

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING:	Cabinet	
MEETING DATE:	9 May 2012	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		E 2406
TITLE:	The Community Empowerment Fund (including Performance Reward Programme Main Grant Fund and Fund for disadvantaged communities, regeneration and localism projects)	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appendix 1: Performance Reward Programme – Recommendations from LSP Board relating to the £1m Main Grant Fund• Appendix 2: Proposals for allocation of the £336,000 element of the Council’s Community Empowerment Fund for disadvantaged communities, regeneration and localism projects		

1 THE ISSUE

1.1 This report sets out the latest situation relating to the Community Empowerment Fund which was agreed by Cabinet on 2nd March 2011 and makes specific recommendations relating to the Performance Reward Grant “Main Grant Fund” of £1m and the £336,000 element of the Council’s Community Empowerment Fund for helping disadvantaged communities, regeneration and localism projects. The £1m Performance Reward Grant “Main Grant Fund” comes from Government funding as a result of the Local Area Agreement process, whilst the £336,000 fund is from Council funding agreed in the Council’s 2011-12 budget.

2 RECOMMENDATION

That:

2.1 The provisional funding allocations set out in Appendix 1 in relation to the Performance Reward Programme Main Grant Fund be agreed and that conditional offers be made with regard to the projects identified, subject to successful negotiations on grant agreements as set out in Paragraph 6.2

2.2 The Divisional Director, Policy and Partnerships be delegated authority, in consultation with the Council Leader and Section 151 Officer, to sign funding agreements that have been finalised according to this process, put in place performance management arrangements and reallocate any sums returned to the fund in accordance with the prioritisation assessment agreed by the LSP Board

- 2.3 The funding allocations in relation to the Fund for disadvantaged communities, regeneration and localism projects, including the £60,000 allocation for equalities projects recommended by the LSP Board following its deliberations on the Main Grant Fund, and set out in Appendix 2, be agreed.
- 2.4 The identified Divisional Directors be delegated authority, in consultation with relevant Cabinet members and the Section 151 Officer, to manage the budgets allocated under the Fund for disadvantaged communities, regeneration and localism projects
- 2.5 The funding profile for the Ward Councillors Initiative be agreed as follows
- 2012-13: £3000 for each member
2013-14: £3000 for each member
2014-15: No allocation
- 2.6 The allocation of £100,000 from the Fund for disadvantaged communities, regeneration and localism projects for a new Future Fund be agreed

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The £1m of funding for the Performance Reward Programme “Main Grant Fund” is drawn down from a total of £1,361,386 of grant made to the Council by central government for the work of the Council and its partners in relation to the Local Area Agreement targets in the period 2007 – 2010. Of the remaining £361,386, £300,000 has been invested in small grants for local projects and £61,386 allocated for programme management costs.
- 3.2 The funding allocations within this report for disadvantaged communities, regeneration and localism projects are within the £336,000 specifically allocated by Council for this purpose.
- 3.3 All funding set out in Appendices 1 and 2 comprise one-off allocations and there are no on-going revenue commitments.

4 CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

- 4.1 Specific proposals contained in the report directly address the Council’s objectives of
- Promoting independence and positive lives for everyone
 - Creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live
 - Building a stronger economy
- 4.2 The projects have also been developed to help promote the capacity of our communities tackle local issues, and there is a focus on what the Council’s Vision identifies as “stronger relationships between the public, private, and voluntary sector to champion joined-up services that are efficient and meet local needs”.
- 4.3 These recommendations, taken together with other initiatives and commissioning processes, represent a significant step on the Council’s journey towards being a “listening Council with active citizens that reaches every community and culture”.

They represent a clear investment in local voluntary and community organisations which are supporting local people to make a real difference to their areas.

5 THE REPORT

5.1 Council, at its budget meeting in February 2011, established a Community Empowerment Fund comprising

- £1.3m of Performance Reward Grant awarded from Government and earmarked for schemes to boost local capacity through a £1m “Main Grant Fund” (£600,000 of revenue and £400,000 of capital funding) and a £300,000 “Small Grants Fund” which has provided valuable support to local groups. The small grants scheme was launched immediately and 61 awards have been made so far totaling £261,713 of investment into local communities.
- A £120,000 investment into a Youth Enablement Fund (YEF) that enabled Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector groups to apply for funding to deliver youth provision in Bath & North East Somerset. The Cabinet awarded an additional £13,000 for the final round of the YEF and 37 organisations received funding for 41 projects. The Youth Service continues to monitor and evaluate these projects in partnership with the organisations.
- The Ward Councilors’ Initiative. In 2011/12 this provides a sum of £2,000 to each Ward Councilor to enable them to respond quickly to local community needs where a small amount of financial support can make a big difference. It is proposed that each Ward Councilor will be allocated £3,000 for both 2012-13 and 2013-14 with no allocation for 2014-15.
- A fund of £336,000 designed to help disadvantaged communities, regeneration and localism projects. This has not been allocated to date.

5.2 Cabinet approved the next steps for the process of delivering the £1m Performance Reward Programme “Main Fund” at its meeting in January. It requested a further report on the £336,000 element of the Fund designed to help disadvantaged communities, regeneration and localism projects to be brought to a future Cabinet meeting.

5.3 Following this, a bidding process for the Performance Reward Programme “Main Fund” took place from 24 January to 5 March 2012. 65 Project applications were submitted and assessed according to the criteria set out in the January Cabinet report. These included a commitment to invest at least £100,000 under each of the 6 key outcomes identified. An LSP Board Workshop on 10 April 2012 considered this assessment alongside key issues such as equalities impact and is recommending the overall “package” attached in Appendix 1 to Cabinet to consider and approve, and also a recommendation to Cabinet to earmark £60,000 from the £336,000 for disadvantaged communities, regeneration and localism projects to promote equalities in Bath and North East Somerset.

5.4 In relation to this £336,000 fund, Cabinet recognised that it would also need to take some key one-off enabling measures to maximise opportunities and ensure that the Council itself is playing its full part in delivering the “Big Society”. Further work has now been undertaken on projects which would fit within this overall approach and proposals for the allocation of this fund are set out in Appendix Two. In

addition, the recommendation made by the LSP Board in relation to equality impacts has been incorporated. This package supports the Council's approach to localism and supporting voluntary and community organisations, with a particular focus on

- addressing inequalities
- promoting volunteering
- involving communities in decision-making
- helping address the needs of complex families
- working with young people

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

6.1 The report author and Lead Cabinet member have fully reviewed the risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

6.2 In order to manage risk in relation to the Performance Reward Programme, conditional offers will initially be made to projects as set out in Appendix 1. Negotiation will then be undertaken to finalise grant agreements conditional on agreement of milestones, performance indicators, funding profiles/drawdown, and resolution of all outstanding issues, identified risks and opportunities. This will include all value for money considerations including assuring that no project receives "double funding" either from within Community Empowerment Fund budgets or from other funds. Finalised funding agreements will be signed off by the Divisional Director of Policy & Partnerships (in consultation with the Council Leader and Section 151 Officer) who will also ensure appropriate performance reporting systems are in place.

7 EQUALITIES

7.1 Equality impact assessments (EqIAs) have been carried out as the Main Fund has been progressed; the duty upon the Council under the Equality Act 2010 has been fully considered. The EqIAs have not identified any adverse impacts on people or groups of people with protected characteristics initially identified through this process. However, an opportunity was identified to address the Council's public sector equality duty through this process. By adding a specific criterion in the process relating to "evidence of community need and opportunities to promote equality" we are able to demonstrate we are working towards the duty which specifies we must "eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity between different groups and foster good relations between different groups".

7.2 There are no negative impacts on people with protected characteristics identified through the EqIA of the recommended projects within the Main Fund. Positive impacts are identified in relation to age (older and younger people), gender, people living in rural areas, and people who are or may be at risk of socio-economic disadvantage. There were fewer positive impacts relating to LGBT, disability, BME and religion/belief protected characteristics. As a key positive action arising from the EqIAs, therefore, the LSP Board recommends to Council that £60,000 be earmarked from the £336,000 fund for disadvantaged communities, regeneration and localism projects to invest in projects within Bath and North East Somerset

which promote equalities. This recommendation is incorporated into this report and is included in Appendix 2.

8 RATIONALE

8.1 The approach has been driven by the refreshed Vision and Values for the Council, and in particular building the Council's capacity to be a "listening Council with active citizens that reaches every community and culture."

9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

9.1 Recommendations relating to the Performance Reward Grant "Main Grant Fund" have been made following the process agreed by Cabinet and so no other options were considered. The additional opportunity to invest in the equality agenda was highlighted as an option through consideration of the wider equality impacts identified through the LSP Board consideration of the overall "package" of projects.

10 CONSULTATION

10.1 Cabinet members; Other B&NES Services; Stakeholders/Partners; Other Public Sector Bodies; Section 151 Finance Officer; Chief Executive; Monitoring Officer

10.2 A draft of the report was circulated for comment. The LSP Project Board considered the Main Fund and this comprised representatives from partner organisations.

11 ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN REACHING THE DECISION

11.1 *Social Inclusion; Customer Focus; Sustainability; Young People; Corporate; Health & Safety; Other Legal Considerations*

12 ADVICE SOUGHT

12.1 The Council's Monitoring Officer (Divisional Director – Legal and Democratic Services) and Section 151 Officer (Divisional Director - Finance) have had the opportunity to input to this report and have cleared it for publication.

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Sponsoring Cabinet Member	Councillor Paul Crossley
Background papers	<u>Decision Details: Strategy for Community Enablement</u> <u>Performance Reward Grant: Main Fund</u>
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	