



MONDAY, 5 DECEMBER 2022

YOUR FUND SURREY - UPDATE

Purpose of report: This report presents an update on Your Fund Surrey and is presented for scrutiny.

Introduction:

1. Your Fund Surrey (YFS) is the County Council's capital fund, focused on bringing community led projects to life. Funding was made available over a five-year period to support capital projects that fit with the aims of Surrey's Community Vision 2030. The fund also supports our priorities of empowering communities and ensuring that no one is left behind.
2. An update report on the Fund was presented to Community, Environment and Highways (CEH) Select Committee in March 2022. Following consideration of the report, committee members asked officers to address the following three key areas:
 - a) Select Committee strongly advocates that the rate of progress dramatically accelerates in the next two years and calls on the Cabinet to institute immediate action to ensure delivery with an update report (in 9 months) to the Select Committee.
 - b) Select Committee expects the process for small bids to be 'short-form' in scope to encourage applications as intended in July 2020 and expediate the entire process so intended delivery gathers pace.
 - c) Select Committee urges improvement in Member engagement by YFS team and the Council (including proactive communication with local Divisional Members about projects/applications in their area including relevant boroughs and districts).
3. This report sets out the progress of the Fund and responds to the points above.

General update on Your Fund Surrey

4. Since its launch, over 250 applications have been received. 18 applications have been discussed at Advisory Panel and 16 community projects funded, totalling over £4 million. Another two projects worth over £1.2 million will be discussed at the December Advisory Panel. A list of all the funded projects is included in Annex 1: Applications funded to date.
5. The benefits to the community of the funded projects are starting to be realised and, in some cases, are far beyond those envisaged in the initial applications. Communities are increasing their connections, working together with local businesses and new facilities are seeing greater numbers and diversity of people taking part. We are also seeing evidence of charities and General Practitioners (GPs) signposting vulnerable residents to the new community projects demonstrating the extensive worth of these community projects.
6. There are over 110 live applications worth in excess of £61 million. This includes applications at the idea submission stage, those preparing their full submission documents and those in the final assessment phase. It is anticipated that £10 million of the Fund will be spent by the end of the financial year, funding in excess of 30 projects. It is important to note the process is led by the applicant which will influence when applications will be ready for review.
7. Over 10 per cent of live applications are in excess of £1 million and 30 per cent of projects over £500,000. We expect this to rise further with the current inflationary pressures. The majority of these large projects are very complex in nature, sometimes involving multiple organisations, leases, land ownership, planning permission and different funders.
8. Officers work with applicants to develop their applications. Considerable time is spent on the large projects to review their finances and commercial business plans to ensure that the projects are financially stable and all risks have been assessed. Time is also taken to ensure that all the necessary permissions and other funding streams are in place to ensure the project is deliverable.

Analysis of applications throughout the County

9. Deprivation is measured nationally by Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs). All LSOAs in Surrey have been ranked across the whole of the County and then split into 10 equal parts ('deciles'), where the MOST deprived is decile 1 and the LEAST deprived is decile 10.

10. As can be seen in the charts in Annex 2: Geographic split of applications, for both applications and successful projects we are seeing proportionately more YFS activity from the county's most deprived areas (deciles 1-5 represent the 50 per cent most deprived areas in the county). Chart 1 shows that over 10 per cent of all live applications are from the most deprived 10 per cent of LSOAs in the county and over 60 per cent come from the most deprived 50 per cent in the county.
11. Chart 2: Geographic split of applications, shows that although no funding has yet been awarded to the most deprived 10 per cent of the county, 50 per cent of funding has been allocated to projects in the most deprived 30 per cent. The newly recruited Community Link Officers (CLOs) are proactively supporting the 21 key neighbourhoods, as defined by the Health and Wellbeing Board, to encourage applications in these areas and are working with the voluntary sector to provide assistance.
12. Chart 3: Average value of applications by Surrey Decile, outlines the average value of applications from each of the deciles. As can be seen, there is no correlation between the area of deprivation and the value of application. The largest value applications and funding awarded to-date has come from projects in the third most deprived areas of the county.

Select Recommendation (a) Rate of progress

13. Since launching the fund, amendments have been made to ensure the process is as simple as possible for applicants, whilst ensuring that a proportionately robust level of governance is in place.
14. A greater number of applications are now being discussed by the Advisory Panel than eight months ago. Some of the projects are complex and there is an expectation from the Advisory Panel and Cabinet to ensure that comprehensive checks and due-diligence are carried out when considerable levels of taxpayers' money is being spent. The YFS team have been working hard with applicants to develop their applications and we expect considerably more full submissions next year.
15. For all applications, we have simplified the forms applicants need to complete and have adapted overall requirements based on the complexity of the projects and/or value. For example, we would require greater information from a project that includes a commercial element, rather than a simple purchase.
16. Applications for projects under £100,000 tend to be less complex. As such, applications under £100,000 are now reviewed and assessed by the Advisory Panel via email rather than waiting for the next scheduled Panel. This has sped up the process in which these applications have received funding. Officers

and/or Members can choose to bring a project <£100,000 to Advisory Panel for discussion if the project is higher risk. To date, two applications have followed this method and we anticipate at least five more applications will follow the email process this financial year.

Recommendation (b) new process for small bids

17. A new funding stream, as part of Your Fund Surrey, will be launched in early 2023. The new fund will be aimed at small, simple capital bids. Examples could include creating a community orchard, purchasing new sports equipment or updating a village hall. The new fund will provide each individual County Councillor with £50,000 to support smaller capital projects within their divisions.
18. The aim of the new funding stream is to:
 - Support smaller capital projects which might otherwise not have met the YFS criteria
 - Make the process quicker and more easily accessible for smaller organisations
 - Ensure every community across Surrey benefits from YFS funding
19. The application process for the new fund will follow the current Members' Community Allocation (MCA) process which was chosen as members and communities are already familiar with it.
20. The new fund recognises that County Councillors have local knowledge and insight and can direct funding to where it is most needed. The fund is set to run until March 2025, giving Members time to engage with their communities and prioritise the requests. The fund amounts to £4,050,000 for 81 councillors.
21. A briefing note has been sent out to all Members and a report is being prepared for approval by Cabinet in December.

Recommendation (c) enhanced communication with Members

22. A range of improvements have been made since the previous select committee report. Members are now contacted by the YFS team as soon as an application comes in from their division and their views on the project sought.
23. Divisional Members are encouraged to write a supportive statement in the report to Advisory Panel and are invited to the Panel to present the benefits of the projects. This is proving invaluable and has helped with decision making as

each Member understands their area and can articulate the need. All Members are also encouraged to visit projects in their areas.

24. The following events have been held for Members:

- A YFS stall was held at Woodhatch before Full Council on 25 May 2022. All YFS Officers were available and the session was open to Members who wanted to know more about the YFS process or individual applications. Leaflets were available for Members to take and hand out in their communities.
- A Member Development Session on Community Engagement was held on 15 June 2022. The YFS team held a drop-in session before and after the event for Members to come and talk about their applications.
- The YFS team were present at the Member Transport Session on 29 September 2022
- An interactive session was due to be held at the Member Development event on 31 October 2022, but unfortunately this event has been postponed until the new year

25. The Community Link Officer (CLO) team is now in place and the CLOs are looking for opportunities in their communities and updating Members. The CLOs are kept aware of what applications have been made and what potential new enquiries and projects are in the pipeline.

26. Monthly updates are provided to Members through the Member portal, the dedicated channel on the county council's Teams account. Following feedback, the monthly reports have been updated to include information broken down by individual borough and district. The spreadsheet also details individual projects' aims, projected costs and the amount of funding requested.

Planned next steps

27. A report is being prepared for December's Cabinet meeting. This report will seek agreement on the principles of the new Member capital fund. Subject to agreement, the new fund will be launched in early 2023.

28. CLOs will continue to develop their relationships with their local Members, hold events with local residents and identify community needs. Particular focus will be on supporting the most deprived areas of the county.

29. A new marketing campaign is being planned for the new year with a refreshed focus. The campaign will focus on the different funding streams available, how

to access them and for communities to consider projects that would make a big difference to their neighbourhoods, whether large or small.

30. The YFS process will continue to be iterative with amendments and simplifications being made to the process on an ongoing basis.

Conclusions:

31. Progress has been made against each of the recommendations from the previous select committee and community benefits are being realised. Work is still ongoing to ensure that the application process is as simple as possible for applicants, whilst ensuring the Council is satisfied that the project is financially viable and deliverable. This work will continue as we launch the new members' fund.

Recommendations:

32. To consider the report and provide any additional recommendations that would support the Fund.

Next steps:

33. Officers in conjunction with Cabinet Member for Communities and Community Safety to consider recommendations arising from the Communities, Environment & Highways Select Committee meeting on 5 December 2022.

Report contact

Nikki Tagg, Your Fund Surrey Programme Manager

Jane Last, Head of Community Partnerships and Engagement

Contact details

Nicola.Tagg@surreycc.gov.uk

janel@surreycc.gov.uk

Annexes

Annex 1: Applications funded to date

Annex 2: Geographic split of applications

Sources/background papers

Refer to previous select committee report [Report \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](https://www.surreycc.gov.uk)

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