

CABINET– 23 JANUARY 2018

TRANSITION FUND FOR COMMUNITY INITIATIVES FOR OPEN ACCESS CHILDREN’S SERVICES

Report by Assistant Chief Executive

Introduction

1. The 2016/17 budget agreed by Council in February 2016 included the creation of a ‘one off’ £1m fund to provide pump priming grants to communities to enable them to create sustainable solutions for open access children’s services.
2. The approach agreed has been flexible, recognising the different needs across the county. Through the current support provided to community groups, individual solutions were developed in different areas with differing funding requirements.
3. Following four successful grant application rounds, where 29 community groups have been awarded funding totalling £800,417, there is now a remaining balance of £199,583 in the budget.
4. Given that the original council decision provided £1m to try to mitigate any gaps left in open access provision as a result of the move to more targeted provision in the new Children & Family Centres, Cabinet agreed on 18 September 2017 to continue to use the underspend as a grant scheme for open access children’s services delivering for the 0-5 age range.
5. It was agreed to broaden the existing criteria to allow for other groups to apply for grants for delivering open access services for the 0-5 age range in locations other than previous children’s centres. This would also encourage applications from groups in locations where there was previously a children’s centre which has been repurposed i.e. nursery provision.

Transition Fund Approach

6. A gap analysis of the current open access provision against what was previously delivered by the children’s centres was undertaken. This has helped to identify shortfall by locality area and would be used as the basis for assessing applications which address this gap.
7. The grant criteria has remained broadly the same, removing the requirement for the provision to be in the same area as a previous children’s centre and the addition of not funding previous recipients of the transition fund grant:
 - Sustainable solution for open access children’s services in the local community

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- 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.
8. Applicants must be able to demonstrate an identified need in their area as a result of the changes in early intervention services, and provide a sustainable business plan beyond the funding period.
 9. Previous recipients of transition fund grants would not be eligible to apply again.
 10. A cross party group of county councillors has been established to consider applications against the criteria. Councillors were nominated for this group by the party leaders. The group consists of Cllrs Gray, Fenton, Matelot, Brighthouse and Webber. The group is chaired by the portfolio holder for Local Communities, Cllr Gray.

Process

11. The fourth round of applications closed on the 7 December 2017. In this round 5 bids were submitted for consideration.
12. The applications were assessed by the cross party working group against each of the criteria outlined in the guidance notes at Annex 1 and listed above.
13. Applicants, along with their local county councillor will be notified by e-mail of the Cabinet decision.
14. 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.
15. Applicants will only have the first year of funding transferred initially with subsequent years funding subject to monitoring compliance.
16. Any unspent grant funding will be recovered by the County Council.

Assessment of Applications

17. Having carefully assessed all the bids received against the established eligibility criteria, the cross party working group are recommending the following three bids for funding:

- Happy Hub, Cholsey
 - Sutton Courtney Stay and Play Group
 - Thomas Gifford Trust, Charlbury
18. A further bid was considered to require further support to ensure a robust and sustainable model. As such Cabinet is recommended to defer the following bid to the next round of applications:
- Banbury & District Community Bus Project
19. A further bid was considered to be outside the remit of the grant criteria and as such Cabinet is recommended to decline this bid for funding:
- Oxford Baby Cafe
20. A summary of all the bids received under the fifth round of applications for the Transition Fund is included below:
21. **Applicant:** Banbury & District Community Bus Project
Amount: £12,426 over 1 year
Proportion of proposed budget: 13%

Overview: Banbury & District Community Bus Project (BDCBP) is a mobile play, educational and social hub provider working with children (0-11yrs). BDCBP is requesting funding for early years rural provision. The mobile provision supports hard to reach families within rural locations, offering open access group sessions includes messy, free-play and learning activities for the under 5's and well as engagement, support and signposting for parents and carers.

The funding requested would be used to provide 2 stay and play drop-in sessions a week term time only, for children 0-5 years and their families within the North Oxfordshire area. The sessions will be delivered in Arccott and Deddington villages.

Panel feedback:

The panel noted that funding was being requested for two stay and play sessions per week; however, the organisation offers more sessions overall. It was noted that funding had been requested for one year only.

The panel raised concerns about value for money, sustainability and ability to self-fund in the long-term. Councillors noted that the sessions are very expensive compared to fixed location sessions.

The panel raised questions regarding the match funding and if these amounts were secured already as this would impact on the sustainability. The panel did not think that the costs in the application were clear and further work was required.

It was agreed that there is evidence of need in this area.

Recommendation: The panel agreed that there is evidence of need and they were minded to fund open access children's services in this area; however, the costs need to be clearer and the level of expenditure more in line with other projects. The panel recommended to cabinet that the bid is deferred to the next round.

22. **Applicant:** Happy Hub, Cholsey
Amount: £3,381 over 2 years
Proportion of proposed budget: 8%

Overview: The Happy Hub runs play sessions on 6 days each week, Monday to Saturday, including term time and school holidays. Many families struggle to find children's activities during the school holidays and these sessions are always well attended.

The new service will focus on providing more support at the Great Hall, the heart of the Cholsey Meadows community, and a fair distance from the centre of Cholsey village. The service will provide weekly play sessions throughout the year, term time and holidays and will introduce families to other activities planned by the Children's Centre.

Panel feedback:

The panel noted that the bid represented good value for money and the organisation wanted to extend their reach, demonstrating inclusivity.

The panel noted that the funding requested represented 100% of the costs outlined in the organisation's application. Officers confirmed that the costs outlined were only in relation to the new sessions and that other costs were met by the Parish Council and fundraising which were significantly higher.

The panel noted the service will be funded from donations and the parish council in subsequent years.

Recommendation: The panel recommend that Cabinet approves this bid for funding.

23. **Applicant:** Oxford Baby Café Group
Amount: £16,908 over 2 years
Proportion of proposed budget: 74%

Overview: Oxford Baby Cafes Group run four busy weekly drop-in sessions in different locations in Oxford (Jericho Health Centre, East Oxford, Grandpont and Donnington) offering specialist support for breastfeeding. Sessions are free, universal and accessible to all.

For 10 years, OBC were commissioned and fully funded by Children's Centres. Following the County Council budget cuts, OBC have reduced their service from eight to four sessions a week to be able to provide a streamlined service and dedicate additional time to fundraising.

OBC are seeking to fund a part time coordinator role with office space to perform the following roles:

1. Lead the existing fundraising campaigns
2. Support the development of proposed new income streams which will support the self-funding of this post in the future:
 - **Private home visits and outreach work** to families who need extra support, including those with barriers to attending group sessions and those who need.
 - **Paid training in infant feeding for health professionals.** There is a local need for specialist CPD training in infant feeding for local medical, dental and nursing staff.
 - The expansion of our **breast pump hire service.**
3. Perform general administration and day to day running of the service

Panel feedback:

The panel had concerns that this application did not meet the fund's eligibility criteria and was more related to health than to open access children's services.

The panel noted that the organisation had previously been commissioned to provide some services at OCC Children's Centres and there were concerns that this did not provide value for money. It was discussed that there are alternative models for supporting breast feeding in Children's Centres that are more sustainable and offer better value for money.

The panel raised concerns for sustainability and ability to self-fund in the long term.

In terms of community buy-in the panel noted that this is a pre-existing service that has not been developed with parents. This also raises questions about the ability to have a lasting impact and inclusivity.

The panel acknowledged that the application demonstrated partnership working with the Children's Centre, as well as clearly defined costs and timescales.

Recommendation: The panel recommended that Cabinet decline to fund this bid, as it was not assessed to meet the funding criteria for universal open access children's services.

24. **Applicant:** Sutton Courtney Stay and Play Group
Amount: £939 over 2 years
Proportion of proposed budget: 23%

Overview: Sutton Courtenay Stay and Play Group has been established to provide an environment for parents/carers to share in educational play with their babies and toddlers (aged 0-5 years) with other parents/carers and their children.

The group runs one session per week, offering a stay and play service similar to that offered by the previous South Abingdon Children's Centre.

As the financial forecast shows the group is applying for a Transition Fund grant of £939 to enable them to establish a financially stable group for the first two years so that they can then work towards being self-financing at the end of the funding period.

Panel feedback:

The panel noted this application was deferred from the previous round. The panel acknowledged the work that had gone into the resubmitted application.

The panel agreed that the proposed model met all the fund's eligibility criteria, and were supportive of the bid.

Recommendation: The panel recommended that Cabinet approves this bid for funding.

25. **Applicant:** Thomas Gifford Trust
Amount: £12,974.50 over 1 year
Proportion of proposed budget: 100%

Overview: The Thomas Gifford Trust built Charlbury Community Centre, which opened in September 2017 and is planned to be a self-funding resource for the community. The Thomas Gifford Trust would like to use the Thomas Gifford Room in the new community centre to host a number of activities focussed on parents and children under five years and in particular those from disadvantaged, vulnerable and hard to reach families. The types of sessions include:

- Under 5's healthchecks
- Know me Know you, seven-week course
- Bump to One session
- Potential for Ante Natal Yoga
- Weekly Stay & Play session
- Soft Play session

Panel feedback:

The panel noted that an application was submitted in a previous round but the organisation had not been eligible for funding against the criteria.

The panel noted that there was positive evidence of partnership working with the health visiting service.

The panel noted that only one year of funding has been requested and the organisation intends to fund open access sessions by charging for the use of the soft-play provision at the centre. Therefore, meeting the criteria of the ability to self-fund and sustainability in the long term.

The panel discussed that most of the costs were for set-up and equipment, except for contribution to two salaries.

The panel raised concerns over the costs for room hire which were considered high in relation to other bids especially since the building belongs to the organisation bidding for grant.

Overall the panel were supportive of the bid in principle. The panel agreed not to recommend awarding the group the full requested amount as it was considered that costs for the room hire were not justifiable.

Recommendation: The panel recommend that Cabinet approves a reduced budget of £10,769 to account for a reduction in the room hire.

Financial and Staff Implications

26. The financial implications are set out in the main body of the report.
27. Further information in relation to the groups applying for funding is included below:

Organisation	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Funding requested	Funding Awarded
Banbury & District Community Bus Project	£12,426	£-	£-	£12,426	£-
Happy Hub, Cholsey	£3,381	£-	£-	£3,381	£3,381
Oxford Baby Café Group	£10,658	£6,250	£-	£16,908	£-
Sutton Courtney Stay & Play	£514	£425	£-	£939	£939
Thomas Gifford Trust	£12,975	£-	£-	£12,975	£10,769
TOTAL				£46,629	£15,089

28. A breakdown of the current expenditure to date along with the recommendations made in this report is provided below:

TOTAL FUNDING AVAILABLE	£1,000,000.00
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FUNDING APPROVED IN 1ST ROUND OF APPLICATIONS	£162,984.52
FUNDING APPROVED IN 2ND ROUND OF APPLICATIONS	£305,883
FUNDING APPROVED IN 3RD ROUND OF APPLICATIONS	£268,458**
FUNDING APPROVED FOR FLORENCE PARK	£30,000
FUNDING APPROVED IN 4TH ROUND OF APPLICATIONS	£33,091
REMAINING FUNDING	£199,583
FUNDING RECOMMENDED UNDER 5TH ROUND OF APPLICATIONS	£15,089.25

** Includes conditional funding allocations

29. The panel when making its recommendations have ensured due diligence in assessing the applications and ensuring value for money is achieved. This has resulted in a proportion of the funds remaining unspent as outlined in the body of the report and further rounds are planned for 2017/18.

Equalities Implications

30. 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.'
31. There are no equality and inclusion implications arising directly from this report, the protected characteristics have been considered when assessing all proposals.

RECOMMENDATIONS

32. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:**
- (a) **Approve for funding the following bids:**
 - a. Happy Hub Cholsey
 - b. Sutton Courtney Stay and Play Group
 - c. Thomas Gifford Trust
 - (b) **Ask that further work is conducted to develop more robust business plans and reapply for funding under the next round of applications:**
 - d. Banbury & District Community Bus Project
 - (c) **Decline for funding the following bid:**
 - e. Oxford Baby Café Group

Maggie Scott
Assistant Chief Executive

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Background papers: Transition Fund Guidance Notes & Transition Fund Application Form.

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

January 2017

ANNEX 1**REVISED GUIDANCE NOTES****TRANSITION FUND
COMMUNITY INITIATIVES FOR OPEN ACCESS CHILDREN'S SERVICES****September 2017****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>.

Having funded majority of the previously owned OCC Children's Centres, Cabinet on the 18th September have agreed that the underspend can now be used to extend the grant scheme to organisations delivering open access services for the 0-5 age range. Read the full details of the decision here:

<http://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=115&MId=5023&Ver=4>

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 four rounds of applications with deadlines in October 2017, December 2017, February 2018 and March 2018, 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 there are remaining funds, post-March 2018.

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.

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 2 years or 31 March 2020 whichever is sooner (*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

What don't we fund?

Organisations:

- Previous recipients of transition fund grants would not be eligible to apply again.
- Groups that have previously received Transition Funding
- 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

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.

- 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) Application form & business case
- 2) Review of bid by transition fund cross party group with recommendations to Cabinet
- 3) Assessment of bid by Cabinet
- 4) Decision
- 5) Notification to bidders

Deadlines

There are four applications round, with deadline dates of:

- 1) TBC October 2017
- 2) TBC December 2017
- 3) TBC February 2018
- 4) TBC March 2018

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. There is a limited amount left in this budget and early applications are encouraged to avoid disappointment.

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 28 November 2017 (first round), 23 January 2018 (second round), 20 March 2018 (third round), 17 April 2018 (fourth 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.

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

Sarah Jelley
Policy Team
Oxfordshire County Council
County Hall
New Road,
Oxford OX1 1ND

Email: localities@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Telephone: 07554 103437

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

- 6) Application form & business case
- 7) Review of bid by transition fund group with recommendations to Cabinet
- 8) Assessment of bid by Cabinet
- 9) Decision
- 10) Notification to bidders

. Deadlines

There are four applications round, with deadline dates of:

- 5) 25 October 2017
- 6) TBC December 2017
- 7) TBC February 2018
- 8) TBC March 2018

Contacting Us

Sarah Jelley, Policy Team
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County Hall,
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Oxford OX1 1ND
Email: localities@oxfordshire.gov.uk
Telephone: 07554 103437

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

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2. Summary

Please describe the activity you wish to fund.

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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 2 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.

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5. Success Measures

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

6. Sustainability

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

7. Costs

Description	Cost	Grant Request
<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.

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:

Name:

Signed:

Date:

On behalf of (organisation):

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.**