

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

**CABINET –13 NOVEMBER 2014
COUNCIL – 27 NOVEMBER 2014**

COMMUNITY PRIDE FUND – GRANT ALLOCATION

REPORT OF MANAGING DIRECTOR

LEAD CABINET MEMBER – CLLR SHAUN DAVIES

PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT

1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

- 1.1 The Community Pride Fund is being delivered as part of the Pride in Your Community programme to support the physical, social and economic regeneration of the Borough. This report provides an update on the implementation of the Community Pride Fund and proposes that the original budget of £1m is increased by a further £260,000. This is due to the significant response to the fund and the contribution that some applications can make to delivering the Council's priorities.
- 1.2 Each application has been evaluated and assessed by a range of Council Officers and an independent, politically balanced Funding Advisory Panel, the report outlines the evaluation process, and membership and role of the Funding Advisory Panel. The qualitative evaluations carried out by the Funding Advisory Panel have been used to prioritise the projects that are recommended to receive funding, as outlined in Appendix 1 of this report. It is proposed that 37 projects with a total value of £1,257,447.50 are funded through the Community Pride Fund.
- 1.3 It is proposed that delegated authority is given to the Managing Director in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services and Employment & Skills to re-allocate funding if any projects are unable to spend their Community Pride Fund grant. This funding would be allocated to the next project on the list that was prioritised using the panel member's evaluations. The process of dispersal of the grants and ongoing monitoring are also outlined.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the budget for the Community Pride Fund is increased to £1,260,000 to enable a greater number of projects that contribute to the Council's priorities to be supported through the Community Pride Fund.**

2.2 That Cabinet agree that the projects outlined in Appendix 1 that have been prioritised using the Funding Advisory Panel evaluations are funded through the Community Pride Fund.

2.3 That if any project that has been approved for funding is unable to spend their allocated grant within the timescales for the scheme, that delegated authority is given to the Managing Director, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services and Employment & Skills, to re-allocate the funding using the list of projects prioritised by the Funding Advisory Panel. The funding would be allocated to the next project on the list from the appropriate funding pot.

2.4 That Cabinet recommend Council to approve the transfer of £0.260m into the Community Pride Fund which will be funded from the delivery of additional in year savings in 2014/15.

3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Co-Operative Council priority objective(s)?	
	Yes	One of the essential criteria for the Community Pride Fund is that applications contribute towards the delivery of at least one Council Priority.
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	No	The range of projects that are recommended for support through the Community Pride Fund have the potential to have a positive impact on a wide cross section of the community, some projects do target specific groups.
TARGET COMPLETION/DELIVERY DATE	It is envisaged that grant payments will commence following the receipt of an appropriate signed agreement from each successful applicant, projects have been made aware that the deadline for the allocation of their funding is 31 March 2016.	
FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes	The original budget of £1m was part of the 2014/15 approved Service & Financial Planning Strategy (capital programme) which not only focussed on the delivery of savings but also

		<p>had clear investment priorities for the benefit of the borough. The last financial monitoring report to Cabinet on 16 October showed a significantly improved financial position for 2014/15, with £2.71m projected to be available at year end. This is a reflection of the strength of the financial management being exercised by Cabinet Members and senior managers and the delivery of in year savings. £1.5m of the projected benefit at year end has arisen from a second phase of work re-profiling the Council's Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) payments. The first phase of MRP re-profiling work generated a back-dated benefit of almost £5m which was prudently set aside to fund the debt charges on the Community Pride Programme capital expenditure and it is therefore possible to fund an increase in the Community Pride budget by making a virement from this further MRP benefit to fund the additional projects identified in this report.</p>
<p>LEGAL ISSUES</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The legal recommendations of the report dated 24 April 2014 were fully implemented in order to ensure that a legally compliant, robust and transparent assessment procedure was developed.</p> <p>Terms of Reference were drawn up to guide the Funding Advisory Panel along with a detailed application form and robust assessment/evaluation criteria.</p> <p>Openness and transparency of the process was maintained by advising all applicants of the assessment/evaluation criteria and the terms and conditions of funding at the time of making their applications. Detailed guidance was also produced to assist applicants in submitting their bids.</p>

OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	No	
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	No	Borough-wide impact

PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4. Community Pride Fund Application Process

- 4.1 The Community Pride Fund was established to support the delivery of the Council's Pride in Your Community Programme. The fund comprises of £1m capital funding to support the physical, social and economic regeneration of Telford. The £1m was divided into two separate pots of £500,000, one for applications of £2,000 to £50,000, the other for applications of £50,001 to £100,000; these levels were set to ensure that there is a spread of small to medium and large projects supported through the Community Pride Fund.
- 4.2 The Community Pride Fund opened for applications on 30 May 2014 with the scheme being widely promoted through the Council's website, Town and Parish Council's and Elected Members, publicity and posters in a range of venues across the Borough, promotion through Social Media and through local networks such as CVS and through the Council's Business Support Officers. Applications were available via the Council's website along with the criteria for the fund and guidance for applicants.
- 4.3 Potential applicants were able to access a range of support and information relating to the fund via a specific 'Community Pride Fund' email enquiry and from a range of Council Officers from within the Community Participation and Business Support Teams. Two information sessions were held in July at Meeting Point House and Wellington library, to provide an opportunity for potential applicants to ask questions about the fund, these sessions were attended by 26 different organisations.
- 4.4 The applications fell into four categories, £2,000 to £10,000, £10,000 to £25,000, £25,001 to £50,000 and £50,001 to £100,000. The forms were developed with advice from a range of Council services including, Finance, Legal, Information Governance and Investment and Property and required different levels of information from applicants depending upon the level of funding requested. These services were also involved in developing and carrying out the evaluation process for assessing the Community Pride Fund applications.
- 4.5 Applicants were encouraged to submit applications electronically wherever possible, where organisations were unable to submit an application in an electronic format support was given by the Council, the aim was to ensure that the fund was as accessible as possible to a wide range of organisations. The fund closed for applications on 5

September 2014, a total of 66 applications were received from 60 different organisations, and the total amount of funding requested from organisations was over £2 ½ m.

- 4.6 Due to the significant response to the Community Pride Fund and the quality of the applications received, it is proposed to increase the budget for the fund. Through in year savings it has been possible to identify £260,000 that is available to be added to the Community Pride budget. This would enable a greater number of projects that meet the Community Pride Fund criteria, and that have been assessed as making a contribution to the delivery of the Council priorities to be funded. It is proposed that the funding for applications with a value of between £2,000 and £50,000 is increased to £578,808.89 and that the funding for applications with a value of between £50,001 and £100,000 is increased to £678,638.61. This would require an additional £257,447.50 to be added to the budget and would enable the prioritised applications to be allocated the full amount of funding requested in line with the funding panel's recommendations.

5. Evaluation of Applications

- 5.1 There were a number of essential criteria that applications needed to meet to be eligible for funding from the Community Pride Fund which include the following;

- Projects needed to be delivered within Telford and Wrekin
- Expenditure could only relate to capital items
- Religious and political activities would not be funded
- Projects must contribute to the delivery of at least one Council priority
- Projects need to commence within 12 months of the grant being offered and be complete by 31 March 2016

Applications were assessed against the following aims of the fund;

- Jobs created/safeguarded
- Training provided
- Volunteers supported
- Building brought back into use/prevented from closure
- Increase in participants

The evaluation process also took into account the following;

- Community need for the project
- Sustainability of the project
- Proposed impact of the project in relation to level of funding requested

- 5.2 The process of evaluating the Community Pride Fund applications involved two stages, an initial detailed check and assessment of the applications by a number of Council Officers as outlined in 4.4, followed by an evaluation of each application by each of the members of the Community Pride Funding Advisory Panel as outlined in 6.1 below.
- 5.3 The Officer evaluation involved checking each application in relation to the following;
- Financial - all expenditure related to capital, costs consistent with market values, organisation had relevant financial procedures, sustainability of project and match funding
 - Delivery of project – appropriate plan for delivery, delivery within fund timescales (by March 2016), appropriate permissions would be gained e.g. building control, and appropriate policies in place such as child protection
 - Project outcomes – contribution of the project towards aims of Community Pride Fund criteria outlined above

A brief summary of this evaluation was provided to the Community Pride Funding Advisory Panel for information.

6. **Community Pride Funding Advisory Panel**

- 6.1 The Funding Advisory Panel was an independent, politically balanced group comprising of volunteers from the Cooperative Commission and Elected Members of the Council. The role of the Community Pride Funding Advisory Panel was to evaluate each individual application against the criteria set out in 5 above, and to agree as a panel the projects that should be recommended for funding to Cabinet. The panel was made up of the following; **Elected Members** - Cllr Gill Green, Cllr Mike Ion, Cllr Leon Murray, Cllr Gilly Reynolds and Cllr Jacqui Seymour, **Cooperative Commission Members** - Paul Hinkins, Mike Lowe, Arul Selvaratnam, and Paul Shuttleworth. Ian Dosser, the Chair of the Cooperative Commission was unable to take part in the process due to a clash between the funding panel meetings and other work commitments. Paul Shuttleworth was appointed as Chair of the Funding Advisory Panel in Ian's absence. Thanks are given to Paul for taking on this role.
- 6.2 Panel members have made a significant time commitment to this process which has involved attending a panel briefing session, two panel meetings, and a considerable amount of time evaluating each individual application. The panel are to be commended for the level of commitment and professionalism that they have shown. We are also grateful for the level of experience and knowledge that the panel members have been able to bring to this process.

- 6.3 The process for prioritising the applications involved each panel member evaluating each application and making their own recommendation on whether they felt the project should be approved. This process was carried out on an individual basis prior to each panel meeting; this information was then shared as a panel. If panel members had any 'interest' in the project they were advised not to evaluate the application. Declarations of interest included location of a project within an Elected Members Ward, or any other involvement with a project or organisation, such as being a Board Member or Trustee.
- 6.4 The panel's evaluations have been used to prioritise the projects that are recommended to Cabinet to be funded from the Community Pride Fund. This prioritisation is based on the criteria outlined in 5.1 of the report, with those applications that were felt to most clearly demonstrate that they meet these criteria being 'ranked' highest. The panel suggested that applications be prioritised by the relative number of yes/no votes for each application. This was considered, however, it was felt that the assessment of the projects against the fund criteria was a more appropriate way of prioritising the projects.
- 6.5 The panel also had a detailed discussion regarding providing 'part funding' to projects. This would involve not awarding the full amount requested to some organisations to enable a larger number of projects to receive funding and therefore allow more organisations to benefit from the Community Pride Fund. Following discussion the panel voted against this proposal with 5 members being against and 4 members being for awarding partial funding. The reasons given by panel members for not wanting to recommend this option to Cabinet included concerns that the projects may not be able to be delivered with a reduced level of funding, and that they had carried out their evaluation based on the amount of funding that the applicant had requested. However, there was a strong feeling amongst other panel members that as many projects as possible should be able to benefit from the Community Pride Fund. In recognition of this it is proposed that the budget for the Community Pride Fund be increased as outlined in 2.1 of this report.

7.0 Allocation of Grants

- 7.1 The projects that are recommended for allocation of a Community Pride Fund grant are attached in Appendix 1. It is proposed that 28 small to medium applications (between £2,000 and £50,000) are funded with a total value of £578,808.89. It is proposed that 9 large projects (£50,001 to £100,000) are funded with a total value of £678,638.61. It is proposed that 37 projects with a total value of £1,257,447.50 are funded through the Community Pride Fund.
- 7.2 The projects that are recommended for funding will make a contribution to delivering a number of Council priorities including supporting local jobs, creating training and volunteering opportunities, providing

opportunities for children and young people and vulnerable adults and supporting healthy lifestyles. The outcomes delivered by these projects will be monitored as part of the grant conditions as outlined in 8.3. The projects outlined in Appendix 1 have identified match funding of over £550,000 which will also contribute to the delivery of their projects, and the Community Pride Fund grant will enable some organisations to lever in additional funding from other sources.

- 7.3 The Funding Advisory panel also recommended that plans be put in place to re-allocate funding should any of the projects that were initially prioritised for funding are not be able to deliver their project and spend their grant within the timescales of the fund (31 March 2016), delegated authority is sought for the Managing Director, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services and Employment & Skills to re-allocate the funding to the next project on the list using the panel's evaluations as the method of prioritisation.

8.0 Awarding and Monitoring of Grants

- 8.1 All projects that wish to accept an offer of a grant through the Community Pride Fund will be required to sign an appropriate agreement. For grants of up to £10,000 this will be a 'letter of award' and for grants over £10,000 this will be based on the Council's standard grant agreement, both of these documents have been developed by the Council's Legal Services. The agreements may include additional funding conditions relevant to each project. These conditions are based on both the officer assessments and the evaluations that were carried out by funding panel members.
- 8.2 The funding agreements will include the schedule of payment of the grant and the monitoring arrangements. Finance will advise on the funding schedules and it is envisaged that for larger grants staged payments will be made. It may be appropriate to make 'up-front' payments to small organisations with limited access to funding; evidence of expenditure following the grant payment would still be required.
- 8.3 It will be important to track the impact of the funding that is allocated through the Community Pride Fund; this will be done through ongoing monitoring of the projects against the outcomes they included within their applications. Successful applicants will also be required to submit regular updates and will be encouraged to contribute to the Community Pride Fund 'blog'. Projects will be required to acknowledge the receipt of Community Pride Funding within their publicity about their project. It is suggested that funding panel members be invited to take part in visits to successful projects, so that they are able to see the impact of the fund at first hand, panel members were keen to take up this opportunity.

- 8.4 Due to the high level of applications it won't be possible to give detailed individual feedback to all organisations that weren't successful in securing Community Pride Funding. Overall feedback on why their application was not successful will be provided, and organisations will also be provided with information about other potential funding opportunities where possible.

9. PREVIOUS MINUTES

Cabinet – 9 January 2014 – Report – 'Everyday Telford – Pride in Your Community Programme'

Cabinet – 24 April 2014 – Report – 'Pride in Your Community – Community Pride Fund'

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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