

**COMMUNITY FUND 2013-14**  
**WDA/12/13**

**Recommendations**

That:

1. Members note the projects awarded Community Funding in 2012/13 as listed in Appendix 1.
2. Members approve the Community Fund Policy Framework at Appendix 2;  
and
3. Members approve the details for the Community Fund for 2013/14 listed at Table 1 and the assessment criteria and scoring in Appendix 3 ;

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**Community Fund 2013-14**  
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**Report of the Chief Executive**

**1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 To inform Members of the projects supported by the Community Fund for 2012/13.
- 1.2 Members are asked to consider and approve a policy framework for the Community Fund to ensure appropriate principles are established for the over-arching programme to deliver the Fund each year.
- 1.3 Members are also asked to approve the details of the Community Fund for 2013/14 in accordance with the new policy framework.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 The Authority approved the budget and details of the 2012/13 Community Fund in April 2012 (WDA 11/12) following a full review of the scheme to evaluate its success and the benefits in strengthening the scheme.
- 2.2 Veolia E.S has provided a contribution to the Community Fund through the WMRC contract. This contribution was £10,000 last financial year bringing the Fund to a total of £60,000 in 2012/13 and the contribution will remain at this level for 2013/14. Veolia are included in the assessment panel and the process of allocating the funding whilst the general administration and project management is undertaken by Authority Officers.
- 2.3 The Authority's Revenue Budget was approved by Members on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2013 and Members agreed to increase the Authority's contribution to the Community Fund from £50,000 to £120,000. The fund will therefore total £130,000 for 2013/14 with Veolia's contribution.

**3. Community Fund 2012-13**

- 3.3 The Fund supported 39 projects to a value of £59,238 in 2012/13 (see Appendix 1 for details of individual projects):
  - Fund 3: 4 projects out of 24 applications totalling £22,070;
  - Fund 2: 10 projects out of 30 applications totalling £26,115; and

- Fund 1: 25 projects on a first come first served basis totalling £11,052.44
- 3.2 In reviewing the award of projects it was found that whilst a number of innovative projects were supported, many of the other applications did not meet the requirements set out in the guidance which was provided online and in hard copy. There appeared to be a lack of either understanding of the criteria for the funding by community organisations or appreciation of how projects must relate to waste themes.
- 3.3 The structure of the fund for 2012/13 and the level of poor quality submissions led to a greater than expected use of officer time in administration of the fund and delays in making the awards. This also had a knock on effect on the timetables for delivery of the projects given funding.
- 3.3 Anecdotal evidence from unsuccessful organisations indicated that more recognisable and specific criteria would help in the development of projects that met their own requirements and the Authority's strategic objectives.
- 3.4 The take up of the funding by schools has taken longer than anticipated despite regular communications from the Authority, Veolia and the Districts. It is important to ensure that communications are targeted appropriately and fit the timetable for schools in planning their curriculum based projects.
- 3.5 Schools also indicated that they require support to be able to deliver their project to ensure its sustainability. Many teachers felt they did not have the sufficient level of knowledge or skills required to conduct a waste related project.
- 3.6 The proposals for the 2013/14 Community Fund particularly those for education establishments in Fund Three take into account the feedback received above.

#### **4. Community Fund Policy Framework**

- 4.1 The value of the Community Fund has significantly increased in the last few years from £20,000 in 2011/12 to £130,000 for 2013/14. Therefore, officers propose an increase in the control measures which are proportionate to the increase in the level of funding. These control measures are included in a separate overarching policy framework for the Community Fund for consideration and approval by members (Appendix

2). The annual scheme details would then be submitted in accordance with the policy following confirmation of a Community Fund in the Revenue Budget for future years.

4.2 The principles set out in the proposed 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;
- Schemes that are already being funded by the Authority in the same financial year will not be eligible for Community Fund support;
- An annual scheme will include:
  - Apportionment of the fund into lots;
  - Criteria for each portion of the fund which must include:
    - quantitative and qualitative elements;
    - Risk assessments;
    - Financial threshold for delegations to officers; and
    - Minimum scoring thresholds against the criteria whereby awards would not be made to projects where the threshold is not met.
- Approval of awards over £20,000 be subject to Member approval either by the whole Authority or by sub-committee;
- All awards will be subject to a mechanism for recompense (clawback) in accordance with the Authority's Financial Procedural Rules should the agreed project outputs not be met; and
- Community awards will be limited to annual funding. An eligible organisation can apply for funding for a scheme in consecutive years but will be subject to competition and the revised or

reaffirmed evaluation criteria established each year that the Community Fund exists.

## 5. Community Fund 2013-14

5.1 It is proposed that the Fund for 2013-14 should be allocated as set out as at Table 1 below and Appendix 3 for assessments in line with the new policy framework and funding streams one and two will be subject to a timetable for applications not a first come first served approach. However, funding stream two will only be undertaken should there be any underspend in the awards for fund one. This cascade will continue as necessary and appropriate into fund three.

<b>Table 1: Breakdown of Scheme for 2013-14</b>		
<b>Funding Stream</b>	<b>Financial Band Total</b>	<b>Criteria</b>
One	£110,000	<p>To support up to five large scale projects of £20,000.</p> <p>Approval of shortlisted applications awards to be subject to Member approval at a meeting of the Authority to be convened during summer 2013.</p> <p>The project which scores above 80 in the evaluation may be awarded up to £10,000 additional funding at the discretion of members where it can demonstrate commitment to deliver additional outputs for the extra funding.</p>
Two (provisional)	[£30,000]	<p>Three to six medium sized projects for support between £5-10,000.</p> <p>Appropriate projects to be evaluated and identified as reserve schemes.</p> <p>Approval to be delegated to the Chief Executive should any reserve schemes be awarded.</p>
Three	£20,000	<p>Up to 10 Schools/College Packages up to £2,000 in value. The package will based on four thematic options which support the Authority's objectives:</p> <p>1. Food</p>

		<p>2. Textiles</p> <p>3. Growing/Composting</p> <p>4. Recycling Champions</p> <p>The package would be tailored to the schools/colleges and the district council's waste collection system but linked to the chosen theme and would be a combination of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Visit to one Recycling Discovery Centre (including appropriate travel incentive/provision);</li> <li>b. Funds for one arts based session linked to the theme e.g. theatre performance or workshop;</li> <li>c. Practical skill session back in school provided by MRWA officers (up to agreed number of hours);</li> <li>d. Fixed funding to implement behavioural change by pupils/students.</li> </ol> <p>The arts based element of the package would be procured under the Financial Procedural rules and approved by the Chief Executive.</p> <p>Each individual package would be approved by the Waste Strategy Manager as the appointed budget holder.</p>
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5.2 Projects will be assessed and scored against ten criteria listed in Appendix 3: this includes:

- Five quantitative criteria and five qualitative criteria;
- Each criterion can be scored to a maximum of 10;
- Total score for a project is 100;
- The total score will address the value for money for each application;
- Each application in funding streams one and two will be required to meet a minimum overall scoring threshold of 40 and score at least 3

of out 10 in eight of the ten criteria (as identified in Appendix 3). Any project which does not meet these minimum scores will not be put forward to be awarded community funding;

- Risk assessments are a requirement of the project management criterion for funding stream one and two;
- Applications for funding stream three (the pre-packaged award to schools and colleges) will be considered on a first come first served basis but on the basis that the proposal will be awarded if it contains proposals to implement behavioural change (equivalent to scoring a minimum of four against the qualitative behavioural change criterion).

5.3 It is proposed that should Members approve the recommendations, Community Fund workshops will be held in each of the five districts by MRWA officers working with the districts to engage with potential applicants. These workshops will be used to inform organisations about funding procedures and provide more detailed guidance to improve the standard of applications received. It is also proposed to use traditional and more targeted communications techniques to promote the Fund to help increase the number of quality applications received by the Authority.

## 6. Risk Implications

Identified Risk	Likelihood Rating ( L )	Consequence Rating ( C )	Risk Value (L x C = RV)	Mitigation	Mitigated Risk Value
Over subscription to the fund	3	4	12	Ensure criteria for evaluation are appropriate and set minimum threshold for scoring to award fund.	8
Making the funding process too complicated and deterring potential applicants	3	4	12	Amend criteria to be more focused for applications and arrange awareness workshops for applicants in each district	8
Risk that each category has unsatisfactory uptake	3	4	12	Improved targeted communications and value of fund in promotions. Increase working with new networks	8



				to spread message to organisations and ensure timetable meets applicants' needs.	
The CV sector not being supported in the right way	3	4	12	Ensure the Fund is improved based on feedback from participating organisations and districts to ensure awards meet the requirements of the sector and opportunities to support are not missed.	6
Ensure process control measures are appropriate to ensure quality and value for money applications are awarded in order to comply with the Authority's Best Value duties.	3	3	9	Introduce new community fund policy framework with clear criteria, delegations to officers as appropriate and minimum scoring thresholds below which awards would not be made.	3
Opportunities for working / supporting the CV sector are missed.	3	2	6	Improve communication process to signpost more CV sector groups to funding availability.	2

## 7. HR Implications

- 7.1 The revisions to the Community Fund reduce the overall number of awards being provided, involve Members in the high spend funding streams and offer a pre-determined package for schools and colleges. By including these changes to the process and the way applications are determined the management and delivery of the fund will be improved.

## 8. Environmental Implications

- 8.1 The new policy and funding criteria aims to deliver corporate objectives and ultimately deliver the Authority's vision which is "To improve people's

quality of life by ensuring that waste is sustainably managed to bring about the best combination of environmental, economic and social benefits”.

## **9. Financial Implications**

- 9.1 The Authority set its revenue budget for 2013/14 at a meeting of the Authority on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2013. At that meeting, Members approved the closure of Rainford Household Waste Recycling Centre and agreed to use £70k of the resultant savings to support the growth in the Community Fund and the budget has been amended to reflect the approved changes.
- 9.2 The proposed policy and funding procedures for the Community Fund will ensure that the control measures proposed are commensurate to the increased budget and risks associated with achieving value for money for the increased spend. These measures also ensure the Community Fund is in line with the Authority’s Best Value and fiduciary obligations.

## **10. Conclusion**

- 10.1 The increased budget for the Community Fund requires more effective control measures to be put in place which protect the public purse and meet Best Value requirements. Therefore, an overarching policy framework is proposed for the Fund. This framework will then allow for annual changes to the Fund to be made and approved by Members should the Community Fund budget be agreed each year.
- 10.2 A number of good quality projects were awarded Community Funding in 2012/13 but the take up by schools for funding took longer than anticipated. Feedback suggests the need for more targeted communications, in an appropriate timeframe and provision of support towards delivery of waste related projects. The proposed workshops in each district are as a response to feedback from district officers, applicants and those previously unaware of the Fund, to provide advice in ensuring a range of quality applications are submitted.
- 10.3 The proposed changes to the criteria and scoring mechanisms support transparency and a level playing field for the funding. The revised criteria and method for scoring should help to make the application process clearer for organisations to submit quality proposals and should take less time for assessment, award and monitoring.
- 10.4 Ultimately, the changes proposed are to ensure a high standard of governance and the delivery of sustainable waste management projects being undertaken across the partnership. These projects will demonstrate

the added value of the Authority's financial contribution and active engagement and support to the region's schools, community and voluntary sectors.

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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