

# **NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **Cabinet**

5 February 2020

### **Report of the Head of Transformation - A.Thomas**

#### **Matter for Decision**

#### **Wards Affected:**

Port Talbot

### **Project Proposal made to the Members Community Fund**

#### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To seek Cabinet approval to fund a project proposal that requests financial support under the Members Community Fund. The project has been tabled by the three Ward Councillors for Port Talbot.

#### **Executive Summary**

2. The Members Community Fund is to be used to address local needs and to support projects and initiatives that will contribute towards creating vibrant and sustainable communities.

The Project Development & Funding Unit (PDFU) within ELLL is charged with the governance of the Fund and will act as the Grant Management Organisation.

Bids can be made for projects that enhance existing Council services, assist voluntary sector provision or form part of a larger initiative that is in need of additional financial support.

Eligible projects will include those that enrich the environment, promote non - statutory education and learning, assist Health & Well Being, and promote culture and / or recreation in all its forms.

Another project proposal now seeks funding and has been formally submitted to the PDFU. The bid has been checked for completeness, accuracy and deliverability and is 'fit for purpose' and ready for determination by Cabinet.

## **Background**

3. Application to improve the land around the Girl Guiding Headquarters in Bridge Street, Port Talbot to create an outdoor environment for species habitat and to promote the development of Interest/Achievement Badges, linked to gaining proficiencies in nature based activities.

This project proposal is to crown thin and lift the canopy of existing trees, to prune back hedgerows and reduce overgrowth so that areas can be designated for wildlife, camping, 'Back wood cooking', fireside feasts and Bush craft.

The facility at Bridge Street is a green oasis set amongst the backdrop of densely populated housing and the M4. It is a sanctuary for wildlife, many bird species and slow worms and this will need to be preserved. The proposed work will allow specimen trees to flourish and mature with no further need for remedial pruning. Areas to be cleared will lend themselves to the Rainbows (5 -7 yrs.), the Brownies (7-10 yrs.), the Guides (10 - 14 yrs.) and the Rangers (14 - 18 yrs.) pursuing Badges as part of the 'Builder journey' and becoming nature detectives.

This proposal is seen as a phased development which will include further maintenance, shelter building and landscaping with the provision of bug hotels (made from felled timber neatly stacked), nesting boxes and the like.

The need for this initiative has arisen from investment of all surplus monies generated from subscription being used to bring the Headquarter building up to standard whilst by necessity, having to overlook the outdoor environment.

The project will help sustain the Girl Guiding movement in Port Talbot, help participants build confidence, promote mental health, friendships and lifelong participation in positive leisure- time pursuits.

The cost of carrying out the tree surgery, clearance work and maintenance of boundaries and hedgerows has been competitively quoted for. The project will cost £2,400 and the whole of this cost is sought from the three Port Talbot Members (£1,263.93 from Councillor Freeguard, £852.75 from Councillor Keogh and £283.32 from Councillor Rahaman).

### **Financial Impact**

4. In order to win favour in Cabinet all projects must be sustainable. Projects must have a robust exit strategy that places no additional revenue or financial burden on the Council.

Ongoing maintenance of the professionally pruned trees will be minimal as all diseased material is to be removed as part of this project. Trees that are interfering with neighbouring properties, lanes and overhead telecommunications will be reduced in height. Boundaries will be more manageable. The cost of grass cutting will be met from subscription and the use of a willing band of volunteers.

There will be no future revenue expenditure for the NPTCBC.

### **Integrated Impact Assessment**

5. A first stage impact assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its legislative duties (under the Equality Act 2010), the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, the Well - being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

The first stage assessment has indicated that a more in - depth assessment is not required as the summary concludes there are

positive outcomes for the sustainable development principle, collaboration and involvement, with no impact on equalities or the Welsh language.

### **Valleys Communities Impacts**

6. No implications

### **Workforce Impacts**

7. There are no workforce impacts associated with this report.

### **Legal Impacts**

8. The delivery of the Members Community Fund will come within the purview of the Local Government Act 2000 which introduced well-being powers which enable every Local Authority to have capacity to do anything which it considers likely to promote an improvement to economic, social or environmental well-being in the area. Under section 56 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 sanction is given for both Executive and Non - Executive Members to invest within their own Ward.

The Council's Constitution should be referred to for explicit guidance on governance.

### **Risk Management**

9. There are no risk management issues associated with this report.

### **Consultation**

10. There is no requirement for external consultation on this item.

### **Recommendations**

11. That this project proposal to enhance the outdoor environment at the Girl Guiding Headquarters in Port Talbot is approved and that the three Port Talbot Ward Councillors contribute £2,400 under the Members Community Fund.

## **Reasons for Proposed Decision**

12. To approve the Application for funding that has been received under the Members Community Fund. Full Funding Applications can be made to the Members Community Fund until the end of the financial year. The Fund will then close. Funds left unallocated will be returned to Reserves.

## **Implementation of Decision**

13. The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period.

## **List of Background Papers**

14. This Port Talbot initiative has been developed from the Members Community Fund Application Form submitted jointly by Councillors Freeguard, Keogh and Rahaman and the Afan Division of the Girl Guides. The Quotation received for the arboricultural work has been entered on File for reference. The Constitution, Accounts, Deeds and the Insurance Policy pertaining to the HQ have been retained. The first stage Impact Assessment documentation associated with this project proposal has also been retained.

## **Officer Contact**

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