

Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources

13 October 2016

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources – Councillor John Mutton

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Executive Director of Resources

Ward(s) affected:

Holbrook

Title:

Transition Fund Award

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive Summary:

As part of the 2015/16 budget setting process the Council agreed to establish a one-off £500k Transition Fund to support work with residents and communities in developing new approaches to delivering Council services. Following a merger of this fund with the Community Grant Fund, the Transition Fund was increased to £525k.

The Transition Fund is a key enabler for delivery of the Connecting Communities approach.

Connecting Communities is an ambitious and wide reaching approach to radically redesign services through co-production and collaboration with local communities. The approach focuses on how services might be delivered differently in the future in the communities and neighbourhoods where there is most need, and within the resources available.

Criteria for final award of Transition Funding includes the need for a clear plan for the proposal to deliver long-term cost savings to the Council as well as being required to fit with the principles of the Connecting Communities programme approach.

Initial expressions of interest in the Transition Fund were sought during the consultation process on Phase One of Connecting Communities.

One Transition Fund award was approved in June 2016 (Cabinet Member decision of 21 July 2016 refers). Following expression of interest and business case evaluation processes, officers sought approval for a further award from the Transition Fund, again to the total value of a maximum of £20,000. This award will enable the delivery of one proposal that formed a part of Phase One of Connecting Communities, as agreed by Cabinet on 23 February 2016.

The award will support Holbrooks Community Care Association to accommodate alternative library provision, following Cabinet's decision to end delivery of library services at Arena Park Library.

A Cabinet decision of 26 November 2015 gave delegated authority to the Executive Director of Resources in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources to take decisions on Transition Fund awards where the matter is urgent or where lower risk/value opportunities are identified.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources is recommended to:

- (1) Note a decision that the Executive Director for Resources has already made in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources, under delegated authority, to make an award from the Transition Fund to Holbrooks Community Care Association up to the value of £20,000.

List of Appendices included:

None

Other useful background papers:

Connecting Communities – Cabinet Report – 26 November 2015
Connecting Communities – Cabinet Report – 23 February 2016

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title: Transition Fund Award

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 The original one-off £0.5 million Transition Fund was agreed as part of the 2015/16 budget-setting process. It was envisaged as a way of enabling communities to:
 - be involved in delivering alternative service models
 - mitigate the impact of City Council service reductions in local areas.
- 1.2 The aim of the fund is to provide an opportunity to think innovatively about how services could be delivered differently, providing some transition support to kickstart, empower and enable communities and partners to run services in new ways, on a sustainable basis.
- 1.3 It is expected that the fund will support a wide variety of projects, with the common factor being support to groups and organisations that need one-off funding to get their projects off the ground. Key criteria for final award includes the need for a clear plan for the proposal to deliver long-term cost savings to the Council as well as alignment with the principles of the Connecting Communities approach.
- 1.4 Initial applications to the Transition Fund were invited in parallel with the consultation on the ten proposals that formed Phase One of Connecting Communities. Organisations and groups were asked to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) with an initial deadline for submission of 22 January 2016, by providing high level information on potential ideas.
- 1.5 37 EOIs were received from 26 different groups/organisations. The EOIs were reviewed against set criteria and shortlisted to a final list of seven. Shortlisted groups were invited to submit a Business Case to provide further detail regarding their proposal. Four Business Cases were received and reviewed by a panel of officers. Only two Business Cases were received for proposals put forward by the Council in Connecting Communities Phase One. Approval was given for one award in June 2016 (Cabinet Member decision of 21 July 2016 refers) in respect of Willenhall Community Library.
- 1.6 A further award to Holbrooks Community Care Association has now been approved in relation to the Connecting Communities Phase 1 proposal to seek alternative community provision resulting from the closure of the Arena Park Library. .

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1 The original business case received from Holbrooks Community Care Association (HCCA) (submitted in January 2016) was contingent on successful third party grant funding applications to support the wider costs of the proposed project. This application was supported by the review panel subject to a successful third party grant funding application.
- 2.2 The applications were unsuccessful and the business case was consequently reviewed. HCCA advised the Council that they wished to progress a plan to locate library resources in the HCCA Centre through a revised and reduced scheme. The Council received a revised Business Case from HCCA on 10 August 2016.

- 2.3 The review panel met again on 25 August to consider the revised business case and recommended that a Transition Fund award should be made to HCCA, up to the value of £20,000.
- 2.4 The approved award relates to the following Phase One Connecting Communities proposal approved for delivery by Cabinet on 23 February 2016:
- To end delivery of library services from the Arena Park Library facility by not renewing the lease and to continue engagement with Holbrooks Community Care Association (HCCA) about the potential delivery of a reduced library service to be provided in the HCCA building by September 2016

2.5 The Business Case relating to the award that is proposed is summarised below:

- 2.51 The revised business case requests £20,000 to support costs that will pay for essential structural work and refurbishment (including removal of walls, raising the ceiling, insulation and electrics) to create a viable space to be able to incorporate the library at HCCA. This involves work to create an open plan space where there are currently three separate areas.
- 2.5.2 The proposal includes significant community contribution to the refurbishment of the Centre, with flooring, decoration and work to the community garden being provided without cost to the Centre.
- 2.5.3 The proposed future service model is a partnership between HCCA and the Council Library Service, including the creation of a joint volunteer team to support service delivery. The Manager at HCCA will take overall responsibility for the day to day running of the centre and a self-service operation will be introduced to compliment the service. The Library Service will provide the resources for their unique services, including books, information and self-service machines, and will provide some limited support from the Library Connect team to ensure the successful development of new ways of working.

2.6 Review Panel Recommendation

The Business Case Review Panel recommended the approval of a Transition Fund award to Holbrooks Community Care Association of up to £20,000.

2.7 Results of consultation undertaken

- 2.7.1 An extensive consultation exercise was undertaken in relation to the ten proposals that formed phase one of Connecting Communities between 7 December 2015 and 1 February 2016. The consultation was public and was undertaken using a variety of methods to ensure that stakeholders were able to share their views with the Council.
- 2.7.2 During this consultation period, initial Expressions of Interest (EOIs) in the Transition Fund were invited from groups and organisations, with an initial deadline of 22 January 2016. 37 EOIs were received.

3 **Timetable for implementing this decision**

- 3.1 Officers will continue to work with HCCA to complete a Grant Aid Agreement, which is the formal framework for making Transition Fund awards.
- 3.2 Funding will be released in stages as the project progresses, up to the maximum amount approved and based on costs to be incurred. HCCA will be required to invoice the Council for specific costs.
- 3.3 The Library Service is working with HCCA to plan for implementation of the proposed library provision with a view to new services opening at the earliest possible opportunity.

4 **Comments from Executive Director, Resources**

4.1 Financial implications

The Transition Fund represents one off funding for the purposes outlined in this report. The balance of the fund is currently £505k (following approval of an award of up to £20k in June 2016). The recommendations in this report will utilise a further £20k from this fund. The remaining £485k of the Transition Fund remains ring-fenced for the purposes outlined in this report. Further opportunities will be provided for groups and organisations to receive financial support from the fund to initiate projects and activities relating to the future Connecting Communities programme.

The recommended award will enable the delivery of one proposal that forms part of Phase One of Connecting Communities, as agreed by Cabinet on 23 February 2016, achieving ongoing full year savings of £1.2million overall.

4.2 Legal implications

Section 7 of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 creates a duty upon local authorities to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons. In fulfilling its duty, local authorities should have regard to the desirability of securing adequate stock and encouraging people to make full use of the service. The provision of alternative library services at HCCA following the closure of Arena Park Library will contribute to providing a more cost effective library and helping to preserve library facilities within the community.

The Holbrooks Community Care Association lease the Resource Centre from the Council on a lease that expires in 2027. The Council will enter into a user agreement with the Association for the delivery of the Community Library Service and a contribution towards ongoing running costs and support.

5 **Other implications**

5.1.1 **How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy)?**

Alternative library provision to mitigate the impact of the ending of library services in Arena Park Library will make a positive contribution to the council's priorities, particularly in relation to: citizens living longer, healthier, independent lives; making Coventry an attractive

and enjoyable place to be; ensuring that children and young people are safe, achieve and make a positive contribution; encouraging a creative, active and vibrant city; developing a more equal city with cohesive communities and neighbourhoods.

5.2 How is risk being managed?

Risk will be managed through Council risk management processes and frameworks and the Connecting Communities project risk register.

Monitoring arrangements will be agreed with the grantee as part of the Grant Aid Agreement. The Council will monitor delivery progress against a project plan, developed with the organisation, and the project will be subject to a review after an agreed period to ensure appropriate outcomes are achieved. Monitoring will provide the necessary assurances to the Council but will not be unduly burdensome to the group/organisation.

The Grant Aid Agreement contains the provision to claw back funding to protect the Council against reputational risk and provide assurance that funding is not misused or lost.

5.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

The Fund will support the mitigation of the impact of reducing Council resources by offering the opportunity for community groups and organisations to develop new service delivery and support solutions. It is anticipated that Transition Fund awards will provide local residents with alternatives to Council provided services.

5.4 Equalities / EIA

A full analysis of the equality impacts of each of the proposals that formed Phase One of Connecting Communities was completed out and reported to Cabinet on 23 February 2016 to support decision-making. Work to explore potential alternative provision of library services in Holbrooks formed part of the proposal approved by Cabinet at that time.

5.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment

None

5.6 Implications for partner organisations?

Connecting Communities, with support from the Transition Fund focuses on changing the current relationship that the Council has with local communities in Coventry, as well as partner organisations, the community and voluntary sector. It is envisaged that this approach will result in closer working and more shared responsibilities and ultimately a transformation of community and partnership working in the city.

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