

Cheltenham Borough Council
Cabinet – 17 April 2012
Promoting Cheltenham Fund 2012

Accountable member	Cllr. Steve Jordan, Leader of the Council
Accountable officer	Richard Gibson, Strategy and Engagement Manager
Accountable scrutiny committee	Economy and Business Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Ward(s) affected	All
Key Decision	No
Executive summary	<p>Promoting Cheltenham Fund is a pot of funding to support events, projects and initiatives that will stimulate economic and business growth in Cheltenham. The 2011 round was launched in July 2011 and on 18 October 2011, Cabinet agreed to allocate £150,100 from the Promoting Cheltenham Fund pot worth £179,006.</p> <p>This left a sum of £28,900 which was to have been allocated as part of a second tranche in March 2012. A bid has been developed to use this funding to support the creation of a new tourism website for the borough.</p> <p>In the meantime, the council's agreed budget for 2012-13 included an additional sum of £141,500 for the Promoting Cheltenham Fund. Cabinet are asked to consider the proposed application guidelines and process for allocating this funding.</p> <p>To support Cabinet making decisions on the fund, a review of the funding has been carried out.</p>
Recommendations	<p>Cabinet to note the review of projects funded from the 2011 round – see appendix 2.</p> <p>Cabinet to consider whether to approve the proposal to use £25,000 from the 2011 Promoting Cheltenham Fund to support the creation of a new tourism website – see appendix 3.</p> <p>Cabinet to approve the guidelines and process for allocating the 2012 Promoting Cheltenham Funds – see appendix 4.</p>

Financial implications	The fund comprises £141,500 from the government's new homes bonus to support events, projects and initiatives that will stimulate economic and business growth in Cheltenham Contact officer: Andrew Sherbourne Principal Accounting Technician E-mail: andrew.sherbourne@cheltenham.gov.uk Tel no: 01242 264337
Legal implications	The grants will be formalised by agreement based on the Community Giving Grant template. Contact officer: Donna Ruck E-mail: donna.ruck@teWKesbury.gov.uk Tel no: 01684 272695.
HR implications (including learning and organisational development)	None
Key risks	If grant funding is allocated to an organisation that subsequently goes onto use the funding on a fraudulent basis – see appendix 1
Corporate and community plan Implications	The proposed allocations set out in appendix 2 will enable the council to deliver on the following outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheltenham has a strong and sustainable economy • Our residents enjoy a strong sense of community. • Arts and culture are used as a means to strengthen communities, strengthen the economy and enhance and protect our environment.
Environmental and climate change implications	None identified

1. Background

- 1.1** On 26 Jul 2011, Cabinet agreed to launch the Promoting Cheltenham Fund which was a pot of funding worth £179,000 to support events, projects and initiatives that would stimulate economic and business growth in Cheltenham. The funding would be allocated in two tranches; phase 1 was launched at the end of July with a closing date of Friday 30th September.
- 1.2** Organisations across Cheltenham were invited to apply for a single award typically up to a maximum of £20,000 though larger bids for multiple events could be considered.
- 1.3** Organisations were asked to deliver one or more of the following outcomes:
- Increased visitor numbers;
 - Increased new business investment;
 - Increased retention, investment and expansion of existing businesses;
 - Increased recognition of the Cheltenham brand on a national/international scale.
- 1.4** The guidelines stated that successful projects must produce economic outputs which were measurable (e.g. the number of attendees; revenue generated for the organisation, revenue generated for other businesses) but also have lasting economic benefits for Cheltenham and the local community.
- 1.5** In total 19 applications were received, with a cumulative request for £409,000, which were

assessed by the grant assessment panel which met on Friday 7th October. The panel comprised the Leader of the Council, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Community Development, the Cabinet Member for Sport and Culture, Cllrs. Tim Cooper and Malcolm Stennett from the Economic and Business Improvement O+S Committee and John Forward and John Leamon from Cheltenham Business Partnership.

- 1.6 On 18 October, Cabinet agreed to allocate £150,100 to 14 projects, leaving an unallocated sum of £28,900. A review has been carried out of these projects and this is attached as appendix 2.

2. Issues arising from the review

- 2.1 Overall the projects are progressing well; the Pittville Christmas Ice Rink project did not proceed due to concerns from local residents. The applicant was given an opportunity to set out a case for retaining the £10k allocation for Christmas 2012 and how she would address local residents' concerns. Instead, the applicant has decided to withdraw her application so the £10k will be put back into the fund.
- 2.2 Original plans set out by the organisers of the Sustainable Street Expo 2012 generated resident objections; at this stage we believe that the revised plans for the Expo are proceeding and that concerns raised from residents will be addressed in these plans.

3. The proposal for a new Tourism website

- 3.1 The need for review of the Tourism website was set out in the council's Tourism and Marketing Strategy that was agreed by Cabinet in April 2011 and developed by a joint working group from Social and Community and Economy and Business Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The strategy says:

"The Visit Cheltenham website, which already receives well over a million hits a year, is sure to become an even more important tool for promoting Cheltenham in the coming years. It is therefore very important that it is 'fit for purpose'. Considerable work has been done to improve the Visit Cheltenham website, but it is important that its effectiveness is kept under review. Not only must it be comprehensive and provide easy access to a wide range of information about the attractions of the town. It must also provide easy and effective links with related sites, especially those that carry information about events and facilities that might interest visitors and make their visit more enjoyable."

- 3.2 A stakeholder survey of the current Tourism website (www.visitcheltenham.com) subsequently undertaken found that only 33% of people using the site found it to be generally appealing, only 53% found the information they were looking for easily and only 40% would recommend the site to others. Other research has shown that 83% of potential visitors to an area will consult a website in advance as opposed to only 27% who would use a paper brochure.
- 3.3 As the main destination website for Cheltenham, the council's tourism team are seeking address these issues through seeking funding to create a new Tourism website. As the website is one of the most significant elements of how Cheltenham promotes itself nationally and internationally, and would clearly support delivery of the four Promoting Cheltenham Fund criteria an application for £25,000 has been put forward.
- 3.4 The website proposal was mentioned at the council's Economy and Business Improvement O+S meeting where it was suggested that the proposal be circulated to members of the assessment panel for comment. If the proposal found favour with the panel, it would go to Cabinet on 17th April for approval.
- 3.5 To date, feedback received from the panel has been positive, with particular support for the proposal coming from the commercial partners on the assessment panel; the Cheltenham Chamber of Commerce, Cheltenham Business Partnership and from the Regent Arcade.
- 3.6 However, the following questions have been raised:
- How were the costs of the project arrived at?

- How will the procurement exercise ensure the quality of design and functionality for users?
- What will the process be for the regular updating of the new site?
- Can the site provide information for potential business visitors and investors?

3.7 In response to the questions, Jane Lillystone, Museum, Arts & Tourism Manager has stated that the cost figure used in the application is based on the costs of developing similar websites for the Town Hall and leisure@. She has also stated that there is no particular supplier in mind, nor final specification but welcomes the importance that partners are placing on design, ease of use, ability to be updated easily and the links with economic development. More information will be provided at the Cabinet meeting in response to these questions.

4. Application guidelines and process for 2012

4.1 The application guidelines (see appendix 4) are mostly unchanged from 2011 with the exception of an additional outcome to support:

- *“The increased recognition, viability and sustainability of local commercial areas”*

4.2 This is in response to the feedback received from traders operating in areas like Montpellier and the Suffolks who, as independent traders, are finding it more challenging to survive.

4.3 If approved by Cabinet, the grant round will commence on 20th April and will close on 29th June, allowing 10 weeks for applications to be prepared and submitted. This would enable decisions to be made at the Cabinet meeting on 17th July 2012.

5. Opportunities for bidding

5.1 The Promoting Cheltenham Fund does provide an opportunity for bidders to come forward with projects that could address some of the issues that have been raised recently by elected Members.

5.2 There is a strong desire amongst elected Members to create a lasting reminder of the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee and that this could be supported from the Promoting Cheltenham Fund to enable this to happen.

5.3 There has also been a lot of interest amongst elected Members to use the Promoting Cheltenham Fund to encourage the design, production and marketing of a Cheltenham “bag for life” that would address the issues of plastic bags.

5.4 Officers will be able to offer more information for organisations wishing to come forward with Diamond Jubilee or plastic bag projects.

Report author	Richard Gibson, Strategy and Engagement Manager, 01242 235354, richard.gibson@cheltenham.gov.uk
Appendices	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Risk assessment 2. Review of Promoting Cheltenham Fund projects 2011 3. Proposal from Cheltenham Tourism for new website 4. Application guidelines and process for 2012
Background information	

Risk Assessment

Appendix 1

The risk				Original risk score (impact x likelihood)			Managing risk				
Risk ref.	Risk description	Risk Owner	Date raised	I	L	Score	Control	Action	Deadline	Responsible officer	Transferred to risk register
	If the commissioning division does not put proper controls in place for the management of the partnership small grants funds, then we run the risk of funds being used inappropriately or even fraudulently	Strategy and Engagement Manager	Apr 2010	3	3	9	reduce	Implement and monitor small grants protocols	ongoing	Strategy and Engagement Manager	Implementation of grant protocols has reduced the likelihood to 2.