

Cheltenham Borough Council
Cabinet – 25 September 2012
New Homes Bonus
Environmental Improvements Programme

Accountable member	Cllr Andrew McKinlay, Cabinet Member Built Environment Cllr Roger Whyborn, Cabinet Member Sustainable Development
Accountable officer	Director Built Environment, Mike Redman,
Ward(s) affected	All
Key Decision	Yes
Executive summary	<p>For 2012-2013, Council agreed to allocate, from the New Homes Bonus, a sum of £160,000-00 to the Cheltenham Environmental Improvements Fund.</p> <p>As approved by Cabinet, Environmental Improvements schemes have been subject to a bidding process by Council departments, with bids prioritised by a member panel comprising the Cabinet members for Built Environment and Sustainability and a Cabinet appointed advisory group.</p> <p>The aim is to tackle environmental issues in packages costing up to a maximum of £20,000-00.</p> <p>This report summarises the process and all bids submitted. At the time of writing, recommendations for the distribution of funds are being finalised and will be included in an Appendix C to this report to be circulated prior to the Cabinet meeting.</p>
Recommendations	<p>That Cabinet determine which bids to support and at what level, having regard to the:-</p> <p>1. Prioritised list of bids attached at Appendix C; 2. Available budget of £160,000-00.</p>

Financial implications	<p>None arising directly from this report.</p> <p>£160,000-00 has been allocated by Council for the Cheltenham Environmental Improvements Fund and will be distributed as shown in Appendix C.</p> <p>Contact officer: Paul Jones</p> <p>E-mail: paul.jones@cheltenham.gov.uk Tel no: 01242 775154</p>
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Legal implications	<p>Section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003 gives authority for the Government to pay grants to local authorities. Under this section the New Homes Bonus Scheme Grant Determination 2012/13 has been made.</p> <p>Contact officer: Jonathan Noel</p> <p>E-mail: jonathan.noel@tewkesbury.gov.uk</p> <p>Tel no: 01684 272690</p>
HR implications (including learning and organisational development)	<p>No HR implications as a direct result of the content of this report.</p> <p>Contact officer: Julie McCarthy ,</p> <p>E-mail: julie.mccarthy@cheltenham.gov.uk</p> <p>Tel no: 01242 264355</p>
Key risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial – it will be important to ensure that any funds allocated, particularly to external organisations, are the subject of appropriate controls to make sure they effectively deliver target outcomes; • Capacity – staffing resources are currently stretched and the allocation and support mechanisms for this scheme will therefore need to take this into account, to minimise the risk of impacts on other corporate priorities.
Corporate and community plan Implications	<p>As part of the bid process, applicants were asked to identify how individual projects supported at least one of the Council's high level environmental objectives-</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 • Carbon emissions are reduced and Cheltenham is able to adapt to the impacts of climate change <p>A copy of the application guidelines is at Appendix B.</p>
Environmental and climate change implications	<p>The Environmental Improvements fund offered an opportunity for the Council to support schemes to directly enhance the town's environment and contribute to helping reduce climate change impacts.</p> <p>As part of the bid process, applicants were asked to identify the impact of individual projects on carbon emissions and how they would help adapt to the impacts of climate change. The majority had some impact.</p>

1. New Homes Bonus 2012

- 1.1 The Council recently received an allocation of the New Homes Bonus (NHB) from central government.
- 1.2 NHB has been designed to address the disincentive within the local government finance system for local areas to welcome growth. Until now, increased housing in communities has meant increased strain on public services and reduced amenities. NHB reduces this disincentive by providing local authorities with the means to help mitigate the strain the increased population causes. This should ensure that the economic benefits of growth are returned to the local authorities and communities where growth takes place. In addition, in doing so, NHB is intended

to engender a more positive attitude to growth, and create an environment in which new housing is more readily accepted.

- 1.3 The NHB commenced in April 2011, and will match fund the additional council tax raised for new homes and long term empty properties brought back into use, with an additional amount for affordable homes, in each of the following six years.
- 1.4 From Cheltenham's allocation of NHB for 2012-2013 Council agreed to continue with the two funds created in 2011 - Environmental Improvements (the subject of this report) and Promoting Cheltenham (being dealt with under separate arrangements and a separate report).
- 1.5 The Environmental Improvements Fund has £160,000 for small environmental works. Bids from within council departments were invited. The aim is to tackle environmental issues by offering funding packages up to a maximum of £20,000-00.
- 1.6 The environmental improvements fund has been the subject of a bidding process by internal Council departments, with bids considered by a member panel of Cabinet members and a Cabinet Advisory Group. At the time of writing allocation of funds is being finalised. Appendix C, showing recommended funding allocations will be circulated prior to the Cabinet meeting on 25/09/2012
- 1.7 **The Fund received bids for the following projects (projects listed in alphabetical order):**

Project Name	Maximum Funding Sought
Allotment Water Butts	£8,000
Bee Guardian Project	£5,000
Cenotaph	£20,000
Community Pride Fund	£20,000
Cracking Environmental Crime	£15,000
Grosvenor Terrace Car Park	£15,000
Honeybourne Line Welcome	£20,000
Imperial Gardens Railings	£10,000
Leckhampton Lime Kilns	£9,000
Leckhampton Village Hall	£15,000
Montpellier Gardens Landscape Improvements	£13,500
Montpellier Gardens Sustainable Planting	£6,500
Pittville Gates	£20,000
Regent St Car Park	£10,000
Sandford Ornamental Gardens	£3,500
Sandford Park West	£10,000
Skillicorne Imperial Gardens	£50,000
Tivoli Lights	£8,500
Westdown Gardens Community Green	
TOTAL	£259,000

2. Reasons for recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet needs to be satisfied with the prioritising and funding projects under the fund and must ensure that it has considered the risks which may impact on the financing and delivery of relevant outcomes.

3. **Alternative options considered**

3.1 None

4. **Consultation and feedback**

4.1 Consultation has taken place through the Cabinet Advisory Working Group.

5. **Performance management –monitoring and review**

5.1 Performance in implementing the environmental improvements scheme will be monitored through the Council's normal internal performance management and scrutiny processes.

Report author	Claire Stenson, Landscape Architect, Built Environment claire.stenson@cheltenham.gov.uk, 01242 264191
Appendices	A. Risk Assessment B. Application Guidelines C. Funding recommendations (to follow)
Background information	

The risk				Original risk score (impact x likelihood)			Managing risk				
Risk ref.	Risk description	Risk Owner	Date raised	Impact 1-4	Likelihood 1-6	Score	Control	Action	Deadline	Responsible officer	Transferred to risk register
	If insufficient staffing and capacity is available to manage allocation and monitoring processes there is a risk that projects and related outcomes will not be delivered on time, or to an acceptable standard.	Director Built Environment	10/09/2012	3	2	6	Accept	Internal bids need to clearly identify resources required for effective management and delivery. Capacity for managing bidding process needs to be identified.	-	Directors and service managers tasked with project delivery.	
<p>Explanatory notes</p> <p>Impact – an assessment of the impact if the risk occurs on a scale of 1-4 (4 being the greatest impact)</p> <p>Likelihood – how likely is it that the risk will occur on a scale of 1-6 (6 being most likely)</p> <p>Control - Either: Reduce / Accept / Transfer to 3rd party / Close</p>											

Cheltenham Environmental Fund

Application Guidelines

Introduction

The Cheltenham Environmental Fund is a funding programme for small-scale environmental works. These will generally be capital works in streets, public spaces, parks or open spaces.

The fund will be allocated by Cabinet in September 2012.

Who can apply

Bids can be made in conjunction with external organisations, including community groups. Single award bids, typically up to a maximum of £15,000, must be submitted by an officer of the Council. Larger bids may be considered.

Officers can make more than one grant application.

What we are looking to support

Funding applications will be assessed on the basis of their relevant merits and their ability to deliver one or more of the following outcomes:

- an improvement in the quality of streets, public spaces, parks or open spaces;
- a positive contribution to environmental sustainability; and
- an increase in the community's involvement in its local environment.

Bids are encouraged which have additional benefits including an ability to:

- demonstrate innovative design or delivery solutions to environmental issues;
- act as learning pilots for other areas or organisations; or
- make a further contribution to wider areas of interest, particularly the economy, education, transport, health and well-being, bio-diversity or civic pride.

Funding will be awarded for capital works and reasonable associated costs (design, project management etc).

Projects should demonstrate community engagement in development and/or delivery.

Projects will need to evidence long-term maintenance.

Projects can be existing or new but must be capable of making significant progress by 31st January 2013 in terms of community engagement, design or implementation.

Making an application

Your application must clearly demonstrate the following which will form the basis of the assessment criteria:

- how your project will deliver one or more of the fund's outcomes
- how your project will have lasting environmental or sustainability benefits
- how the success of your project will be measured
- how Cheltenham's community will be involved in the development, design or delivery of the project

- what additional benefits your project will deliver
- when various stages of your project will be delivered and the project completed
- how your project will be maintained in the future
- how you will involve partners in your project and what they will contribute (funding or in-kind)
- if your project is eligible for other funding, how the Cheltenham Environmental Fund will complement, secure and add value to those other sources of funds.

How we will assess applications

An assessment panel will be drawn from the Cabinet. The panel will be looking for:

- projects that have been well thought out and can demonstrate that they meet the assessment criteria set out above;
- applications that demonstrate clarity of both planning and delivery of the projects with an understanding of what permissions will be required to see the successful implementation of the project;
- assurances that project deliverers will put in place a robust system for collecting, monitoring and assessing the impacts of the project and for reporting and sharing this information.

Recommendations will be made to the Borough Council's Cabinet that meets on 25th September 2012. Successful applicants will be notified shortly afterwards.

Completed applications for the main fund must be returned no later than Friday 22nd June 2012 to:

Judith Baker, Built Environment Directorate, Municipal Offices

Email: judith.baker@cheltenham.gov.uk

Recommended Distribution of Funds (to follow under separate cover)