

Appendix B

Transition Fund – administration process outline

1. Background

The Council is making difficult decisions against a backdrop of savage spending cuts that sees our government funding halve by 2017 from 2010 levels. Proposals made as part of the City Centre First (Connecting Communities) Programme aim to provide services to the best level we can now afford.

In some cases local community and voluntary sector groups have already approached us about how they might play a role in the delivery of a library, or other, service that may otherwise reduce as part of these spending cuts. Unless communities and other organisations join together to work with us and others on delivering services in neighbourhoods these services will end.

As part of the 2015/16 budget setting process the City Council agreed to establish a one-off £0.5m Transition Fund to support communities in mitigating the impact of City Council service reductions. This is an important investment by the Council and a way of enabling communities to deliver alternative service models and mitigate the impact of spending reductions in local areas. It is an opportunity to think innovatively about how services could be delivered differently, providing some transition support to make this a reality.

2. Purpose of the transition fund

Groups and organisations within Coventry Communities may wish to have more involvement in providing services to Coventry residents, in particular, where service reductions impact on a specific community.

The Transition Fund exists to support those groups and organisations that need one-off funding to get their project off the ground. Opportunities that could be available as part of the Transition Fund will vary from project to project.

Applications for the Transition Fund could include:

- An application for the resources needed to be able to carry out a function that has historically been provided by the Council e.g. for the purchase of equipment to maintain a park
- A business case to temporarily fund administrative or management support during the early stages of a project, to assist in the establishment and set up of systems to enable community asset transfer or service provision

- An application for minor refurbishment to make a location or premises suitable for a specific purpose e.g. the delivery of a service now being provided by the community or another organisation.

The purpose of the transition fund is to provide some mitigation of the impact of Council service reductions – not to replicate those services through grant, but to kickstart, empower and enable communities and partners to run services in new ways on a sustainable basis.

The use of the fund is not limited to the examples outlined above – these are provided for indicative purposes only. The fund must be flexible in its usage to enable the trialling of new ideas and approaches, but it must enable the Council to achieve its overall financial and non -financial objectives through the Connecting Communities programme. Any application made to the Transition Fund will be considered provided that it meets the criteria outlined in section 4 below.

3. Process

From December 2015 the Council will consult on proposals made as part of Connecting Communities – Phase One (formerly City Centre First). At this time, the Council will also engage with stakeholders to gain a greater understanding about the opportunities that exist for co-production or for communities to take a new or increased role in the delivery of City Council services as part of Connecting Communities – Phase Two.

From December, expressions of interest will be sought from these stakeholders to access one-off funds from the transition fund provided that cost savings to the Council can be demonstrated and delivered in order to achieve targets in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

An initial assessment will determine whether or not the proposal should be taken forward to completion of either an application or a business case.

The Transition fund will be split into two key areas as follows:

1. Development of community services/support to mitigate the impact of public sector reductions – an application will need to be submitted
2. Specific proposals to transfer services/buildings that would otherwise close to voluntary/community sector – a business case will need to be submitted.

All applications and business cases received will be evaluated to include an assessment of how the objectives of the Transition Fund will be met. A robust, financially viable and sustainable project plan will also be required where relevant to the proposal. The Council will not, through the Transition Fund, fund anything that the Council already funds and the Council may need to take procurement, HR or legal advice on specific proposals to test their feasibility.

It is anticipated that the maximum application/business case for use of the fund will not usually exceed £20k per application/business case.

Stakeholders will be given a deadline to submit their applications/business cases to coincide with the formal consultation and engagement processes for Connecting Communities (Phases 1 and 2). Future proposals for consultation will be brought to Cabinet during Summer 2016. These proposals will be partly informed by the outcome of the transition fund application process.

4. Evaluation

Once applications and business cases have been received they will be evaluated by representatives from Connecting Communities project team using the criteria below:

- Evidence of a sustainable and feasible business case
- Mitigation against specific service reductions, whilst enabling the Council to deliver savings
- How the proposal protects and supports the most vulnerable in the local community
- Development of active citizens in strong actively engaged and sustainable communities

Following assessment of the proposals, recommendations will be made as part of future cabinet reporting on City Centre First (February 2016 and Summer 2016) to approve the applications and business cases that best meet the criteria described.

Where opportunities are identified that require expediency, these proposals will require applications and business cases to be submitted by January 2016. Recommendations will be made to Cabinet during February 2016 to award transition fund to the successful applicants, to enable implementation from April 2016.

Decisions on award of Transition funding will normally be made by Cabinet unless the matter is urgent or where lower risk/value opportunities are identified, when the Executive Director of Resources will have delegated authority in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources.

5. Eligibility

The Transition Fund will be only open to groups/organisations that are based in Coventry and might include, but will not be limited to, community groups, community centre associations and residents associations.

Timescale summary

Date	Action
7 th December 2015	<p>Consultation on Connecting Communities Phase One (formerly City Centre First) begins</p> <p>Engagement on Connecting Communities Phase Two begins</p> <p>Expressions of Interest sought for Transition Fund proposals</p> <p>Proposals requiring swift implementation to submit applications/business cases¹</p>
End January 2016	<p>Initial deadline for expressions of interest from groups and organisations</p> <p>Review expedited applications and business cases</p>
February 2016	<p>Expressions of Interest to be taken forward to either Application Form or Business Case stage.</p> <p>Recommendations to be made to Cabinet on the outcome of expedited applications and business cases.</p>
End March 2016	<p>Deadline for submission of Application Forms and</p>

¹ **Note:** Where opportunities are identified that require expediency, an earlier report will be brought to the Cabinet for decision making in February 2016. This will potentially lead to usage of the fund with effect from this date and onwards. Where lower risk/value opportunities are identified, the Executive Director of Resources will have delegated authority in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources.

	Business Cases
April 2016	Successful applicants notified
June/July 2016	Proposals on Connecting Communities delivery model taking into consideration successful applications