

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL****LEADER****DATE: 11 SEPTEMBER 2013****LEAD OFFICER: JANE LAST, PROGRAMME MANAGER AND LEAD MANAGER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PARTNERSHIP****SUBJECT: COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENTS FUND – PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS****SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

To consider the recommendations of the Community Improvements Panel (16 August 2013) and agree which projects will be funded from the Community Improvements Fund.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

It is recommended that the Leader of the Council approves the proposed grant funding from the Community Improvements Fund Budget as set out in Annex 2.

**REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Approval of the proposed grant funding will enable the Community Partnerships Team to progress with facilitating the payments relating to the Community Improvements Fund.

**DETAILS:****Business Case**

1. In December 2011, the Leader of Surrey County Council announced the introduction of a Community Improvements Fund of £750,000 to be allocated to community projects in Surrey in 2012/13.
2. The aim of the fund was to give local groups the chance to improve their areas, make a real difference to people's lives and strengthen the ability of residents to independently enhance where they live. The fund proved popular with approximately 200 bids submitted and over 30 community groups successful in their applications.
3. On 12 February 2013, an increased Community Improvements Fund of £1 million for 2013/14 was announced for further investment in local projects, making a real difference to people's lives and help residents independently enhance where they live.
4. Bids for between £10,000 and £50,000 were invited for one-off capital schemes for community improvements (in exceptional circumstances bids for start-up revenue projects would be considered) between 1 April and 28 June 2013.

5. A total of 94 bids were submitted via the Community Partnerships Team and considered by a Community Improvements Panel consisting of Nick Skellett (Panel Lead), Pat Frost, Peter Hickman and Fiona White.
6. The Panel considered all bids submitted against the evaluation criteria outlined in Annex 1 and made its recommendations for funding as set out in Annex 2.

#### **CONSULTATION:**

7. The Leader of the Council introduced the scheme, and Members appointed by the Leader sat on the Panel alongside the Assistant Chief Executive. The Community Partnerships Team liaised with applicants in developing their bids by providing guidance regarding the criteria.
8. Local Members and Local Committee Chairmen were consulted on the bids in their areas. Where bids had an implication on Surrey County Council services, officers within these services were asked to provide objective comments on the bids.

#### **RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:**

9. There are no identifiable negative risks attributed to the processing of the Fund. The Council needs to ensure that the payments are processed in a timely manner and for the projects approved. Each of the successful projects will be asked to report back on the outcomes of the funding within twelve months.

#### **Financial and Value for Money Implications**

10. The cost of funding the projects identified within Annex 2 will be £600,565. The Community Improvement's Fund Budget for the 2013/14 financial year is £1million. This proposal is within the agreed revenue budget and the Panel will hold a second round of bidding later in the financial year.

#### **Section 151 Officer Commentary**

11. The Section 151 Officer confirms that all material, financial and business issues and risks have been considered / addressed.

#### **Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer**

12. The Scheme of Delegation includes reference to the Fund and authority has been allocated to the Community Partnerships Manager to process the approved funding. There are no further legal or legislative requirements relating to this Fund.
13. These grants are being made by the Council in accordance with its general powers of competence under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011, under which it is empowered to do anything that individuals generally do and this includes the power to do things for the benefit of persons resident or present in its area.

#### **Equalities and Diversity**

14. The Fund is open to groups (not individuals) who are applying on behalf of the community, but is not restricted to any specific groupings within the county.

- 15. The Community Partnership Team is currently reviewing progress of all projects successful in securing funding in 2012/13. As part of that review the Community Partnership Team will request feedback from applicants on how they felt the funding process worked to identify better methods of communicating with hard to reach groups.
- 16. An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out on criteria and process for applying for this Fund. This has been considered by the Assistant Chief Executive, submitted to the Cabinet Member for Community Safety and considered by the Panel prior to making recommendations. It is available online for viewing.

**WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:**

- 17. Applicants will be informed whether they have been successful and if so what course of action they need to undertake to receive the funding that has been allocated. Where bidders have been unsuccessful, then they will also be informed of the decision. The Community Partnerships Team will publicise any future rounds.
- 18. Each of the successful applicants will be asked to provide evidence within 12 months of expenditure and the achievement of the outcomes set out within the bid form. This will then be included in a report for the Leader in the autumn 2013.
- 19. Information on successful bidders will be included on the Council's website.

**Contact Officer:**

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**Consulted:**

Nick Skellett (Panel Lead), Pat Frost, Fiona White and Peter Hickman, Susie Kemp (Panel Members).  
 Service Officers where appropriate, and other agencies where appropriate.

**Annexes:**

Annex 1 - Criteria and Guidance for Community Improvements Fund  
 Annex 2 - Community Improvements Fund Panel Recommended Projects

**Sources/background papers:**

- Community Improvement Fund Application Form
- Community Improvement Fund Criteria and Guidance
- Community Improvement Fund Assessment summary documents

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