-put into the decision making and there is meaningful and thought-out discussion. The proposal for 2021 is to continue to build on the success of the People’s Budget in previous years to deliver both a People’s Budget: Events and to introduce People’s Budget: Town Vote to support individual areas or neighbourhoods.

All projects must demonstrate

- Improved Physical, Mental, Emotional Health, and Environmental or Economic outcomes.
- And have direct, positive, impact for Frome residents.

#### 1. PB: Events

Next financial year the budget of £25k has been made available for PB: Events.

In addition:

- Applications can be made for up to £10,000
- Applications must be robustly shortlisted to ensure that each event benefits the town and falls within our strategic objectives
- Costed budget information must be included in the information before voting
- Organisations are asked to produce a short one minute film to explain their project.
- Voting should include both offline and online elements, thereby opening up voting to the whole town.
- Ach project will be asked to make a video to bring the idea to life

The videos will be placed online along with the event budget and a description. The public will be given an opportunity to ask questions and to rate each project from 0-5.

Year eight pupils from Oakfield, Selwood, Critchill and Avanti will take part in the vote although we are anticipating that this will be online this year, as the Make it Happen conference for all year 8 students in Frome will probably move online. This is an excellent opportunity for young people to engage with a real democratic process with real outcomes. The year eights had excellent discussions in previous years, and they engaged fully in the process and we hope to be able to replicate that. Their vote will be weighted and represent 30% of the overall vote.

We propose to open the window for applications in March with a view to closing it April with a vote in May.

## 2. PB: Town vote

We are proposing a different approach in the coming year. We plan to ask for bids for projects of up to £1k from street level neighbourhood communities within the budget of £10,000. The projects must be deliverable in the financial year of 2021-2022, have a costed budget, be focussed on a street or place. These projects should be bought forward by residents or community groups who will work with our neighbourhood networks co-ordinator to support the project and help the group engage with other neighbours. The projects don't all have to be different; it could be the same project delivered across different areas, but they do have to be identifiable as location based. Clearly, this PB: Town Vote proposal is designed to complement the ongoing work we are doing in developing community networks and thereby building community resilience.

We will promote the initiative and resulting projects will be posted for discussion on our [Your Priorities](#) platform. So long as our criteria are met, we will put them forward to a Town Vote. The voting criteria will be defined along the basis of feasibility, impact and equality benefit and it is hoped that this will produce some interesting, inventive, and beneficial outcomes.

For the delivery of both the PB: Events and the PB: Town Vote this year we propose to use a discussion event and use electronic mechanism on the Your Priorities platform to help inform the decision. We will also continue to run an offline promotional campaign in the newspaper, noticeboards and at the Town Hall (if possible) to ensure maximum engagement.

### Recommendation

Delegate authority to the Marketing and Comms Manager to progress both the PB: Events and PB: Town Vote as described in the report