

Connecting Communities Cabinet Report – 30th August 2016

Appendix C: Transition Fund – administration process outline

1. Background

The one-off £0.5 million Transition Fund was agreed as part of the 2015/16 budget-setting process as part of the Connecting Communities programme of service change in community facing services.

It was expected that the Fund would support a wide variety of projects, with the common factor being support to groups and organisations that needed one-off funding to get their project off the ground.

2. Purpose of the transition fund

The purpose of the Transition Fund can be summarised as:

- Mitigating the impact of spending reductions in local areas
- Helping deliver savings for the Council ('invest to save')
- Encouraging greater community involvement in service delivery.

Applications for Phase one of the transition fund included the funding of minor refurbishments to make a location suitable for a specific service, such as library provision. However the fund is intended to be flexible in its usage to enable the trialling of new ideas and approaches, and could also include:

- An application for the resources needed to be able to carry out a function that has historically been provided by the Council
- Temporary funding of 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 after which time it will be financially sustainable without any further Council support.

3. Process

From September 2016 the Council will consult on proposals made as part of the next phase of Connecting Communities. There will be a targeted engagement period ahead of this, in July and August 2016. During the targeted engagement period, the Council will raise awareness of the Transition Fund as part of early conversations with local groups and organisations.

Following discussions with the Council, a brief Expression of Interest will be requested from stakeholders who wish to pursue their initial interest to access one-off funds from the Transition Fund.

An initial officer assessment of the expressions of interest will determine whether or not each proposal is sufficiently credible to be taken forward to completion of a business case.

All business cases received will be reviewed, to include an assessment of how the initiative reflects the purpose of the Transition Fund. A robust, financially viable and sustainable project plan will also be required where relevant to the proposal that details the Transition Funding needed and any other support needed

Where competing expressions of interest (relating to the same savings proposal) progress to business case, a deadline will be set for submission and proposals will be evaluated competitively through a scoring process.

It is anticipated that Transition Fund awards will not usually exceed £20k per business case. Funding will be released in stages as the project progresses, up to the maximum amount approved, and based on specific costs to be incurred.

The Council will not, through the Transition Fund, provide funding for:

- Services that are already commissioned by the Council
- Any complementary services that the Council will continue to provide or fund through other routes in similar locations New additional services

The Council may also need to take procurement, HR or legal advice on specific proposals to test their feasibility.

4. Evaluation

It is envisaged the majority of Business Cases that are received by the Council will have been subject to collaborative discussions. Once received, the finer detail of the Business Case will be reviewed by the project team to ensure the Business Case is robust and sustainable prior to an award being finalised.

In cases where two or more Business Cases have been submitted for delivery of the same service, they will be evaluated by the Connecting Communities project team against 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, approval will be sought for awards to support business cases that best meet the criteria described and will deliver the outcomes and priorities the Council has stated it wishes to deliver (in the Connecting Communities proposals). Award of Transition fund will continue to be made by the Executive Director of Resources in consultation with the Cabinet Member for 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.

6. Timescale summary

| Date | Connecting Communities | Transition fund |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| July 2016 | Targeted engagement begins | Officers to discuss Transition Fund options as part of this process |
| September 2016 | Start of public consultation | Proactive work with local groups and organisations followed by submission of a formal expression of interest |
| September – December 2016 | Consultation period | Groups and organisations to complete a Business Case outlining their proposals and detailing Transition funds needed to implement. Support from Council Officers where needed to create Business Case whilst ensuring that the group or organisation continues retain ownership of the proposal. |
| January – February 2017 | Cabinet meeting | Transition fund recommendations to be made to Cabinet Member in advance of Cabinet Successful applicants notified |
| April 2017 | Implementation of Phase 2 proposals | Transition funds awarded |