

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET

5 SEPTEMBER 2017

JOINT REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR – OPERATIONAL AND PARTNERSHIP SERVICES AND THE HEAD OF FINANCE

COMMUNITY ACTION FUND 2017-18

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek Cabinet approval for the 2017-18 Community Action Fund.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/Other Corporate Priorities

- 2.1 The use of the fund is at members' discretion and therefore is expected to impact upon all priorities.

3. Background

- 3.1 The 2017-2021 Medium Term Financial Strategy which was approved by Council on 1st March 2017 included a new budget of £285,000 for the creation of a Community Action Fund. The broad aims of the fund were to create opportunities for localised intervention by members within their own ward to the benefit of the community. This is hoped to broaden the impact which council funding can have on individual communities and provide a funding source which members can individually use to directly benefit their local ward.

4. Current situation / proposal

- 4.1 Following the approval of the 2017-18 budget, officers from the OAPS directorate and Finance section have worked to develop processes and procedures to implement the fund, and a suite of documentation is attached in the appendices to this report.
- 4.2 Officers have designed the scheme with the aim of minimising administrative costs. The burden of responsibility for the eligibility of payments is therefore placed on members, with the requirement for members to sign a certification that they have, to the best of their knowledge, complied with the rules of the scheme. Further assurance will then be provided through public accountability – i.e. reporting of payments on the council's website and to the audit committee – and periodic sample based compliance testing to be carried out by the council's internal audit function.
- 4.3 Members have significant discretion over how to use the money with the overarching caveat that expenditure must be lawful and it must not contravene council policy. Similarly, funding should not be awarded to profit making organisations or for political purposes. Subject to Cabinet approval of the scheme,

members will be required to attend mandatory training before they are able to submit applications for payment. This is to ensure that the scheme operates smoothly and that future administration costs and enquiries are kept to a minimum.

- 4.4 It is anticipated that some members will wish to use their allocation to fund works or services which the council would itself carry out, incremental to existing provision. In such cases, members will be encouraged to discuss proposals at an early stage with officers in order to best accommodate requests in an efficient manner. It is important to recognise, however, that it may not be possible to practically or economically accommodate all requests and therefore members should note that the relevant corporate director retains the right to refuse such work.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules

- 5.1 The appendix to the report details new procedure rules to be implemented as part of the Community Action Fund.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

- 6.1 The fund provides an equal sum of £5,000 for each member to allocate to their ward as they see fit, within the bounds of the conditions set out in the appendices. As such it is impossible to quantify how the fund will impact upon different equalities groups. It is proposed that an Equality Impact Assessment is carried out following a full year of implementation.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 Funding was approved as part of the 2017-18 revenue budget totalling £285,000 including £15,000 for administration.

8. Recommendation.

- 8.1 Cabinet is asked to approve the Community Action Fund as detailed in the body of this report and the procedures as attached in the report's Appendix.

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Background papers: None