

Subject:	Modernising the EDB		
Date of Meeting:	EDB Panel September 2014 Area Panels December 2014		
Report of:	Benjamin Ben O'kagbue Head of Property & Investment		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Janine Healey	Tel: 29-3314
	Email:	Janine.healey@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to consult with Area Panels about proposals to improve the delivery of Estate Development Budget (EDB) projects and to inform Area Panels of changes to EDB processes.
- 1.2 The recommendations within this report have the support of the EDB Panel.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 In order for an EDB bid to be approved, the responsibility for any ongoing maintenance requirements must be specified and agreed.
- 2.2 The main bids for the fencing programme can include up to 25% of the bid value to be unallocated to any address.
- 2.3 EDB Panel to monitor receipts for any cheque request payment to TRAs.
- 2.4 Community Payback (CP) to have an Area based budget available for materials, contributed to by each Area Panel.
- 2.5 Set up four Area based tool stores for Community Payback and EDB funded items.
- 2.6 The spend cap on quick bids to be increased from £500 to £750.

3. UPDATES TO PROCESS & PROCEDURE

The following updates to process and procedures are taking place across the current and next financial years.

- 3.1 During 2015-16 the resident involvement Service Improvement Groups look to develop a citywide fencing scheme.

- 3.2 During 2015-16 the resident involvement Service Improvement Groups look to broaden and increase the involvement of residents in proposing EDB project bids and voting on the projects to be pursued within their area.
- 3.3 Mears' approved suppliers to have funds placed on store accounts for TRAs and CP to select & collect.
- 3.4 Where appropriate, leaseholder recharging to commence in April 2015 for projects completed during 2014-15.
- 3.5 Area based budget calculations for 2015 onwards will include leaseholder dwellings as well as tenant dwellings.

4. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

4.1 Financial Framework

From Autumn 2014 the geographical boundary of the four Area Panel areas will be changing. In light of this, the EDB Panel have agreed to a "clean slate" approach to the budgets and unallocated funds for the four areas, as follows:

- 4.1.1 Funds which remain unused *and* uncommitted at the end of this 2014-15 financial year will be returned to the over-arching EDB fund for re-allocation to new bids in the new areas for financial year 2015-16.
- 4.1.2 EDB Panel to sense check the outstanding quick bids to assess whether or not the bids are still feasible and able to be delivered. Those which are not, will be cancelled and the funds returned to the over-arching EDB fund for re-allocation to new bids in the new areas for financial year 2015-16. This means that live bids will remain even if the Tenant Association has changed area.
- 4.1.3 At the end of successive financial years (April 2016 onwards) funds which remain uncommitted and unspent will be carried forward within the relevant Area's budget for the following financial year's new bids.
- 4.1.4 All live bids will remain with the TRA until delivered (the majority of which will be completed by March 2015).

4.2 Scope of Work

- 4.2.1 Discussion was had around whether it was appropriate for EDB funds to be used for cyclical maintenance such as decorating shared areas. It was agreed that EDB had always been available to bring forward the capital programme where it was a priority for residents.
- 4.2.2 There is currently a review of BHCCs Sheltered Housing stock and one of the recommendations in the draft report (due to Area Panels in December 2014) is to introduce a new ten year cyclical programme of decorating to sheltered housing communal areas. If this programme is agreed, any EDB bids already approved for this type of work will be reviewed by the EDB Panel in conjunction with the new programme.

4.3 Service Delivery Model

- 4.3.1 The benefit of having area based bids and stores for CP materials, would allow the EDB Panel to easily approve work for CP to deliver, combined with a quicker method for Mears to provide access to materials via supplier store accounts. CP would then be able to collect the materials at their own convenience and commence work on site without the need to meet a resident. This aims to address historical issues surrounding the ownership, usage and secure storage of items funded via EDB.
- 4.3.2 TRAs will still be able to have their own stores with their own tools and materials.
- 4.3.3 TRAs will still be able to place main bids for specific projects in their area for CP to deliver.

4.4 Resident Involvement

- 4.4.1 The EDB Panel will commit to requesting an article in every edition of Homing In to raise the profile of EDB across the city, by having a feature on a recently completed bid or upcoming bid.

5. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

5.1 Financial Framework

The discussions around finances and budget allowed for the following areas to be discussed and agreed:

- 5.1.1 There was the suggestion and agreement that a common-sense approach be taken with quick bids with a value of just over £500 e.g. £510. This then developed into the suggestion of increasing the cap of quick bids to £750.
- 5.1.2 There was the alternative suggestion of introducing a second round of main bids, however this was dropped due to the difficulty of timing of the Area Panels and the amount of work involved in setting up an additional round of four meetings.
- 5.1.3 It was also suggested that each Area Panel could bid for any amount of quick bid funding. At present the bid is usually £15k, it was agreed that a suggested increase of this cap to £25k in order for more quick bids to be funded.
- 5.1.4 It was agreed that in some circumstances it may be necessary to issue a cheque to a TRA, although this would be in exceptional circumstances only. Where a cheque is requested and issued, then a breakdown of items or description of the specific item must be provided to the EDB Panel.

5.2 Service Delivery Model

5.2.1 Discussions were also had around ongoing ownership of tools, materials and items purchased under EDB. It was agreed that if it was felt necessary to be able to identify items funded by EDB then the use of an “asset tag” would be suitable.

5.2.2 Having sought advice from HRA Finance around ownership of items, it was suggested that the items are “gifted” to CP or the TRA along with responsibility for ongoing service and maintenance. When the items are no longer functional, they can be replaced where needed by a new EDB bid or if recommendation 2.4 is agreed, with a pot of generic funding for CP tools and materials.

5.3 Resident Involvement

5.3.1 A group of officers met the council’s Communities Manager to talk about best practise within the city, when it comes to involving more residents in the EDB process, particularly around ideas for bids and voting on the bids to be carried out. It was agreed that this would be looked at in the future, led by the Resident Involvement Team.

6 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

6.1 The EDB Panel have been fully involved with this review, identifying the issues within the EDB processes and working through potential solutions. The panel contributed to the content of this final report and support all the recommendations within it.

6.2 Other interested parties have also been consulted with, including Mears EDB Project Manager, Community Payback Project Coordinator and the Resident Involvement Team.

7. CONCLUSION

The recommendations within this report will support the aim of modernising the EDB and ensuring that projects are delivered in a timely manner whilst ensuring value for money and high quality.