

Cheltenham Borough Council

Cabinet – 26 July 2011

Allocation of funds through the Community Pride Scheme

Accountable member	Leader of the Council, Councillor Steve Jordan
Accountable officer	Richard Gibson, Policy and Partnerships Manager
Accountable scrutiny committee	Social and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Ward(s) affected	All
Key Decision	No
Executive summary	<p>As part of the 2011-12 budget, the council agreed to set aside £30,000 for the community pride scheme. The budget papers set out the Cabinet's aspiration that the funding be used to enable "big society" initiatives such as promoting volunteering or voluntary initiatives.</p> <p>Cabinet on 19th April 2011 agreed the application guidelines and the grant scheme went live from Thursday 21 April and was publicised through Gloucestershire Association for Voluntary and Community Action, media releases and information on the council's website. The closing date was Friday 1st July 2011 which gave applicants a 10 week period to submit applications.</p> <p>A panel comprising the Leader of the Council, Cllr. Anne Regan, Angela Gilbert from Gloucestershire Association for Voluntary and Community Action, Andrew Sherbourne Principal Accounting Technician and Richard Gibson, Policy and Partnerships Manager met on Wednesday 6th July to evaluate the 35 applications and make recommendations to Cabinet.</p>
Recommendations	Cabinet to approve the list of projects to be funded from community pride funds as set out in appendix 1.

Financial implications	<p>On the 27th June 2011 as part of the 2010/11 Outturn Report, Council approved an allocation of £30,000 to support the community pride grant scheme from the New Homes Bonus Scheme received.</p> <p>Contact officer: Andrew Sherbourne Principal Accounting Technician E-mail: andrew.sherbourne@cheltenham.gov.uk Tel no: 01242 264337</p>
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Legal implications	<p>The payment of these mostly small grants does not generally require much in the way of formal documentation. However, written agreements will be used to document these grants, based on the Community Giving Grant template, with necessary adaptations for the very small grants.</p> <p>Contact officer: Nicolas Wheatley, Solicitor, One Legal E-mail: nicolas.wheatley@teWKesbury.gov.uk Tel no: 01684 272695</p>
HR implications (including learning and organisational development)	None
Key risks	If funding is allocated to an organisation that subsequently goes onto use the funding on a fraudulent basis.
Corporate and community plan Implications	<p>The proposed allocations set out in appendix 1 will enable the council to deliver on the following outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheltenham has a clean and well maintained environment; • Cheltenham's natural and built environment is enhanced and protected; • Our residents enjoy a strong sense of community.
Environmental and climate change implications	Out of the 21 grants being awarded, 17 will enable local organisations to make a positive difference to their local environment.

1. Background

- 1.1 2011 will be the fifth year of the council's community pride scheme which has allocated just over £200,000 to match-fund over 80 community-based projects that have improved and enhanced the public realm.
- 1.2 The focus of the scheme has remained resolutely on the public environment but more recent rounds have seen an added emphasis on promoting sustainability and on building-up community ownership over the environment.
- 1.3 For 2011, Cabinet proposed a shift in emphasis to reflect the council's aspirations that communities are more influential in shaping and delivering public services. As funding for all public services continues to fall, there are more opportunities for communities to be involved in delivering services that might have traditionally been provided by the public sector. This direction of travel is being shaped by the coalition government's localism bill, which when enacted, will enshrine new rights for communities.
- 1.4 Cabinet on 19th April 2011 agreed the application guidelines and from Thursday 21st April 2011 onwards, the council invited community organisations to bid for funding from its community pride fund that was made available to match fund neighbourhood-based projects that will build up community resilience and enable local groups to be more influential in supporting their communities and improving their neighbourhoods. The type of projects the council was looking for included:
- Participation in training courses for volunteers and paid staff to develop specific skills such as fund-raising, management structures, governance and accountability;
 - The purchase of equipment to enable the group to be more effective in improving their neighbourhood;
 - Access to specific advice and support to enable community groups to take on public assets and/or public services, including looking at new organisational models;
 - The use of technology and social media to create a sense of community;
 - The organisation of community events that will build community resilience; and
 - Implementing environmental improvements that will promote sustainability and build up community ownership over the local environment.
- 1.5 The closing date was Friday 1st July and a panel comprising the Leader of the Council, Cllr. Anne Regan, Angela Gilbert from Gloucestershire Association for Voluntary and Community Action, Andrew Sherbourne Principal Accounting Technician and Richard Gibson, Policy and Partnerships Manager met on Wednesday 6th July to evaluate the 35 applications and make recommendations to Cabinet.

2. Reasons for recommendations

- 2.1 Due to the large numbers of applications received this year, which collectively were requesting just under £87,000 (against a total available of £30,000), the assessment panel carried out an assessment of the applications to assess the degree to which the applications met the primary objectives of this year's community pride fund:
- Does the project benefit a particular neighbourhood?
 - Does the project build up community resilience?
 - Does the project enable a community to improve their neighbourhood?
- 2.2 In addition, due to the pressure on the funding, each application was scrutinised to assess whether the project could go ahead if less funding was awarded.
- 2.3 The panel identified 21 projects that could answer in the positive to at least two of the three questions and agreed that they should be recommended for approval. The total sum awarded through this process totalled £28,862. The assessment of the projects is shown in **appendix 1**.

3. Alternative options considered

3.1 None

4. Consultation and feedback

4.1 None

5. Performance management –monitoring and review

5.1 Once approved, the council will enter into written agreements with the successful applicants which are based on the community giving grant template. This specifies that the grant recipient will submit a project monitoring report, summarising the project achievements, outcomes and lessons learnt to the grant administrator on completion of the project.

Report author	Richard Gibson, Policy and Partnerships Manager, 01242 235354, richard.gibson@cheltenham.gov.uk
Appendices	1. Assessment of projects 2. Risk assessment
Background information	