



Report of the Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration & Tourism

Cabinet - 17 September 2020

Councillor's Community Budget - Play

Purpose:	To approve the addition of £1m to the Councillor's Community Budgets. To comply with Financial Procedure Rule No.7 (Capital Programming and Appraisals) - to commit and authorise schemes to the Capital Programme or to include new schemes in the Capital Programme.
Policy Framework:	Financial Procedure Rule No. 7
Consultation:	Finance
Recommendation(s):	That the addition of £1m capital monies to the Councillor's Community budget is approved.
Report Author:	Geoff Bacon
Finance Officer:	Ben Smith
Legal Officer:	Tracey Meredith
Access to Services Officer:	Rhian Millar

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The current Councillor's Community Budget scheme was adopted by Cabinet on 28th May 2013 and subsequently amended by Cabinet on 19th November 2015 and 19th October 2017 and more recently 19th March 2020 when an additional Capital allocation and bidding process was introduced. This revenue and capital scheme is intended to support delivery of small local measures that are a priority for individual Councillors and their local community but are not funded by other Council budgets. Furthermore, it is intended to help deliver the Council's strategic objectives.

- 1.2 As part of the main scheme, a sum of revenue money has been divided equally between all 72 elected Councillors to use on supporting initiatives within their Ward.
- 1.3 The Community budget provides each Councillor with a budget currently set at £10,000 per annum (as at 20/21 financial year). There is no minimum amount a Councillor may spend on funding.
- 1.4 The introduction of a Capital allocation in the March Cabinet report, set out the criteria for bidding and funding.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 The report on the 19th March made a provision to deal with any allocation of capital monies with £1m already allocated for this purpose. In addition it is proposed that a further £1m is allocated to support this initiative which is specifically ring-fenced to improve access to play facilities. The following criteria still apply based on the initial report.
 - The eligibility criteria in place would be the same as set out for revenue funding under the main scheme. In addition they would need to satisfy the criteria for capital projects as set out in the Council's financial procedure rules i.e. the work is intended to "add" to the asset such as new equipment or maintain the longevity of an asset by replacing something that already exists. Acquisition of assets or donations are not permitted from this budget.
 - As the project will be capital in nature the minimum scheme value would be £20,000.
 - There would be a cap on the amount that can be drawn from a capital budget of a maximum of £30,000 **per ward** per year. The capital contribution cannot represent more than 80% of the total costs of the scheme with the balance being derived from other sources which could include grant, revenue community budget allocation or wider community donations.
 - No more than 2 such schemes can be approved for a single ward in any financial year i.e. one or two scheme drawing a maximum of £30,000.
 - Once the budget has been fully committed no further schemes can be considered until a new allocation is made. A deadline or series of deadline may be declared to allow a phasing approach to bid consideration.
 - In year one of the scheme projects would be eligible provided they have not physically commenced on site.
 - Any capital budget remaining at the end of the council term will be rolled over to the next cycle and added to any new amounts allocated.
 - Decisions as to eligibility for each submitted scheme would be delegated to the leader, Cabinet member for Investment, Regeneration and Tourism, Cabinet Member with the responsibility

for Community budgets, and Director of Place. In the event of the scheme being submitted in one of the respective wards then the deputy leader would sit on the panel.

- In the event of more approved bids that the remaining money available the panel could decide to “ration” the approval on pro rata basis.
- As the schemes are likely to be larger than normal community budget projects a deadline will be set for final submission and approval of schemes 1 year prior to the end of the municipal term.

2.2 In addition as this budget is ring-fenced to “play” the following additional criteria are proposed

- Scheme must be on council owned land although if the asset has been transferred to a community group such the project would still be permissible.
- Schemes could include the refurbishment of existing playgrounds/ equipment enhancements of related facilities or the creation of a new facility subject to the overall funds being available.
- Members will be provided with an overview of their current facilities within their ward to assist in their decision making or priorities.
- Any addition revenue implications would need to be dealt with in the same way as outlined within the overarching community budget scheme.
- As no resources currently exist to manage this new strand it is suggested that a project manager is appointed to coordinate the delivery of the programme funded out of the overall budget.
- In line with the guidance contained with the community budget scheme approved by Council on the 19th March 2020 if wards wish to collaborate on schemes that will be considered on a case by case basis but the assumption would be the spend would normally be contained within a ward boundary.

3. Equality and Engagement Implications

3.1 The Council is subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty (Wales) and must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

3.2 Our Equality Impact Assessment process ensures that we have paid due regard to the above.

3.3 An Equality and Impact Assessment screening has been undertaken the outcome being that a full EIA report is not required for the Community Budget itself, individual schemes will be screened in their own right as per the corporate process.

4. Financial Implications

4.1 The additional £1M allocation for Play equipment is to be funded by unsupported borrowing and will be added to the Capital Programme for 20/21 and 21/22 initially apportioned £250k and £750k respectively.

4.2 The ongoing administrative costs will be undertaken by the current Community Budget Manager however any identified Project Management activity will be funded out of the total £1M allocated as allowable capital expenditure.

4.3 Whilst the criteria states that any scheme must be on council owned land, if the asset has been transferred to a community group then any future liability or responsibility will pass onto that group or organisation.

5. Legal Implications

5.1 No additional legal implications over and above those outlined in the main body of the report.

Background Papers:

Cabinet Report – 19 March 2020 – Members Community Budget – Updated Guidance;
EIA Screening form

Appendices:

None