

CABINET

Take Pride Community Fund 06 November 2012

Report of Head of Community Engagement

PURPOSE OF REPORT				
This report is to make recommendations on the allocation of the Take Pride Community Fund (previously referred to as Second Homes Funding for 2012/13)				
Key Decision	X	Non-Key Decision	Referral from Cabinet Member	
Date Included in Forthcoming Key Decision Notice			8 October 2012	
This report is public				

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

It is recommended that:

- (1) Cabinet notes the process undertaken to seek bids to manage the bidding round for Take Pride Community Funding and the involvement and support of Lancashire County Council
- (2) Recommendations of the Member Panel for the allocation of Take Pride Community Funding to the full amount of £283,725 are approved
- (3) Authority is delegated to the Leader of the Council for any future changes to funding allocations, to ensure that all funding is appropriately utilised in line with the criteria for the scheme
- (4) The General Fund Revenue budget and Capital Programme are updated to reflect the recommendations in this report

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 At its meeting on the 24th July 2012 Cabinet approved the proposed arrangements for the use of Second Homes Funding for 2012/13 as the 'Take Pride Community Fund', and agreed that applications should be "*invited for investment grants leading to development of the Voluntary, Community and Faith sector and the Arts sector*" (Minute 36 refers)
- 1.2 It was also agreed that an advisory panel be established to consider applications to the fund, recommend allocations of funding to projects and provide considered advice to Cabinet to help them determine final funding allocations. The City Council nominees were the Leader and the portfolio holder for the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector (VCFS). Lancashire County Council also nominated their VCFS portfolio holder.

2.0 The Process so Far

- 2.1 The Take Pride Community Fund was officially launched on the 6 August with a general invitation going out to VCFS and Arts and Leisure contacts inviting Expressions of Interest. Key infrastructure partners ensured that the invitation was sent to all of their members, and a press release was issued that subsequently appeared as an article in the Lancaster Guardian.
- 2.2 Expressions of interest needed to demonstrate that projects met at least one of the four key priorities previously agreed by Cabinet for the use of the funding:
 - Provide support to front-line organisations in these sectors (i.e. infrastructure support).
 - Renovate and improve premises and accommodation
 - Support the co-ordination and expansion of volunteering
 - Develop new opportunities, more efficient ways of working and their future long-term sustainability
- 2.3 Two categories of funding were created – with amounts up to £10,000 being available for projects that benefit individual organisations, and amounts up to £50,000 being available for larger, collaborative bids that would benefit a number of organisations.
- 2.4 The deadline for expressions of interest was the 17th September and 97 were received by the deadline, with a total value of £2,072,640.
- 2.5 Each submission was assessed against seven criteria agreed by Cabinet:
 - Eligibility – fit with the four identified priorities
 - Deliverability (within the timescales)
 - Quality Assurance
 - Value for Money
 - Additionality and benefit to other projects and initiatives
 - Long-term sustainability of the project or a clear exit strategy
 - Collaboration with other organisations

Initial feedback was provided to the Member Panel that met for the first time on the 25th September to review the applications. The panel considered the Expressions of Interest and also identified potential linkages between applications.

- 2.6 Following this meeting each organisation received feedback in terms of eligibility and how well their proposal met the criteria for the fund. However, the decision as to whether or not to submit a full application was left with applicants.
- 2.7 In the area of support for volunteering coordination, linkages were seen between a number of Expressions of Interest. Lancaster District CVS was asked to act in a coordinating role to see if collaboration between the potential applicants could strengthen proposals, achieve more general benefits for several organisations and also add value to the Lancashire County Council proposals to provide some limited capacity in the district via 'One Lancashire'. Ten other potential applicants were invited to contact CVS to see how their organisation could benefit from that bid and how they might collaborate with CVS to contribute to the proposals.

- 2.8 It will be important that the Take Pride Community Fund applications are considered alongside the proposals for VCFS commissioning that are also to be considered by Cabinet on the 6th November. The two are distinct as the Take Pride Community Fund is a one off investment to help deliver lasting benefits whereas the commissioned arrangements support ongoing revenue services. There is potential for these to add value to one another to increase impact whilst avoiding duplication.
- 2.8 The deadline for full bids was the 11th October and 54 were received with a total value of £893,722. Bids from VCFS organisations totalled £619,513 (69% of the total) and Sports and Leisure-focused bids totalled £274,208 (31% of the total).
- 2.9 The assessment process for full bids included a number of elements. These included:
- Eligibility check – does the proposal fit with the scheme criteria?
 - Deliverability – is the proposal deliverable within the required timescales?
 - Scoring against core assessment criteria as described in Paragraph 2.5, also taking account of Need.

3.0 Projects recommended for funding

- 3.1 The Member panel met for the second and final time on the 18th October to review the full bids and to agree the recommendations to be made to Cabinet. Members looked separately at bids from organisations in the VCFS and Arts and Leisure sectors, and also at bids in both the larger (over £10k) and smaller (£10k and under) categories. Within that framework members focused on the deliverability and the quality of the applications. Ultimately 26 bids were supported totalling the full available amount of £283,725. In 7 cases members decided that less funding should be offered than the amount requested in order to focus on the aspects of the scheme that are most aligned with the Take Pride criteria, and also to ensure as many worthwhile bids as possible can be supported.
- 3.2 Applications recommended by the member panel for support are listed at **Appendix 1**. These are split according to sector and size of bid, and presented in alphabetical order. In some cases, conditions will be added to offers of funding to ensure that value for money is achieved.
- 3.3 Every bid received had merit but the Take Pride Community Fund has been very oversubscribed and so it has only been possible to support some proposals. Although some applications have not been successful this is simply a reflection of a high demand for the limited funding available.
- 3.4 In respect of two proposals, Heysham Mossgate Community and Sports Facilities and Carnforth Local Information Centre, sponsors were previously advised by Cabinet that there would be an opportunity to apply for Take Pride Community funding and both submitted an application. The Heysham Mossgate bid, was one of three supported in the Arts/ Leisure category for grants of up to £50,000 and broadly met the quality criteria for the scheme. The member panel recommended that this proposal is offered £20,000 towards those elements of expenditure that will contribute towards the viability of the Heysham Mossgate facilities, without obligation for the council to consider further funding requests. Proposals for Carnforth Local Information Centre were considered in the VCFS category for grants up to £10,000 but were not successful as alternative proposals in the same category scored more highly against the quality criteria and were allocated the available funds.

3.5 As funding offers are made and projects progress over the coming months it is possible that there may be some underspend. In order to utilise any available funding within the required timescales, it is proposed that the Leader of the Council is delegated authority to approve any reallocation of funding, in line with the criteria and process already used.

3.6 Once approved by Cabinet successful bids will receive offer letters that ensure the allocation of funds and the projects themselves can proceed swiftly and effectively. Projects will be requested to ensure that reference is made to Lancashire County Council and Lancaster City Council in any publicity, and to take part in publicity and partnership initiatives as appropriate.

4.0 Consultation

4.1 Lancashire County Council has been involved in the process with the portfolio holder for the voluntary sector and the arts acting as a member of the panel. In addition, issues and opportunities in relation to the VCF and Arts sectors are being monitored via the current Service Level Agreements and more informally as part of a range of current partnership working arrangements.

5.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

	Advantages	Disadvantages	Risks
<p>Option 1 Agree the recommendations as proposed</p>	<p>Early start for supported projects to ensure expenditure is achieved in line with the required timescales.</p> <p>Early achievement of community benefits.</p> <p>Projects selected via a fair and transparent process and collaboration maximised.</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>Some projects may fail to spend their funding in good time. Proactive monitoring needed to mitigate this.</p>
<p>Option 2 Allocate the funding to different projects</p>	<p>Gives Cabinet the opportunity to address other pressing issues</p>	<p>Potential loss of funding as expenditure may not occur within required timescales.</p> <p>County Council and Community expectations that the funding will be allocated in line with publicised arrangements would not be met.</p> <p>Work by organisations to bring forward proposals in this report would be wasted.</p>	<p>Reputational risk as County Council community expectations are that funding will be allocated in line with publicised arrangements.</p> <p>Funding allocated for later projects might have difficulty meeting financial deadlines.</p>

<p>Option 3 Allocate none or only some of the funding</p>	<p>Keeps some funding available for potential future projects</p>	<p>Potential loss of funds to the district if expenditure deadlines cannot be met</p> <p>Work by organisations to bring forward proposals in this report would be wasted.</p> <p>Loss of benefits to be delivered by the funds.</p>	<p>Reputational risk if funding is held back without a clear rationale. Funding allocated for later projects might have difficulty meeting financial deadlines.</p>
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6.0 Officer Preferred Option (and comments)

6.1 The preferred option is **Option 1**. It confirms the fair, transparent and Member-led process that has resulted in the recommended allocations.

7.0 Conclusion

- 7.1 The massive amount of interest in the Take Pride Community Fund has shown the effectiveness of the advertising process, the evident passion organisations have to continue their good work, and also the extent of the need for support for the VCF and Arts/ Leisure sectors in these difficult times.
- 7.2 The Member Panel has had to make difficult choices in agreeing these recommendations but ultimately the proposed projects will deliver the greatest lasting benefit to local people and the organisations concerned.

RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK

Requirements for the use of the available Second Homes funding are entirely consistent with the Priorities, Outcomes, Success Measures and Actions identified in the council's Corporate Plan 2012 - 15

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

Sustainability is identified as one of the core criteria for funding but other impacts will be specifically identified and considered as individual projects or schemes come forward.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The council is required to enter into an agreement with Lancashire County Council in relation to Second Homes Funding. No specific legal implications are identified at this stage.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

As accountable body, the council will be required to manage Second Homes funding in line with existing arrangements. At the present time Lancashire County Council have confirmed that up to 25% of the total funding can be carried forward into 2013/14 without their specific approval, and bids have been requested to profile their spending based on that limit. Permission to carry forward more than 25% is not guaranteed but based on previous years is likely to be granted as long as it is allocated to appropriate projects. Specific financial implications may arise in relation to individual projects and schemes and these will be considered as part of contractual and monitoring arrangements to ensure there is no financial risk to the council.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Human Resources:

No specific implications identified at this stage

Information Services:

None

Property:

No specific implications identified at this stage

Open Spaces:

None

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Take Pride Community Fund Ranked Bids summary

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