

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL
STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE
17 April 2019

COMMUNITY INVESTMENT FUND

Report by Depute Chief Executive, Chief Operating Officer (Report No. 19/109)

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report makes recommendations for the 2019/20 Community Investment Fund, building on experience from Year 1. It asks the Committee to approve the process and launch of Year 2, in May 2019.

1. BACKGROUND / MAIN ISSUES

- 1.1 The Community Investment Fund (CIF) was established in February 2018 to provide £1.2m of funding for community-led projects across Perth and Kinross, over financial years 2018/19 and 2019/20.
- 1.2 [Report 18/196](#), approved by Committee in June 2018, set out the process for deciding on how the funds would be distributed and how decisions would be reached. Changes were made to timescales, so the final process involved:
 - Application process opened in August 2018
 - Ward Panels established in each of the 12 Council wards between December 2018 and February 2019
 - Panels chaired by elected members and involving a variety of community group members
 - Application process closed 15 February 2019
 - Ward Panels met between 18 February and 4 March 2019, using scoring sheets and other guidance to determine which applications to support
 - Decisions signed off by Chairperson of Local Action Partnership
 - Decisions ratified at the Strategic Policy and Resources Executive Sub-committee on 20 March 2019.
- 1.3 [Report 19/90](#), confirms how Year 1 funding has been allocated. In total 149 applications were received across all wards with a total bid value of £1.59m. Local Action Partnerships (LAPs) worked hard to engage local organisations and encourage applications. The volume and variety of applications received from a wide range of community groups was very significant. A list of successful projects in Year 1 is provided on a ward-by-ward basis as Appendix 2 to this report.
- 1.4 In approving the process for Year 1, the Committee asked for evaluation to be completed by March 2019 to inform improvements for Year 2. The key issues which emerged were:

- **Timescales.** Because of the requirement for all awards to be approved by Strategic Policy & Resources Committee (SP&R) we decided to set two funding deadlines in 2018/19: October 2018; and February 2019. In practice all LAPs agreed to defer to the February deadline to allow more time to develop applications. However, this meant some applicants who submitted earlier in the timescale waited for over 5 months for a decision.
- **Governance.** Each Ward required a Panel to be established to assess applications and make recommendations to the relevant LAP. In practice it took time for these to be agreed at Ward level. In some Wards it was difficult to identify enough Panel members, partly because community members (and some Councillors) had an interest in a particular application.
- **Capacity.** The Community Planning Team managed the process but this placed capacity strains on a team of 4FTE alongside existing responsibilities for administrative support to LAPs, administration of the Common Good Funds and its wider CPP role. This was partially addressed by the relocation of the Community Council Team to Culture and Community Services in January 2019.
- **Communications:** The application process was felt to be over complex by some applicants and the role of SP&R in making final decisions needed careful explanation to some who felt decisions should be made more locally. Promotion of the CIF across wards and LAPs by LAP members was not consistent. Guidelines, assessment criteria and other grant documents were available on the CIF microsite but we recognise that these should be reviewed and clarified where needed for Year 2.

2. PROPOSALS

- 2.1 Taking into account the learning from Year 1, options for delivering Year 2 are set out below. Illustrative timescales for each option are presented in Appendix 1. It will be important that the same process is used across Perth and Kinross to ensure transparency and consistency in decision making.
- 2.1.1. **Status Quo** – Retain the current process. With this option Ward Panels have the same level of funding (£50k), consider each application and recommend awards to SP&R. Chairs of LAPs will sign off the recommendations; and SP&R give final approval on a twice yearly basis;

Benefits	Risks
Continuity as all involved are familiar with this option.	Timescales were challenging for applicants and for capacity reasons. This may discourage further applications in Year 2
If well established, Ward Panels ensure that decisions are made at the most local level	Recruiting enough Ward Panel members and Chairs, and in time to run the process effectively, is challenging

- 2.1.2. **Devolved decisions to LAPs.** With this option the same application process would be followed. However the LAPs would assess applications and approve awards and Ward Panels would no longer be required. This would enable application deadlines to be staggered across the year and would mean that investment could be split across the LAP area, as opposed to within individual Wards. Twice yearly updates would be provided to SP&R Committee;

Benefits	Risks
The decision making process is more streamlined for applicants.	LAPs are still relatively new and experience of managing grant application processes is mixed.
The capacity of LAPs to make devolved fiscal decisions is strengthened and wider membership/representation encouraged.	LAPs still cover large areas and may not have the detailed ward level knowledge to make informed decisions.

- 2.1.3 **Partial devolved decisions to LAPs.** With this option the same application process will be followed and Ward Panels will continue to assess and make recommendations on £50k in each Ward. Awards of £3k-£9,999 would be decided by the Ward Panels, enabling a rolling programme throughout the year for smaller awards. Awards of £10k-£50k would remain subject to SP&R Committee approval on a twice yearly basis;

Benefits	Risks
Continuity as all involved are familiar with this option.	LAPs are still relatively new and experience of managing grant application processes is mixed.
Quicker turnaround time for smaller applications.	LAPs still cover large areas and may not have the detailed ward level knowledge to make informed decisions.
If well established, Ward Panels ensure that decisions are made at the most local level	
The capacity of LAPs to make devolved fiscal decisions is strengthened and wider membership/representation encouraged	
Decisions on larger applications is retained by Council Committee to ensure consistency in how large projects are considered.	

- 2.1.4 **Participatory Budgeting** – SP&R Committee approves the overall allocation to LAPs and LAPs run the process through Participatory Budgeting. The same criteria would be applied to bidding organisations/projects as used in Year 1 of the CIF, to ensure projects qualify in terms of how they will address inequality which is the key rationale of the CIF. This may also mean that investment could be split across the LAP area, as opposed to within individual Wards.

Benefits	Risks
LAPs have strong experience of running effective participatory budgeting processes and the bidding process is straightforward to follow.	Participatory Budgeting is resource intensive for staff and additional training for LAPs will be required to enable them to manage more of the process themselves.
Participatory Budgeting is a well established process, which many community groups understand and relate to	Investment may be needed in more infrastructure (including digital) to widen voting as much as possible and ensure voting processes are fair and transparent.
Participatory Budgeting can actively involve more people in the decision making process.	Moving to PB from the previous CIF process may cause confusion for applicants.
	Some organisations and groups may be deterred by larger/more vocal applicants.

2.2 Whichever option is adopted for Year 2 the following improvements are recommended based on the learning from Year 1:

- Simplified application guidance will be produced and circulated widely across community networks and through the Communications Team;
- A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) sheet plus successful case studies from Year 1 will be developed based on the most common issues and questions that have come from applicants and others involved in the 2018/19 round;
- A Communications Plan promoting successful projects from Year 1 and encouraging applications for Year 2 will be delivered. A clear brand identity for the CIF will be introduced;
- Governance guidance for Councillors, Local Action Partnerships and Council staff will be provided and training workshops held;
- Local Action Partnerships will be asked to assume greater ownership of promoting the CIF within wards; and
- Community Planning partners will be encouraged to promote the CIF and raise awareness through their own networks.

3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Community Investment Fund (CIF) seeks to invest in new projects and initiatives in Perth and Kinross, which seek to deliver against identified equality issues, as outlined in Local Action Plans.
- 3.2 Four options have been identified for operating Year 2 of the CIF which the Committee is asked to consider and, whichever is followed, more general improvements will be made in Year 2.

3.3 It is recommended that the Committee

- i. Approves its preferred option for operating the Community Investment Fund in Year 2 from those set out in paragraphs 2.1-2.2, noting the required timescales for each option at Appendix 1.
- ii. Approves the wider improvement recommendations set out in paragraph 2.3

Author(s)

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Approved

Name	Designation	Date
Jim Valentine	Depute Chief Executive (Chief Operating Officer)	2 April 2019

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1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Strategic Implications	Yes / None
Community Plan / Local Outcomes Improvement Plan	Yes
Corporate Plan	Yes
Resource Implications	
Financial	Yes
Workforce	None
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	None
Assessments	
Equality Impact Assessment	Yes
Strategic Environmental Assessment	Yes
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	Yes
Legal and Governance	None
Risk	None
Consultation	
Internal	Yes
External	None
Communication	
Communications Plan	None

1. Strategic Implications

Community Plan/Single Outcome Agreement

- 1.1 Supporting and investing in community-led solutions to locally identified issues contributes to the delivery of the Perth and Kinross Community Plan / LOIP in terms of the following priorities:

- (i) Giving every child the best start in life
- (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens
- (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy
- (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives
- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations

Corporate Plan

- 1.2 Supporting and investing in community-led solutions to locally identified issues contributes to the delivery of the Perth and Kinross Council Corporate Plan in terms of the following priorities:

- (i) Giving every child the best start in life;
- (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens;
- (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy;
- (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives; and
- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.

2. Resource Implications

Financial

- 2.1 Agreeing the the process for allocating £600,000 Community Investment Fund in 2019/20.

3. Assessments

Equality Impact Assessment

- 3.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between equality groups. Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments for plans and policies allows the Council to demonstrate that it is meeting these duties.
- 3.2 The information contained within this report has been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment Process (EqIA) and has been assessed as **not relevant** for the purposes of EqIA.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 3.3 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on the Council to identify and assess the environmental consequences of its proposals.
- 3.4 The information contained within this report has been considered under the Act. However, no action is required as the Act does not apply to the matters presented in this report.

Sustainability

- 3.5 Under the provisions of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 the Council has to discharge its duties in a way which contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. Under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 the Council has a general duty to demonstrate its commitment to sustainability and the community, environmental and economic impacts of its actions.
- 3.6 The information contained within this report has been considered under the Act. However, no action is required as the Act does not apply to the matters presented in this report.

4. CONSULTATION

Internal

- 4.1 There has been consultation with Finance Department, Community Planning Team, Community Learning and Development Service and the Executive Officer Team.

2. BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

3. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - sets out illustrative timescales for the 2019/20 round of the Community Investment Fund.

Appendix 2 lists the successful applicants to Year 1 of the Community Investment Fund, on a ward-by-ward basis.