

COMMUNITY FUND 2015-16: INVITATIONS TO SUBMIT FINAL APPLICATIONS
WDA/11/15

Recommendations

That Members:

1. Approve the list of ten schemes detailed in paragraph 4.2 and Appendix 2 to be invited to submit final applications for Community Fund approval; and
2. Delegate powers of the Authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chairperson for the following:
 - Should any project be withdrawn or an invited applicant fails to submit a credible project plan within an agreed timescale, those applications will be rejected and further submissions invited from the next best placed projects at the EOI stage; and
 - Approve the final awards for funding.

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Report of the Chief Executive

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To inform Members of the Expressions of Interest received for the Community Fund 2015 and the outcome of the evaluation process;
- 1.2 To seek Members' approval to invite final applications in accordance with the projects listed in paragraph 4.2 and Appendix 2.
- 1.3 To confirm Members' agreement to delegate powers of the Authority to the Chief Executive at the final application stage and to make final awards for funding.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Authority's Revenue Budget was approved by Members on 6th February 2015 which included £100,000 for the Community Fund. Veolia E.S. has also provided a £10,000 contribution through the WMRC contract. The Community Fund for 2014-15 is therefore a total of £110,000 with £5,000 allocated for communications and support related to successful projects. The Fund covers the Merseyside and Halton Waste Partnership area in line with previous years funding.
- 2.2 Members approved amendments to the Community Fund policy framework and details of the annual process in February 2015 (Report WDA 03/15). These changes should enable projects to be awarded earlier in the financial year to give organisations more time to deliver their projects. The breakdown of the scheme approved is for the following regional/district split for funding:
 - Regional Projects: £57,000 to be allocated for region wide projects with a maximum individual award of £25,000;
 - District Projects: £48,000 to support projects up to a value of £8,000 at individual district level.
 - The recommendations for district awards as in 2014 will be made on a spatial distribution with the best placed project for each district and then the second best until the maximum budget is spent whilst

maintaining best value. Where there is any underspend in a district pot, the funding will be reallocated to the regional pot or vice versa and awarded to the next best placed project.

2.3 This year's fund introduced the following split procedure:

- Expressions of Interest (EOI) first stage element to cover the output requirements of the project and to address due diligence issues; and
- A second stage where Members are asked to agree the list of projects for invitation to submit final applications up to the value of the approved budget. This forms the key decision making stage in the process.
- Final awards may be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chairperson. Should any project be withdrawn or an applicant fails to submit a credible project plan within an agreed timescale, there should also be a delegation to reject these applications and invite submissions of final proposals to the next best placed projects at the EOI stage. These changes were proposed to speed up the application process;
- Community led cookery courses and further awareness and engagement on the Love Food Hate Waste campaign are excluded from this year's Fund as these topics are receiving significant support through the Authority's waste prevention programme and WRAP's Love Food Hate Waste 10 City Challenge.

3. Community Fund 2015-16 Stage 1: Expressions of Interest

- 3.1 The Community Fund for 2015-16 was launched on 10th February 2015 with Expressions of Interest (EOI) being accepted up to 13th March 2015. 31 Expressions of Interest for funding were received with a total value of £350,641 and are listed at Appendix 1. This is seven applications less than in 2014 but once again the Fund is significantly oversubscribed. A breakdown of the geographical areas proposed to be supported by the Expressions of Interest can be found at Appendix 1. No applications were received from Halton and it is proposed to reallocate this funding back into the regional pot in line with the annual criteria.
- 3.2 The EOIs received have been evaluated using the policy framework and the 2015-16 criteria as agreed by Members. The principles set out in the policy are that the Community Fund will:

- Be limited to achieving the aims and objectives of the Authority's Corporate Plan;
- Not go beyond the Authority's incidental powers for Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste;
- Eligible bodies will be restricted to community and voluntary sector not for profit organisations including social enterprises, schools, colleges and universities;
- Community Fund applications will not be supported for the same schemes that are already being funded by the Authority in the same financial year; and
- All awards are subject to the Authority's Financial Procedural Rules including the mechanism for recompense (clawback) should the agreed project outputs not be met.

3.3 The Expressions of Interest were evaluated and ranked. The evaluation process has been simplified to rank the expressions of interest within the regional/district allocations in terms of provision of maximum outputs for tonnages diverted from landfill (based on recycling, re-use and/or waste prevention), carbon benefits, levels of engagement with the community and economic benefits (jobs created or safeguarded and volunteering opportunities). Additional social benefits, in-kind support and other sources of funding for projects which maintain best value were also taken into account.

4. Invitations to Submit Final Applications

4.1 A significant number of good quality projects were received but the Authority only has £110,000 available to fund projects, communications and support to promote the schemes. Members are asked to consider the recommendation in paragraph 4.2 below and approve the list of projects at Appendix 2 to be invited to submit full applications to the Authority. It is anticipated that these projects will be the ones to be awarded Community funding subject to agreement of a final project plan from each applicant. The delegation proposed to reject applications and to make the final funding awards is set out in paragraph 2.3 above and is in line with the Community Fund Policy Framework.

4.2 Recommendation

The following organisations should be invited to submit final applications for a total community fund award of £105,200 as listed in Appendix 2:

- **Regional Projects:** to invite the three projects delivering the highest outputs namely Neighbourhood Services (Ref: CF16), Fire Support Network (CF24) and Groundwork (CF14) a total of £62,000. The first scheme continues to support the environmental education work at Larkins Farm covering Liverpool and Knowsley whilst the remaining two projects support recycling and reuse across all districts.
- **District Projects:** to invite seven projects up to a total value of £43,200. The second Liverpool application brings the potential value of awards up to the full budget. Any unallocated budget in each district reverts to the pot to support the funding of the regional projects above.
- One in Knowsley (MerseyCycle Ref CF19);
- Two in Liverpool (Granby Toxteth Development Trust Ref CF26 and Kensington Vision CIC Ref CF1);
- Two in St Helens (Legh Vale Primary School Ref CF13 and Billinge Horticultural Society Ref CF 31).
- One in Sefton (Emmaus Merseyside Ref CF22); and
- One in Wirral (Wirral Change Ref CF9).

5. Risk Implications

Identified Risk	Likelihood Rating	Consequence Rating	Risk Value	Mitigation
Challenge by unsuccessful bidders at EOI stage who are not invited to submit final full applications for the grant.	2	3	6	Members approve a policy framework and output criteria to be met. This ensures that the assessment is equitably applied to all applicants based on a spatial approach to funding.

				<p>The EOI stage and amended criteria have streamlined the process for applicants and removed the competitive element of the fund and reduces the impact of time and resources put into EOIs compared to full proposals which may be rejected.</p> <p>Members do have to consider the political implications of the geographical distribution of the proposed invitations to submit final applications</p>
<p>Ensure process control measures are appropriate to ensure quality and value for money and applications are awarded in order to comply with the Authority's Best Value duties</p>				<p>The policy framework approved by Members has clear criteria, financial thresholds and delegations to officers where appropriate.</p> <p>Funding has been determined as part of the overall budget setting process.</p>

6. HR Implications

- 6.1 The two stage application has reduced the level of staff involvement required to process and evaluate applications but the number of applications received has fallen compared to last year. The level of communications support given to funded projects will continue this year

but at a reduced level as 50% of projects have received funding awards in previous years.

7. Environmental Implications

7.1 The recommended list of applications to be invited to the next stage of the process all aim to deliver the Authority's corporate objectives and provide high environmental outputs and improvements.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 Based on the Community Fund scheme being applied as approved, the projects being taken forward will account for £105,200 of the £110,000 allocated budget with the remaining £4,800 being used for communications to promote the projects. Should any of the projects not proceed to final award, consideration will be given to any substitute applications taking into account the impact on funding available particularly for communications which would be significantly reduced.

9. Legal Implications

9.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report.

10. Conclusion

10.1 The policy framework and control measures continue to prove effective in protecting the public purse and meeting Best Value requirements.

10.2 The changes made to this year's Fund to make the process easier for applicants has proved successful and reduced the amount of time spent on administration and evaluation of applications. Alongside the request for delegation of Authority powers to the Chief Executive, these changes should enable projects to be awarded in May/June 2015 compared to Autumn in previous years funding.

10.3 The 10 schemes that are recommended to be invited to proceed to final application stage provide the maximum outputs and value for money to the Authority from the 31 applications submitted.

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The background documents to this report are open to inspection in accordance with Section 100D of The Local Government Act 1972 - Nil.