

**CABINET- 21 July 2020****CABINET RESPONSE TO THE REPORT OF THE COMMUNITY PROJECTS FUND TASK AND FINISH GROUP (Communities, Environment & Highways Select Committee)****Recommendations:**

The Task Group recommends:

- a) That the Fund includes scalable governance measures that reflect the scope of the bids made to the Fund;
- b) That the funding thresholds and timing of funding rounds can flex to approve suitable projects that may fall slightly outside the proposed rules;
- c) From the beginning of the Fund, the council actively engage with residents and communities to offer support and feedback to those interested in accessing the fund to ensure that less experienced members of the community are able to access the Fund in the same way as more developed community or charitable organisations;
- d) The council's communication plan must include widespread publicity and that bespoke branding be developed to promote the Fund;
- e) That an annual review mechanism is developed to allow for public scrutiny of the activity, delivery and performance of the fund, for example via an annual report that is scrutinised by the Communities, Environment & Highways Select Committee at a future meeting.

**Mr John O'Reilly**  
**Chairman of the Communities, Environment & Highways Select Committee**

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**Cabinet Response:**

We welcome the report of the Community Projects Fund Task and Finish Group and the recommendations they have put forward, which we have looked to ensure are reflected in the design of the Fund that is set out for Cabinet. The positive and constructive discussions that took place at the meetings of the group have played a key role in helping shape the process and criteria for delivery of the Fund.

In developing the Fund, we have made it a priority that we achieve the right balance between ensuring a level of due diligence that provides accountability and value for money, while at the same time ensures the Fund is accessible to communities. In managing and administering the Fund it is intended to streamline processes as much as is possible, with the level of detail required as part of a submission reflecting the level of funding being bid for. The funding thresholds that have been proposed will help us to manage the bids coming in, with smaller project proposals that fall within the lower threshold requiring more of a 'light touch' application process while larger projects will require more detail to be provided.

The aim is to keep the administration of the Fund as flexible as possible, with the thresholds able to be reviewed over the five years and the profile of spend able to be responsive to the amount of bids received, and amount of money left in the Fund at the end of each year.

We believe that for the Fund to be successful, it must meet the requirements of *all* communities and potential applicants rather than only catering for particular groups or parts of the county. We have recommended to Cabinet that further community involvement is incorporated, and that a piece of exploratory “co-development” work is undertaken with a representative group of residents to consider all aspects of the process before the formal launch of the Fund. As part of the resources to deliver the Fund we have highlighted the potential need to support communities to develop bids as well as enable capacity building in the voluntary sector to take place.

Publicising the Fund will be critical in ensuring we generate real interest and energy in the community to submit proposals. In the lead up to the launch, and then subsequently for the opening of each funding window, a communications and engagement campaign will take place to highlight the Fund and its purpose. In addition more targeted communications will be used if it is found that certain communities are not engaging with the Fund once it is opened. Work is already underway with the Communications Team around designs and branding for publicity materials.

We welcome the recommendation that a review of the effectiveness and impact of the Fund be carried out and scrutinised by the Communities, Environment & Highways Select Committee and will deliver an annual report to the Committee.

**Reply from Mr Mark Nuti  
Deputy Cabinet Member to the Leader  
21 July 2020**