

Division(s):

CABINET – 20 SEPTEMBER 2016
Transition Fund for Community Initiatives for Open Access
Children’s Services

Report by the Chief Finance Officer

Introduction

1. The council is currently developing a brand new service for 0-19 year olds which will combine children’s social care and early intervention in one seamless service, removing the need for children and families to be referred between the two.
2. As part of the council’s continuing investment in early intervention, new teams of ‘locality workers’ will advise and support staff who continue to provide universal services to children and families throughout Oxfordshire – such as teachers in schools, health workers and staff in early years settings. The approach will ensure that children at risk who require support are identified as early as possible and appropriate services are provided to them and their families.
3. Alongside these developments, the council has been holding positive discussions with local communities, town and parish councils and the voluntary sector to encourage community-led solutions for delivering open access services for children and families. The aim is for these local solutions to complement the funded service as part of a safe and effective system that ensures support for the most vulnerable families, while harnessing the work of schools, health services, voluntary and community groups as part of a wider early intervention approach.
4. The 2016/17 budget agreed by Council in February 2016 included the creation of a ‘one off’ £1m fund to provide pump priming to support community-led solutions for delivering open-access services for children and families.
5. A cross party group of county councillors has been established to consider the maximum benefit of this fund. Councillors were nominated for this group by the party leaders. The group consists of Cllrs Stratford, Mathew, Gray, Hards and Fawcett.
6. The group has agreed terms of reference (set out in Annex 1) and is chaired by Councillor Stratford, the Cabinet Member for Finance. The group discussed different approaches to utilise the fund and recommend Cabinet to approve the guidance and grant application form set out in Annexes 2 and 3 of this report.

Transition Fund Approach

7. The purpose of this £1m fund is to provide pump priming grants to communities to enable them to create sustainable solutions for open access children's services. The approach will be flexible recognising the different needs across the county. Through the current support provided to community groups, individual solutions will be developed with differing funding requirements.
8. The working group want the process to be open and transparent allowing as many groups as possible to access the funding. It was felt that a grant scheme would be the most appropriate way to ensure this.
9. Any proposals for funding will need to be supported by a business plan that includes all of the relevant information requested in the guidance document.

Grant Criteria

10. The following will be the key criteria when assessing proposals:
 - All proposals will be expected to demonstrate sustainability with the ability to self-fund in the long-term.
 - Proposals are expected to have some level of match funding.
 - Projects must benefit Oxfordshire communities, be inclusive and provide good value for money.
 - Evidence of the need for the project.
 - Evidence of Community buy-in, engagement, partnership working and collaboration.
11. The full list of criteria is contained within the guidance set out in Annex 2 along with the types of organisations that can apply and also the types of projects and organisations that are not eligible to apply for funding.
12. Grants will be awarded on a one-off basis but expenditure can be phased over a period of up to three years.

Process

13. It is proposed that there will be two rounds of applications in October 2016 and January 2017. The applications will be assessed by the cross party working group and recommendations submitted to Cabinet for decision.
14. Future rounds of applications may be considered if communities are not in a position to submit a bid in the first two rounds and a balance of the fund is available.
15. Applicants, along with their local county councillor will be notified by e-mail of the Cabinet decision.

16. Successful applicants will be expected to comply fully with the monitoring requests from the council and signing of the funding agreement will be viewed as acceptance of these requests.
17. Any unspent grant funding will be recovered by the county council.

Financial and Staff Implications

18. The financial implications are set out in the main body of the report.

Equalities Implications

19. The Public Sector Equality Duty, under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, places a responsibility on local authorities to exercise 'due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination... advance equality of opportunity... and foster good relations.'
20. There are no equality and inclusion implications arising directly from this report.

RECOMMENDATION

21. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to approve the Grant Guidance and Grant Application as set out in Annexes 2 and 3.**

LORNA BAXTER
Chief Finance Officer

Annexes: Annex 1 - Term of Reference Transition Fund Cross Party Working Group

Annex 2 - Grant Guidance Notes
Annex 3 - Grant Application Form

Contact Officer: Sarah Jelley, sarah.jelley@oxfordshire.gov.uk, 07554 103437
September 2016

Annex 1

Term of Reference Transition Fund Cross Party Working Group

July 2016

Purpose

The Transition Fund Cross Party Working Group will explore the priority areas for funding, the criteria for each strand and the process and mechanism to allocate funds, making recommendations to Cabinet.

The working group will be supported by Officers and any Project Boards that are established to deliver this work. It will operate as a task and finish group.

Key tasks and responsibilities of the group

- consider the review work to date and the emerging evidence and policy relating to where the council no longer provides services directly but supports a sustainable community solution;
- explore the issues related to the future of thriving communities in Oxfordshire;
- undertake visits to places as necessary to help to inform thinking;
- conduct research, community engagement and other consultation in the analysis of policy and possible options;
- liaise with other organisations operating in the area, whether national, regional or local, to ensure that policy recommendations are thus enhanced to reflect the interests of local people;
- submit findings and recommendations to the Cabinet and/or appropriate cabinet member. Final recommendations will be by consensus if at all possible or by means of a show of hands if necessary.

Membership

Cabinet member for Finance

Other members following receipt of nominations from Group Leaders having regard to:

- a Member's interest
- geographical representation (that is, representation from across Oxfordshire)
- cross party reflecting the balance of political parties within the Council as a whole.

Meetings

- will meet on the dates and at the times and places determined by the chairman of the group in consultation with the other members of the group which shall be set as far as possible in advance and notified to members of the group
- meetings will be chaired by the cabinet member or a nominated vice chairman in their absence
- A vice chairman will be nominated at the meeting in the Chairman's absence as/when needed.
- will have quorum of three members
- will operate such that agendas and reports are sent to members of the group at least five clear days in advance of each meeting.
- Notes of the meetings will be made available on request.

Accountability

The working group is accountable to the Cabinet.

Annex 2 – Grant Guidance Notes**TRANSITION FUND
COMMUNITY INITIATIVES FOR OPEN ACCESS CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

July 2016

Background

In February 2016 the council agreed to set aside £1m for creating a transition fund to provide pump-priming grants for establishing universal provision of children's services in communities across Oxfordshire.

Further details about the council's decision are available at:

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/news/2016/feb/joint-statement-budget-political-leaders-oxfordshire-county-council>

This approach supports the council's commitment to a new way of delivering open access services across communities. Under Oxfordshire Together we have been working with town and parish councils, voluntary sector organisations and local community groups to encourage the continuation of open access sessions such as stay and play and youth group sessions where the council can no longer provide funding for these services. Further information about this work is available at: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/public-site/childrens-services>.

Our approach

The purpose of this £1m transition fund is to provide pump priming grants for sustainable community solutions for open access children's services. In awarding the grants, our approach will be flexible, recognising the different needs across the county. We will work with community groups on an individual basis to develop individual solutions, so if you would like to apply for a grant you are advised to contact us at an early stage. To get in touch with us, please email us at: localities@oxfordshire.gov.uk.

Any proposals for funding will need to demonstrate sustainability and the ability to self-fund in the long term. This will be a key criterion for assessing all applications. In addition match funding is strongly encouraged, and we will be asking all applicants to put together a robust business case showing how the project will self-fund in the long-term.

There will be two rounds of applications with deadlines in October 2016 and January 2017, so if your bid is not successful in the first round, we will be happy to work with you to help develop a strong business case and re-apply for funding. Further rounds of applications will be considered, if appropriate, post-January 2017.

What do we fund? (eligibility criteria)

Funding is available for sustainable community solutions for open access children's services. As the county council is withdrawing funding for some non-statutory children's services, we want to see communities come forward with their proposals for open access services for children and their families, reflecting local need and priorities.

It is entirely up to each community to decide what the new arrangements might look like. In order to be eligible for transition funding, projects must meet a number of key eligibility criteria, and we require all applicants to submit a fully developed business case that demonstrates how the criteria will be met.

If you need help developing the business case, you can contact OCVA, who will be able to offer guidance, or you can consult the government's advice on writing a business plan at: www.gov.uk/write-business-plan.

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To make sure you have included all the relevant information in your business case we have put together a suggested checklist:

- Description of the project/ activity
- Needs analysis
- Desired outcomes & beneficiaries
- Costs
- Sources of funding & long-term sustainability
- Performance Measures (how results will be monitored)
- Governance

Grant criteria

- Sustainable solution for open access children's services in the local community
- Ability to self-fund in the long-term, as outlined in the business case
- Clearly defined costs and timescales for implementation
- Evidence of the need for the project
- Community buy-in
- Engagement, partnership working and collaboration
- Projects must benefit Oxfordshire communities, be inclusive and provide good value for money.
- To what extent we can have confidence that the project will have a lasting impact, beyond the funding period.

We want to see projects which are rooted in their communities and which have grown out of a specific local need. All applicants must work closely with their local community to ensure their project is properly connected locally, responds to recognised need and does not duplicate other provision. We would also ask to see evidence of a strong buy-in from the local community, and any successful initiative would need to be accessible, inclusive and open to all.

Funding will only be awarded on a one-off basis and must be spent within a maximum of 3 years (*depending on your business plan, it could be by end of financial year; set number of years or as per the milestones identified in the business case*).

Funding can be awarded for salaries and overheads if these were part of the sustainable business plan. It is important to emphasise though that the grant will be a one-off payment so organisations need to take this into account when building their business case.

Who can apply:

In order to be deemed eligible for funding, applying organisations must have a committee and/or a constitution or appropriate rules setting out aims and objectives and how the group will operate, and a bank account¹.

- Not-for-profit community groups
- Town and parish councils
- Schools
- Social enterprises
- Charity organisations
- Community associations
- Companies limited by guarantee
- Parent teacher associations
- Cooperatives
- Friendly societies
- Youth Clubs

¹ Please note we will not make any payments into individuals' bank accounts, so it is very important that your group has a bank account.

What don't we fund?

Organisations:

- Individuals or sole traders
- Profit-making organisations
- Organisations not established in the UK
- Organisations that give funds to other charities, individuals or other organisations

Projects:

- Projects that duplicate an already existing service
- Activities which a statutory body is responsible for
- Activities with a religious or political purpose
- Activities that contradict or act against any of the Council's agreed policies such as [Equalities](#) and [Safer Recruitment](#), or fail to comply with all the other relevant statutory requirements, such as health and safety legislation

Please note that this is not an exhaustive list and if you are not sure whether you are eligible for funding you should get in touch with us at: localities@oxfordshire.gov.uk.

How to apply

Application process:

- 1) Expression of interest with outline business case
- 2) Initial review
- 3) Application form & business case
- 4) Review of bid by transition fund cross party group with recommendations to Cabinet
- 5) Assessment of bid by Cabinet
- 6) Decision
- 7) Notification to bidders

Deadlines

There are two applications round, with deadline dates of:

- 1) 21 October 2016 and
- 2) 09 January 2017

We encourage applicants to contact us early with their expressions of interest or any questions they might have, to avoid any delays in the council assessing the bids and making a decision.

How will applications be assessed?

We will assess your application against the key criteria set out above and we may also seek feedback from community stakeholders and the local county councillors.

A cross party panel will review all applications and then make recommendations to Cabinet. The final decisions will be made by Cabinet meeting in public on 29 November 2016 (first round) and 21 February 2017 (second round). The Cabinet will judge each application on its own merits, giving due regard to local circumstances and need.

Cabinet decisions can be called-in by the Performance Scrutiny Committee, which can decide to approve the decision, ask Cabinet to reconsider, refer it to full council for further debate, or require further information of further work to be done.

Awarding the grant

Applicants, along with their local county councillor, will be notified by email of the Cabinet's decision within a week of the decision being made.

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Successful applicants will be asked to sign a legal agreement with the council (for any grants over £5,000). Once the legal agreement is signed, we will then transfer the funding into the organisation's bank account.

For larger grants/ where appropriate, funding might be phased depending on the outcomes achieved following the first stage of delivery.

Unsuccessful applicants will be offered feedback on their proposal and, where possible, we will work with organisations to help them identify alternative funding opportunities.

Monitoring

Successful applicants are expected to comply fully with any monitoring requests from the Council and must agree to this when signing the funding request form.

All successful applicants need to be prepared for a review of their project.

This may include:

- Receipts recording how the money was spent
- Reports on the activity funded
- Feedback from individuals impacted
- Any other record of the activity funded (e.g. promotional flyers and posters)

Successful applicants will be strongly encouraged to keep us informed about the progress of their projects. Any setbacks to the implementation of the projects should be reported to the Transition Fund Team. Delivery of the projects will be monitored as per milestones identified in the business case/ project proposal.

Any unspent grant funding will be recovered by the county council.

Other sources of support and funding available

- Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action (OCVA)
- Oxfordshire Community Foundation
- Community First Oxfordshire

Contact us

Andreea Anastasiu
Policy Team
Oxfordshire County Council
County Hall
New Road,
Oxford OX1 1ND

Email: localities@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Telephone: 07770734707

Annex 3 – Grant Application Form

**TRANSITION FUND
COMMUNITY INITIATIVES FOR OPEN ACCESS CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

The Scheme and Guidance

In February 2016 the council agreed to set aside £1m for creating a transition fund to provide pump-priming grants for establishing universal provision of children's services in communities across Oxfordshire.

In awarding the grants, our approach will be flexible, recognising the different needs across the county. We will work with community groups on an individual basis to develop individual solutions, so if you would like to apply for a grant you are advised to contact us at an early stage. To get in touch with us, please email us at: localities@oxfordshire.gov.uk.

Any proposals for funding will need to demonstrate sustainability and the ability to self-fund in the long term. This will be a key criterion for assessing all applications. In addition match funding is strongly encouraged, and we will be asking all applicants to put together a robust business case showing how the activity will self-fund in the long-term.

Please read carefully the **guidance notes** available on the Council's website to check whether your organisation or the activity you wish to fund is eligible for funding under the scheme's criteria.

The Application Process

- 8) Expression of interest with outline business case
- 9) Initial review
- 10) Application form & business case
- 11) Review of bid by transition fund group with recommendations to Cabinet
- 12) Assessment of bid by Cabinet
- 13) Decision
- 14) Notification to bidders

Deadlines

There are two applications round, with deadline dates of:

- 3) 21 October 2016 and
- 4) 09 January 2017

Contacting Us

Andreea Anastasiu, Policy Team
Oxfordshire County Council
County Hall, New Road
Oxford OX1 1ND
Email: localities@oxfordshire.gov.uk
Telephone: 07770734707

TO BE FILLED IN BY APPLICANT**Name of your organisation:**

Type of organisation:

Organisation Address:

If a registered Charity, please specify number

Contact Name

Telephone

Email

Payment Details

Please provide your organisation's payment details (note: payments will not be made to an individual's bank account).

Account Name	
Bank or Building Society Name	
Account number	
Sort code	

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW**1. Name**

2. Summary

Please describe the activity you wish to fund.

3. Activity Dates

Please state when you would spend the funding. Please include start and end date for the activity and major milestones, if any.

PLEASE NOTE: ALL FUNDING MUST BE SPENT WITHIN A MAXIMUM OF 3 YEARS *(depending on your business plan, it could be by end of financial year; set number of years or as per the milestones identified in the business case).*

4. Analysis of Needs

Please explain how the activity will address a recognised need in your community.

5. Success Measures

How will you monitor progress towards the achievement of your outcomes?

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6. Sustainability

How will you ensure the sustainability of the activity? How will the activity be funded in the long term?

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7. Costs

Description	Cost
<i>Please provide us with a breakdown of costs of your proposed activity. E.g. Volunteer Training, Transport, Information & Promotion, Equipment & Materials, Refurbishment etc.</i>	
TOTAL	

8. Other funding received

Please include details of any other grant funding you have received, including any awarded by Oxfordshire County Council or any funding that has been committed to the activity in principle.

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Applicant Agreement

The organisation undertakes that:

- The information provided on this form is true and accurate.
- Any funds awarded will be spent in accordance with the details provided above.
- For all bids £5,000 and over, or if requested, it will provide details of how funding has been spent and cooperate fully with any other monitoring process undertaken by the Council to ensure the proper use of funds.
- It will advise the Council of any potential difficulties in complying with this agreement as soon as possible so that mutually acceptable solutions can be found.
- Funding awarded will not be spent on activity that does not comply the abovementioned policies of the Council.
- Details of the activity will be listed on the Council's website and may be communicated to a wider audience (e.g. via the local press).
- The funds awarded will be reimbursed to the Council if the organisation is in breach of these terms.
- The activity will be carried out in compliance with all relevant laws.

We hereby agree to these terms:

<p>Name:</p> <p>Signed:</p> <p>Date:</p> <p>On behalf of (organisation):</p>

Please ensure that you have signed the application form before submission to the Policy Team. Please note that while we can accept scanned signatures, **we cannot accept typed signatures.**