

MEMBERS COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE FUND – Appendix C

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR MEMBERS

What is the Members Community Fund?

The Fund is financed from the County Borough Council's Reserves and is available in Financial Year 2020/21, and until the end of October 2021 only. £10,000 is set aside for each Ward Member. The Fund is administered by the Project Development & Funding Unit (PDFU) within Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning (ELLL) acting as the Grant Management Organisation (GMO). The Fund is to be governed for the benefit of priority projects within the 42 Wards of Neath Port Talbot.

Members are to identify preferred projects within their own Ward and present these proposals for consideration to the PDFU for the decision of Cabinet.

Project proposals must align strongly to the Council's Corporate Plan and Single Integrated Plan (SIP). These policies and priorities insist upon working towards creating healthier, safer, more resilient and more economically viable communities.

How to apply?

Please read through these Guidance Notes to find out more about the Community Fund and the types of project that can be funded.

It is advisable to initially contact the PDFU and take advice upon the proposal. The Unit can advise upon eligibilities, how best to procure the project, assist in its commissioning, advise upon site investigations, VAT and project management.

The Project Development & Funding Unit is based in Room 307B (2nd Floor) Civic Centre, Port Talbot, SA13 1PJ. Officers can be contacted on Tel: 01639 763390 or 01639 763552. Email – p.hinder@npt.gov.uk or e.stanton@npt.gov.uk

Members making the initial enquiry with the PDFU will be equipped with an Application Form which will capture the essential ingredients of the proposal. The PDFU will, upon receipt of the completed Application Form, check the Form for accuracy and the project for credibility, practicality and sustainability.

- Please ensure that all questions in the Application Form are answered and that all supporting documentation that has been asked for is provided. Submission of an incomplete Application will delay the processing of the bid.
- There will be no cyclical Rounds of funding as the Members Community Fund is an Open Programme receiving proposals and bids at any time. Member Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their bid following a decision made by Cabinet.

About the Grant

The primary intent of the Fund is to support projects that align strongly to the aspirations of the Council's policies and priorities. Projects should:-

- Generate a genuine long term community benefit
- Address an evidenced need
- Be well thought through and have robust financial plans and delivery proposals
- Complement , rather than duplicate existing provision
- Be sustainable.

How much can you apply for?

Members can apply for funding between £500 and £10,000 from the Community Fund by using the enclosed Application Form. The funding can be used to support any one or a combination of projects in 2020/21. Money left uncommitted within the Member's allocation in 2020/21 can be rolled over to support projects in 2021/2022.

Where a Member of a Ward feels strongly about investing the whole of their £10,000 to support a single project, this is permissible under the Fund criteria.

Members may wish to augment a project that has already received their Member's funding in an earlier Round, as a means of building upon the earlier investment. This is permissible providing that the GMO can be convinced that the earlier initiative has worked and is worthy of continued support.

Certain Wards may be represented by more than one Ward Member. Where there is general agreement between Ward Members that they wish to pool their individual £10,000 allocation as a means of securing a more ambitious project, this is permissible under the Fund criteria.

Should a Ward Member feel strongly about, and can evidence the need for, financially supporting a venture that is not within their own Electoral Ward, this is permissible under the Fund criteria. The investment outside of the indigenous Ward can be made in any Ward providing that the need can be evidenced.

Should a Member wish to develop a traffic calming, or a Traffic Regulation Order or a Highways Infrastructure type proposal, these must be lodged with the GMO by the 31.03.21 to allow for approval to advertise, to explore objections to the proposal and to facilitate delivery by the 31.03.2022.

There will be no retrospective funding.

(Please contact the PDFU for advice upon project costs and the funding arrangements – Tel: 01639 763390/763552).

The Grant Management Organisation (GMO) will refer all bids for funding to Cabinet for decision. The Member Applicant will receive the outcome of the assessment in writing. The

Applicant should await the outcome of assessment before any start is made on the project that is to be funded.

Match Funding – Added Value

Applications and proposals that demonstrate how Council funding will be used to lever in additional resources in support of Council policies and priorities are particularly welcomed. It is intended that the Members Community Fund will endeavour to maximise other funding streams and draw in additional funding which will add value and investment to the Ward that is under determination.

The PDFU can assist Members in identifying additional locally sourced external grant aid (i.e. from Section 106 Community Levy infrastructure payments, Mineral Deposits, Renewable Energy Community Benefit Funds, etc.)

All sources of match funding that are associated with the Total Project Cost must be secured and available before a bid is made to the Members Fund before a project can be presented to Cabinet for approval. The Members Fund is seen as the final piece of the funding jigsaw.

What can be funded?

Projects that have a positive impact on the community and meet the criteria of the Fund will be considered for funding. The need for the project should be evidenced. The project should not duplicate existing provision but complement what is happening in the Ward.

The Members Community Fund can support both revenue and capital projects. Work that will score well in the assessment of the bid might include new, additional or improved facilities or services. Projects that require funding for repair, replacement or renewal are also eligible.

Members that request financial support from the Fund must prove that their project is sustainable in the long term and that the project will continue beyond the life of the grant. Any project progressed should be sustainable and should not ordinarily create additional ongoing operational/revenue costs.

Examples of projects that could be supported include (these suggestions are indicative not exhaustive):-

- Environment – landscaping, traffic calming, street furnishings, interpretation, community gardens, recycling initiatives.
- Education – Out of school hours clubs, 'Forest School', Road Safety initiatives, non – statutory support for libraries (via 'Friends of' Organisations, etc.), non – statutory youth provision, one off materials, staging an exhibition, biodiversity projects.
- Health – support for Food Co – ops, exercise referrals, well-being events.
- Culture – staged productions, promotional leaflets, gateway projects, working with an artist in residence.
- Recreation – Community facilities, playground refurbishments and renewals, improvement to sports facilities, Open days and Festivals.

Bids that will not be supported in assessment might include those that require funding for:-

- Refreshments, food and drink (and fireworks).
- Trips/excursions.
- Projects that impact upon and affect the sustainability of existing provision perhaps elsewhere
- Religion and Faith groups and the advancement of any religion (unless for instance the building that is to be improved by the investment has a community benefit).
- Highways schemes that have no evidenced need or community benefit (genuine outcomes will need to form an essential part of the proposal in order to win through in assessment).
- Party political activities
- Applications to assist Organisations that receive funding from the Public purse (Police, NHS, etc.)
- Funding of recoverable VAT
- Running costs such as utilities, routine hall hire, etc.
- Insurances and legal costs
- Proposals that are without a specific project in mind – i.e. simply gifting money to keep an Organisation operational.
- Purchase of land
- Individual beneficiaries
- Projects that conflict or adversely affect the Council's aims, policies or procedures

Again, this is not an exhaustive list - please contact the Project Development & Funding Unit (PDFU) on Tel: 01639 763390/763552 for advice.

All project submissions will be assessed on merit by Cabinet. The assessment decision is final.

Second and Subsequent Applications to the Fund

Second and subsequent bids made by the same Member will be accepted throughout Financial Year 2020/21 and in 2021 until such time as the individual Member's allocation of £10,000 is fully utilised. The Members Community Infrastructure Fund will receive bids until the end of October 2021 and then the five months to the end of March 2022 will be used to spend the grant aid and bring the project proposal to fruition by the 31.03.2022.

All transactions against the Members Community Fund will be recorded against 64 Folio Headings. The Member will be kept updated as to the status of their investment profile. PDFU will advise Members upon complex projects that require a multi-faceted approach to funding and accountancy.

Declaration

The Member, as an authentic Applicant, is to sign that to the best of knowledge the information contained in the Application is correct and that they will take responsibility for the development of the project.

If the information offered in the Application changes the Member will inform the GMO immediately.

If Grant aid is awarded, it is to be used only for the purposes stipulated in the offer letter. The Council reserves the right to recover grant aid that is inappropriately used.

The Member Applicant will be reminded that the GMO reserves the right to monitor a project post Award as a means of satisfying the Council that the outcomes as depicted in the original Application have been achieved as intended.

In the making of the Application the Member must declare any financial or personal interest in the project. Similarly if the Member acts as a Trustee or forms part of a Board or Management Committee of an Organisation which hopes to be a recipient of a grant from the Fund, that Member must declare a direct conflict of interest (conflicts of interests may arise where a Member's personal or family interests and/or loyalties potentially conflict with those of the broader community and create a danger of bias). Members are bound by the Council's Code of Conduct.