

Mid Devon District Council – items for agenda

This form should be completed by Member(s), Officers or members of the public when proposing an item for Scrutiny or a PDG.

Proposer's name and title	Cllr Elizabeth Lloyd	Date	March 2022
Proposed issue and brief description	Participatory budgeting (PB) – explore what we can learn from effective PB processes in other places in the UK and internationally, and think about how this might inform and improve our own budget-setting process		
Background	<p>After introducing this concept to the finance portfolio holder, it was suggested it be raised as something for Scrutiny to explore.</p> <p>Participatory budgeting is a process whereby residents play an active role in deciding where parts of an authority's budget are spent, through discussion, briefings and debate.</p> <p>Having heard about the success of the process in other places (e.g. London, Scotland, Brazil) and hearing the frustration that many residents feel with how Council funds are spent, there seems to be an opportunity to explore other ways of shaping budgets.</p> <p><u><i>Statutory duty to consult on the budget</i></u> Under the Local Government Finance Act 1992, the Council has a statutory duty to consult ratepayer representatives on annual spending proposals, ahead of setting the budget.</p> <p>The Council conducted a combined residents' and budget setting survey in November 2021. The survey ran for one month. This was an online survey, but paper copies were also available and publicised. Customer Services staff assisted anyone who was unable to complete the form, but wanted to have their say.</p> <p>1,161 people completed the survey. All of the budget feedback that we received was utilised in the Council's 2022/23 budget setting process.</p>		
What will the outcome be?	<p>Residents feel more 'involved' and clear on how Councils decide to spend money. It can help deepen democracy, build stronger communities, and create a more equitable distribution of public resources.</p> <p>A review would enable the council to learn about other ways to set budgets and support residents. A collaborative and fresh way to shape our place, by adapting existing processes, which might be welcome given the challenges and financial pressures that Councils and residents face.</p> <p>A review group could create recommendations about ways to</p>		

	<p>approach budget-setting, on top of our current statutory duties on consultation on the budget.</p>
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