

Appendix 1 - PDS report on findings and actions from the Corporate Panel meeting on the 28th September 2020

Background

Council on 23rd July 2020 resolved to agree in principle to introduce a Community Contribution Fund (CCF) from 2021/22, but to ask the Corporate Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel to consider and report back to Council with recommendations on how it might work in practice including:

- a. Whether to adopt an inclusive approach inviting all Council Tax payers to contribute or whether it should be limited to those in Band H;
- b. The vehicle for managing any new Community Contribution Fund;
- c. The mechanism for identifying local priorities for support; and
- d. The means of consulting with residents on the introduction of any such Fund.

The Corporate PDS Panel meeting on the 28th of September 2020 received a background report and presentation on the proposal CCF and discussed each of the points set out in a-d above.

1.1 Scope of the Fund

Question. Should the Council adopt an inclusive approach inviting all Council Tax payers to contribute or whether it should be limited to those in Band H?

The Panel considered the following issues:

- Whether the scheme be restricted to Band H residents
- Whether it would be a fairer approach to present the voluntary contribution to all residents
- Whether visitors, businesses and other organisations be requested to make contributions

Recommendations from the Panel

- 1) An inclusive approach open to all rather than limiting it to Band H so the scheme would be open to all residents, businesses and organisations whilst being very clear that it was a voluntary scheme.

1.2 Management of the Fund

Question. What should be the vehicle for Managing any new Community Contribution Fund?

The Panel considered the following issues

- Whether the scheme should be run through the Council or through an independent body – such as a new charitable trust or existing partner, with the potential for Gift Aid top up for charitable donations
- The trade-off between complexity and cost of set-up and administering scheme versus income generated.
- Timescales required to deliver the scheme
- The scheme's governance arrangements
- Who will decide on use of fund / grants given from fund

Recommendations from the Panel

- 1) Agree the creation and composition of a Community Contribution Panel with the composition of 10 politically proportionate councillors – six Liberal Democrats, two Conservatives, one Independent and one Labour
- 2) A trial period of one year from 2021/22
- 3) The established CCF Panel will decide on the use of the funds

1.3 Uses for the Fund

Question. What should be the mechanism for identifying local priorities for support?

The Panel considered the following:

- Whether these should be linked to agreed Council Priorities and the Corporate Strategy
- Whether any specific areas / projects which are more suited to a voluntary contribution-based funding approach
- Engagement with residents to inform specific priorities

Recommendations

- 1) The Group Leaders to select and agree the three Criteria Areas that the CCF could contribute to.
- 2) Council Taxpayers would have the option to make a Voluntary contribution
- 3) Three 'Criteria Areas' (Theme area projects) would be set on the form so that people know what they would be contributing to (Similar to a Supermarket green token scheme). The Criteria Areas would be reviewed at the end of the first year's trial.

1.4 Engagement

Q. What will be the means of consulting with residents on the introduction of any such Fund?

The Panel considered the following:

- Any initial consultation exercise to gauge support for the principle of the voluntary contribution fund?
- Any consultation on priorities for use of funds?
- Consultation approach – mail based, web based, existing Council communications, community groups or a mix of these

Recommendations

- 1) As the scheme would initially be for a trial period (and also voluntary), consultation could be done at the end of the one year trial to take on board the results and also endeavour to engage with Parish and Town Councils and the Bath Forum.
- 2) The Corporate Panel agreed that the scheme should be well promoted by good communications