

PROPOSED GRANT SCHEME TO ENABLE MEMBERS TO TAKE FORWARD PROJECTS IN THEIR LOCAL COMMUNITIES

CABINET – 21 JULY 2011

Report of the: Community Services and Planning Director

Status: For Decision

This report supports the Key Aims of the Community Plan

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Peter Fleming and Cllr. Mrs Pat Bosley

Head of Service Head of Community Development – Lesley Bowles

Recommendation: It be RESOLVED that:

- a) £120,000 be allocated to a new grant scheme, entitled the Big Community Fund, from the additional New Homes Bonus Scheme funding received;
- b) approval of the award of grants under the Scheme be delegated to the Portfolio Holder for Community Wellbeing provided such approval is in line with the recommendation of the Project Appraisal Group. If the Portfolio Holder wishes to refuse an application, contrary to the Project Appraisal Group's recommendation, the application will be referred to Cabinet for a decision;
- c) where the Portfolio Holder is unable to act due to unavailability or an interest or Ward connection, this delegation in b) above is given to the Leader of the Council;
- d) that Cabinet be invited to identify a panel of Members to advise the Portfolio Holder for Community Wellbeing in determining grants under the Scheme;
- e) that the Big Community Fund guidelines as set out in Appendix A be approved; and
- f) the Appraisal Template as set out in Appendix B be approved.

Background

- 1 To assist Members to respond to the needs of their local communities, it is proposed to set up the Big Community Fund grant scheme in the form of a community chest. A copy of the draft scheme Guidelines and application form is attached at Appendix A, a proposed appraisal template at Appendix B and a draft timetable at Appendix C.

Introduction

- 2 The scheme is intended to provide a source of funding to enable Members to work with their local communities to improve their area.
- 3 The proposed Aims of the scheme are as follows:
 - 1.1 To make physical improvements to the area;
 - 1.2 To strengthen local communities;
 - 1.3 To help more vulnerable people in local communities
 - 1.4 To improve safety and well-being in local communitiesMembers will be able to bid for funding in partnership with a local delivery organisation such as a town or parish council, voluntary or community organisation.
- 4 A panel of trained Members will provide advice and make recommendations to the Portfolio Holder for Community Wellbeing about the allocation of grants. 5 trained Members will form each monthly panel from a pool of 15 trained Members using a rota system. Awards will be made by the Portfolio Holder for Community Wellbeing. Decisions relating to her ward or applications in which she has an interest will be taken by the Leader of the Council. The Leader of the Council may also make decisions due to the unavailability of the Portfolio Holder. Where the Portfolio Holder disagrees with the Project Appraisal Panel's recommendation for approval of any application, the application will be referred to Cabinet for decision.
- 5 The panel of Members will be established by the Cabinet and training will be provided in order to undertake this work. The maximum sum available per application will be £3,000 and Members will not be limited as to the number of bids that they can make. The amount already allocated to each ward will, however, form part of the grant appraisal process.
- 6 Grants will be payable in advance except in the case of capital projects when the grant will be paid upon production of proof that the work has been satisfactorily completed.

Key Implications

Financial

- 7 The scheme will be funded from the New Homes Bonus scheme. The total amount available per month will be £10,000, totalling £120,000 during the financial year 2011/12. Any funds unallocated in a given month will be rolled forward to next month. As the scheme is starting part way through the current financial year, any funds unspent at the end of 2011/12 will be rolled forward to 2012/13.

- 8 It is proposed that the amount available per year should be agreed annually as part of the budget-setting process, as it is uncertain how much grant will be received each year and the impact the New Homes Bonus scheme will have on Revenue Support Grant allocations. Any funds not allocated in subsequent financial years will be considered by Members as part of the usual budget process.
- 9 Awards made under the Scheme will be reported to the Performance and Governance Committee to ensure the transparency of the Scheme.

Legal, Human Rights etc.

- 10 The Scheme is in accordance with the Council's overall Grant-Making Code of Practice.

Resource (non-financial)

- 11 Officer time spent on the Scheme will be minimal as Members will be trained to appraise applications using the scoring template attached at Appendix B.

Value For Money

- 12 Value for Money will be assessed as part of the appraisal scoring criteria based on whether the application attracts funding from elsewhere and the cost compared with the benefit.

Equality

- 13 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed. All applicants will be asked to sign an Equalities Statement. The aims of the Scheme include to help more vulnerable people in local communities and consideration of this forms part of the grant appraisal process.

Community Impact

- 14 The Scheme's aims ensure that each grant will positively address local needs ensuring a good impact on the community.

Risk Assessment Statement

Risk	Mitigation	Residual Risk
New Homes funding may not be available in future years	Funding to be approved on an annual basis.	None
Approved projects may not be delivered	Performance indicators will be included as a condition of the grant and these will be monitored. Monitoring	There may be some projects that have been delivered but do not meet all of the performance

	will take place at 6 months and 1 year after approval of the grant to ensure that the project or service for which funding was approved is being delivered. The Council will reserve the right to claw back funding when the project has not been completed.	indicators. In all cases, the appraisal process will take into account the strength of the delivery organisation and likelihood of the project proceeding well.
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Sources of Information: The Council's Grant-Making Code of Practice

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