

Division(s):

## **CABINET– 20 MARCH 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 five successful grant application rounds, where 33 community groups have been awarded funding totalling £815,506 there is now a remaining balance of £184,494 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:

## CA7

- 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.
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 Councillors Gray, Fenton, Matelot, Brighthouse and Webber. The group is chaired by the portfolio holder for Local Communities, Cllr Gray.

### *Process*

11. The sixth round of applications closed on the 14 February 2018. In this round 2 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 two bids for funding:

- Bampton Baby & Toddler Group
- Dovecote Voluntary Parent Committee (Oxford)

18. A summary of all the bids received under the sixth round of applications for the Transition Fund is included below:

19. **Applicant:** Bampton Baby and Toddler Group  
**Amount:** £1,000 over 1 year  
**Proportion of proposed budget:** 60%

**Overview:** Bampton Baby and Toddler Group runs every Thursday during term time from 09:30-11:30. It is available for any adults with accompanying children in Bampton or the surrounding areas. The group is run solely by parent volunteers. There is a donation of £1.50 per family, which covers the snacks, refreshments and craft materials. Donations from families average £15.00 per week. The group used to run from the children's centre but when this closed they moved to the church. The funding requested would be used to provide more storage, a new rug and new toys.

### Panel feedback:

The panel noted that this was a small bid for equipment as the service is run from donations, therefore demonstrating the groups sustainability beyond the transition funding.

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

20. **Applicant:** Dovecote Voluntary Parent Committee  
**Amount:** £12,100 over 2 years  
**Proportion of proposed budget:** 84%

**Overview:** Dovecote Voluntary Parent Committee seeks the resource to deliver two stay and play sessions per week for young children accompanied by parents. The sessions will be delivered by local volunteers supported by a qualified member of staff. The delivery of stay and play sessions is needed to address the gap caused by the cut in services previously provided by the Blackbird Leys Children & Family Centre. Any grant awarded would support:

- Recruitment of new volunteers and training of new/ current volunteers.
- The delivery of stay and play sessions.

- Two/three off site trips within the first year of grant being received.

If successful, the grant will give the group capacity to work with local residents to train and empower them to deliver the stay and play sessions to secure the long term sustainability of the project.

**Panel feedback:**

The panel noted that there was considerable evidence of need in this area.

Whilst councillors were mindful of the higher amounts for management, administration and publicity the actual amount for the number of sessions was considered value for money.

Councillors noted that the group are planning to seek parental donations for sessions to ensure the sustainability of the project after the transition funding period.

It was noted that the group already had some grant requests pending which this fund could provide the match funding for.

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

**Financial and Staff Implications**

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

Organisation	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Funding request	Funding Awarded
Bampton Baby & Toddler Group	£-	£1,000	£-	£1,000	£1,000
Dovecote Voluntary Parent Committee	£-	£8,550	£3,550	£12,100	£12,100
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>£13,100</b>	<b>£13,100</b>

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

<b>TOTAL FUNDING AVAILABLE</b>	£1,000,000
<b>FUNDING APPROVED IN 1<sup>ST</sup> ROUND OF APPLICATIONS</b>	£162,984
<b>FUNDING APPROVED IN 2<sup>ND</sup> ROUND OF APPLICATIONS</b>	£305,883
<b>FUNDING APPROVED IN 3<sup>RD</sup> ROUND OF APPLICATIONS</b>	£258,458**
<b>FUNDING APPROVED FOR ST MARYS</b>	£10,000
<b>FUNDING APPROVED FOR FLORENCE PARK</b>	£30,000
<b>FUNDING APPROVED IN 4<sup>TH</sup> ROUND OF APPLICATIONS</b>	£33,091
<b>FUNDING APPROVED IN 5<sup>TH</sup> ROUND OF APPLICATIONS</b>	£15,089
<b>REMAINING FUNDING</b>	<b>£184,495</b>
<b>FUNDING RECOMMENDED UNDER 6<sup>TH</sup> ROUND OF APPLICATIONS</b>	<b>£13,100</b>

\*\* Includes conditional funding allocations

24. 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**

25. 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.'
26. There are no equality and inclusion implications arising directly from this report, the protected characteristics have been considered when assessing all proposals.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**A) The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to approve for funding the following bids:**

- a. Bampton Baby & Toddler Group
- b. Dovecote Voluntary Parent Committee

MAGGIE SCOTT  
Assistant Chief Executive

Background papers: Transition Fund Guidance Notes & Transition Fund Application Form. Contact Officer: Sarah Jelley, sarah.jelley@oxfordshire.gov.uk, 07554 103437  
March 2018

**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 18<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto: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](http://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 account<sup>1</sup>.**

- 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

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<sup>1</sup> 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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  
Oxfordshire County Council  
County Hall,  
New Road,  
Oxford OX1 1ND  
Email: [localities@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto: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).

<b>Account Name</b>	
<b>Bank or Building Society Name</b>	
<b>Account number</b>	
<b>Sort code</b>	

## 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.*

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**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**

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

<b>TOTAL</b>		

**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.**