

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report to Cabinet

1st December 2015

TITLE:	Councillors' Community Initiative Fund - Update
PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	Councillor Brian Johnson (Leisure, Sport, Parks, Countryside & Communities)
OFFICER:	Mark Forrester (Democratic & Community Services Manager)
WARDS:	Non specific

1. Reason for the Report:

The Report provides an update on this year's operation of the Councillors' Community Initiative Fund and proposes an amendment to the criteria designed to provide Councillors with greater flexibility in the use of the Fund.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That Cabinet notes the spend to date on the Councillors' Community Initiative Fund.
- 2.2 That Cabinet approves the proposal to add an additional criteria to the purposes to which the fund can be put – as set out in (3.3 – 3.5 below).

3. Executive Summary

- 3.1 The Councillors' Community Initiative Fund provides £500 for each Councillor to allocate in grant support to voluntary and community activity undertaken in their wards for the benefit of the local community.
- 3.2 This year to date
 - 32 funding applications have been received
 - Funding applications cover activity in 20 wards
 - 22 Councillors have committed some of their fund allocation
 - 3 Councillors have committed all of their fund allocation

- 31 Councillors have not yet committed any of their allocated fund
- A total of £6,117 has been allocated
- £21,883 remains unallocated

3.3 To provide additional flexibility for Councillors to address the most important local issues it is proposed to extend the criteria of the Councillors' Community Initiative Fund to allow Councillors to allocate funds to address local concerns, issues or opportunities via Parish Councils and other statutory agencies, including the District Council. The measure is also intended to assist Councillors to fully commit their allocated funding to the causes they judge to be most beneficial to their communities.

3.4 The proposal is to draft the criteria such that any funds allocated to statutory agencies is for an additional activity or item in the Ward and not for ongoing or routine activity. It is further proposed that these allocations should be to address what is known as the 'cleaner, greener, safety' agenda – that is activity designed to strengthen community life or to address community safety type issues including small scale environmental improvement or activity.

3.5 In order to pilot the revised criteria within this financial year it is proposed that the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport, Parks, Countryside & Communities is given delegated authority to approve the detail of the revised criteria.

4. How this report links to Corporate Priorities

4.1 The proposed grant relates to the Corporate aim: Help create a safer and healthier environment for our communities to live & work

5. Options and Analysis

5.1 That Members note the report and support the piloting of the proposed additional CCIF criteria (Recommended)

5.2 That Members do not support the piloting of additional CCIF criteria.

6. Implications

6.1 Community Safety - (Crime and Disorder Act 1998)

The proposed changes to CCIF criteria provide an additional opportunity for Councillors to address local community safety related issues.

6.2 Workforce

No implications

6.3 Equality and Diversity/Equality Impact Assessment

There are no specific implications from this report. The CCIF provides an opportunity for Councillors to contribute to activity

which assists the Council to fulfil its duties under the Equality Act.

6.4 Financial Considerations

No implications

6.5 Legal

No implications.

6.6 Sustainability

No implications.

6.7 Internal and External Consultation

No implications

6.8 Risk Assessment

No implications. Council officers will continue to provide support to Councillors to verify that fund criteria have been met, that groups/organisations are eligible to receive funding and to provide other advice on request. There is a small residual risk that funding may not be spent effectively but as each grant is relatively small the risk is low compared to the significant benefits delivered to communities by the many projects supported through the fund.

7. Background and Detail

7.1 The Councillors' Community Initiative Fund (CCIF) was launched in April 2010 as a means of supporting activity by local people that improves the wellbeing of their communities.

7.2 When launched the total fund available was £15,680 allocated as £280 per Councillor . In 2013/14 the fund was increased to £500 per Councillor – a total budget of £28,000 per annum.

7.3 The Council's Community Leadership Scheme (September 2014) also recognises CCIF as means of strengthening the relationship between Councillors and local community groups.

Fund criteria

7.4 To be eligible to apply for CCIF projects and activities must:

- Be run by volunteers from the local community
- Benefit the local community
- Have the full support of their District Councillor

7.5 The CCIF can support:

- one-off events or ongoing projects
- capital items or revenue costs
- new projects or existing projects

7.6 There are certain activities that CCIF does not support. These are Parish Councils, retrospective applications, religious activities, political activities, non-voluntary organisations, individuals, activities that do not benefit residents of Staffordshire Moorlands. Note though that Parish Councils have occasionally received money on behalf of informal community organisations without a bank account or for specific community events.

7.7 A list of the groups and activities supported by Councillors is published each year on the Councils website and can be found at

<http://www.staffsmoorlands.gov.uk/sm/council-services/improve-the-place-you-live/councillors-initiative-fund>

Summary or year to date

7.8 The CCIF was launched this year on 29th June 2015.

7.9 To date:

- 32 funding applications have been received
- Funding applications cover activity in 20 wards
- 22 Councillors have committed some of their fund allocation
- 3 Councillors have committed all of their fund allocation
- 31 Councillors have not yet committed any of their allocated fund
- A total of £6,117 has been allocated
- £21,883 remains unallocated
- A variety of community activity has been supported:
 - Projects for older people
 - Youth and children's projects
 - Sports based activity
 - Village and Community Hall activity
 - Environmental improvement work
 - First responders

7.10 This deadline for this years applications to be received is Friday 29th January 2016. This allows times to process grants before the end of the financial year. By precedent un allocated funding has been made available to other ward Councillors (in mutli councillor wards) to allocate.

Proposed changes

- 7.11 Since 2010 Councillors have from time to time enquired about the eligibility to fund beneficial activity run directly by Parish Councils and whether it is possible to use funding to address local issues such as unkempt land or litter bins – which could mean funding additional activity by the Council or another agency.
- 7.12 To provide additional flexibility for Councillors to address the most important local issues it is proposed to extend the criteria of the Councillors Community Initiative Fund to allow Councillors to allocate funds to address local concerns, issues or opportunities via Parish Councils and other statutory agencies, including the District Council. The measure is also intended to assist Councillors to fully commit there allocated funding to the causes they judge to be most beneficial to their communities.
- 7.13 The proposal is to draft the criteria such that any funds allocated to statutory agencies is for an additional activity or item in the Ward and not for ongoing or routine activity. It is further proposed that these allocations should be to address what is known as the 'cleaner, greener, safety' agenda – that is activity designed to strengthen community life or to address community safety type issues including small scale environmental improvement or activity.
- 7.14 It is proposed that the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Sport, Parks, Countryside & Communities is given delegated authority to approve the detail of the revised criteria and that these are piloted as soon as possible.

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Web Links and Background Papers

Location

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