

The Vale of Glamorgan Council

Cabinet Meeting: 20 November, 2017

Report of the Leader

Strong Communities Fund 1st Round

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide Cabinet with an update on the Strong Communities Grant Fund and to seek approval for the award of funding from the first round of applications.

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that Cabinet notes the content of this report.
2. It is recommended that Cabinet approve grant funding totalling £75,519.51 and endorse the Evaluation Panel's recommendations as listed in [Appendix A](#).

Reasons for the Recommendations

1. To provide Cabinet with an update on the Strong Communities Grant Fund.
2. To enable Strong Communities Funding to be awarded to submissions as outlined in [Appendix A](#) attached to this report in line with the Council's Constitution and the scope of the scheme.

Background

2. On April 3rd 2017, Cabinet approved the establishment of the Strong Communities Fund. The Strong Communities Grant Fund is intended to streamline the way in which community grant funding is managed by the Council and to encourage innovative and creative use of a range of funding to support community initiatives in line with the Council's Corporate Plan Well-being Outcomes.
3. This report provides Cabinet with an update on the progress made in implementing the scheme and makes recommendations on the first round of projects that could be funded by the Council.

Relevant Issues and Options

4. The purpose of the Strong Communities Fund is to enable community groups, the voluntary sector and town and community councils to apply for revenue and capital funding that promotes initiatives within the Vale of Glamorgan consistent with the Council's vision of "Strong communities with a bright future".
5. Eligible schemes can include those which are seeking funding to:

- improve the resilience of organisations/groups or their activities by funding activities which add value to their current work and reduce their reliance on grant funding in the future;
 - provide seed corn funding towards initiatives that can demonstrate longer term sustainability;
 - undertake consultation, feasibility, design and other specialist work to develop proposals for future activity and funding bids;
 - meet the capital costs of schemes by purchasing plant, machinery, equipment or other assets or undertaking maintenance work that would enable viable services to be provided, for example, through increased income generation potential.
6. Applications solely for the funding of core costs of an organisation are not eligible. Funding towards activities that generate funding to cover these costs would be considered. In addition, applications from Town & Community Councils for revenue funding will only be considered where these demonstrate that they are a joint bid with a voluntary/community group.
7. The evaluation of bids to the fund has been undertaken in line with a series of weighted criteria. The themes for these criteria are:
- Linkages being made with the Council’s Corporate Plan. This includes the Council’s vision for the Vale of Glamorgan area of “Strong Communities with a Bright Future”. Applications need to be consistent with the Council’s values which are open, ambitious, together and proud. Importantly, proposals also need to demonstrate their contribution to the Council’s Well-being Outcomes and Objectives, which in turn contribute to the national Well-being Goals for Wales.
 - The way in which schemes are consistent with the Council’s transformational change programme, Reshaping Services. This programme seeks to reshape the Council to enable it to meet the future needs of citizens of the Vale of Glamorgan within the context of unprecedented financial challenges. The associated strategy has three objectives being: To identify alternative ways of delivering services which provide better outcomes for citizens and/or more efficient means of delivery, to meet future financial challenges while mitigating the impact of cuts on service users and to develop the Council and its partners to ensure they are able to meet future challenges.
 - Showing how the proposals are consistent with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act. In addition to contributing to the Well-being Goals for Wales, proposals will also need to show how schemes are aligned with the Sustainable Development Principle, that is, acting in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In doing so, proposals will need to explain how they have considered and embraced the five ways of working introduced by the Act (these are long-term, prevention, integration, collaboration and involvement).
8. An evaluation panel is responsible for the evaluation of submissions for funding and comprises:
- Leader of the Council
 - Cabinet Member with responsibility for Regeneration
 - One representative from a Town Council

- One representative from a Community Council
 - One representative from each of any donors of recurring third party funding
 - One representative from the Voluntary Sector
 - One representative from a member organisation of the Public Services Board
9. The evaluation panel is supported by Council Officers from a range of departments.
 10. In October 2017, the evaluation panel met to consider the first round of twelve applications to the Strong Communities Grant Fund in line with the criteria described above.
 11. [Appendix A](#) sets out the names of the applicants, a summary of the project seeking funding, a total amount of funding requested and the recommendation of the panel as to whether the submission should be supported (in whole or in part), not supported or deferred for more information. Where bids are recommended to be supported in part, the Council will communicate with the applicant to suggest the element of the bid that would be supported and ensure any conditions (such as match funding requirements) are put in place prior to the release of any funds.
 12. Following the consideration and approval of Cabinet, the Council will communicate with all those organisations who have bid for funding to provide feedback on the bid and put in place the relevant monitoring and payment mechanisms for approved funding applications.
 13. The next round of applications is due to be considered by the evaluation panel in early 2018 and further promotion of the scheme will be undertaken in the coming months. The progress of the overall scheme will be reported regularly to the Voluntary Sector Joint Liaison Committee as part of the work programme supporting the Compact between the Council and Glamorgan Voluntary Services. Further updates will be provided to Cabinet following the consideration of bids by the evaluation panel.

Resource Implications (Financial and Employment)

14. The Strong Communities Fund comprises the following funding elements:

	Total Budget 2017/18 (£)	Total Budget 2018/19 (£)	Total Budget 2019/20 (£)	Total Budget (£)
Capital	30,000	30,000	30,000	90,000
Revenue	132,000	132,000	132,000	396,000
Waterloo Foundation	20,000	20,000	20,000	60,000
Reserve (brought forward)	126,000	0	0	126,000
Total	308,000	182,000	182,000	672,000

15. In addition to the above, the Strong Communities Grant Fund can access S106 funding should this be appropriate use of that source of funding to support Community Facilities or Public Open Space schemes.

16. As outlined in [Appendix A](#), a total of £75,519.50 is recommended to be awarded as a result of the evaluation of this round of applications. The Council's Section 151 Officer will determine the appropriate categorisation of expenditure (capital or revenue) of the various schemes. The Waterloo Foundation have provided a third party contribution to the Grant Fund and will indicate which schemes that organisation would wish their funding to be used to support. Where any schemes could make use of Section 106 funding, this will be agreed through established procedures and reported back to the evaluation panel in due course. Members will note that this is the position with one scheme (Rhoose Community Cinema) as highlighted in [Appendix A](#).
17. The Council has committed £162,000 funding per annum for a three year period from 2017/18 in order that any bids approved spanning more than one financial year (or approved mid-way in a year) can continue. Cabinet will note that it was also approved that should there be any underspend on the grant fund in a financial year it would be "rolled-forward" so as to increase the funding available for the next financial year.
18. There are no direct employment implications as the scheme is delivered using existing staff resources. Applicants are supported through the application process by the Economic Development team and funding is monitored and defrayed by the Accountancy section.

Sustainability and Climate Change Implications

19. The proposals are consistent with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 which requires the Council to contribute to the national Well-being Goals and to work in line with the sustainable development principle. These proposals seek to develop the Council's approach to the five ways of working which support the sustainable development principle, with a particular focus on the collaboration (with community groups and other organisations) and involvement (of the public in decision making) ways of working. The proposals are also consistent with promoting the Council's corporate plan vision and associated Well-Being outcomes.

Legal Implications (to Include Human Rights Implications)

20. There are no direct legal implications arising as a result of this report.

Crime and Disorder Implications

21. There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising as a result of this report. However, the Strong Communities Grant Fund is intended to support the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan which includes a Well-being Outcome of Inclusive and Safe Communities and as such, some schemes will contribute to the reduction of crime and disorder.

Equal Opportunities Implications (to include Welsh Language issues)

22. There are no direct equalities implications arising from this report. The scheme is promoted via the Council's bilingual website. The award criteria and application process has been designed so as to ensure equalities considerations form part of the overall administration of the scheme.

Corporate/Service Objectives

23. The Strong Communities Fund is consistent with the Council's vision as articulated in the Corporate Plan. The proposals are evaluated against criteria which include contribution to the Council's Well-being Outcomes and objectives. Working with the Voluntary Sector, Town and Community Councils and community groups is a key project within the Council's transformational change programme, Reshaping Services.

Policy Framework and Budget

24. This is a matter for Executive decision by the Cabinet.

Consultation (including Ward Member Consultation)

25. The establishment of the Strong Communities Grant Fund was undertaken through consultation with the Voluntary Sector Joint Liaison Committee. The evaluation panel is representative of a range of stakeholders. Consultation and engagement on individual schemes is the responsibility of applicants and information is sought as to the extent and outcomes from this activity as part of the application process.

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

26. Corporate Performance & Resources Scrutiny Committee.

Background Papers

Strong Communities Grant Fund, Report of the Leader, Cabinet, 3rd April 2017
[http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/ Committee%20Reports/Cabinet/2017/17-04-03/Reports/Strong-Communities-Final-Report.pdf](http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/Committee%20Reports/Cabinet/2017/17-04-03/Reports/Strong-Communities-Final-Report.pdf)

Strong Communities Grant Fund, Voluntary Sector Joint Liaison Committee, 7th February 2017
http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/council/minutes,_agendas_and_reports/reports/voluntary_sector_joint_liaison/2017/17-02-08/Strong-Communities-Grant-Fund.aspx

Reshaping Services Programme - Grants to Community and Voluntary Organisations, Cabinet, 31st October 2016
[http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/ Committee%20Reports/Cabinet/2016/16-10-31/Reports/Reshaping-Services-Programme-Grants-to-Community-and-Voluntary-Organisations-Cabinet-Report.pdf](http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/Committee%20Reports/Cabinet/2016/16-10-31/Reports/Reshaping-Services-Programme-Grants-to-Community-and-Voluntary-Organisations-Cabinet-Report.pdf)

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