

CABINET – 17 APRIL 2018

COUNCILLOR PRIORITY FUND 2018: PROPOSED APPROACH

Report by Assistant Chief Executive

Introduction

1. In February 2018, Council agreed to set aside £945,000 in 2018/19 and 2019/20 for a Councillor Priority Fund.
2. This is part of our commitment to supporting local communities across Oxfordshire, building on last year's Communities Fund and the successes and lessons learnt of administering that fund.

Approach

3. Each Councillor will be awarded a Councillor Priority Fund Budget of £15k per annum for 2018/19 and 2019/20.
4. Councillors wish to use their budgets with maximum flexibility. To ensure spending falls within the Council's governance criteria (both financial and constitutional) the following single, very broad, criteria is suggested:

'Councillor Priority Fund must be spent on projects or services which meet a recognised community need and pump prime, rather than fund an on-going commitment, for that activity.'

5. In previous years, councillors could fund highways maintenance schemes through the Area Stewards Fund. Councillors could choose to use some or all of the new Councillor Priority Fund for highways improvements (in agreement with and via the Group Manager Area Operations).
6. Councillors can choose how they spend their funds across internal service provision and external grant applications. Councillors are encouraged to share their priorities with external organisations to prevent disappointment if using all their budget on internal services.
7. Councillors are encouraged to pool resources at the Locality level to address priorities in a sustainable way.
8. Organisations can submit bids for decision throughout the year on a rolling basis until 31 January 2020.

Governance

9. Councillors will recommend the projects to fund, and officers will enact their decision under officers' delegated powers. In the unlikely event that any concerns or problems are identified, the matter will be escalated to the relevant Cabinet member for decision.
10. Officers will ensure that each organisation and project fits the published criteria, the types of organisations that can apply and the types of organisations and projects that are not eligible to apply for funding as set out in Annex 1.
11. Funding can be awarded across both financial years with commitments into 2019/20, however payment will be made for each separate financial year subject to satisfactory monitoring of the first year.

Process

12. To ensure flexibility and minimise paperwork there will be two processes:
 - (a) Organisations wanting to apply for grant funding
 - (b) Councillors allocating funds to enhance internal service provision i.e. highways.
13. The process for organisations wanting to apply for grant funding is set out in the attached guidance at Annex 1 and application form at Annex 2.
14. The process for councillors to allocate funds to internal service provision is set out at Annex 3.
15. Unlike the previous Communities Fund allocation, the new Councillor Priority Fund will be managed through a single point of contact in the Policy Team. Applications will be accepted at any point throughout the year up to the last submission date of 31 January 2020.
16. Applicants, along with their local county councillor, will be notified by e-mail of the decision within 14 working days.
17. Applicants awarded grants £5,000 and over will be expected to sign a funding agreement.
18. Successful applicants will be expected to comply fully with any monitoring requests from the council and signing of the application form at Annex 2 and/or funding agreement will be viewed as acceptance of these requests.
19. Any unspent grant funding at the end of the stated project period will be recovered by the county council in line with the monitoring requirements.

Communications

20. Officers will make the guidance, application and contact details available on the internet along with details of how to contact their local councillor.
21. Councillors will be encouraged to manage their own communications regarding their preference for allocations of the funds i.e. internally or community grant applications.
22. Councillors will be provided with updates on their spending on request.
23. An end of year report will be made available to all councillors.

Key Dates

24. The fund is proposed to launch following Cabinet decision on the 17 April 2018.
25. The final deadline for applications will be 31 January 2020.

Financial and Staff Implications

26. The £945,000 per annum Councillor Priority Fund is for 2018/19 and 2019/20 and must be spent by the end of the financial year 2019/20.
27. Any unspent funds at the end of 2018/19 will be rolled forward into 2019/20. Councillors can choose to allocate both years funding in the second year, thereby having £30k to spend on a larger project.
28. The £945,000 will be accounted for separately and reported via the Financial Monitoring and Business Strategy delivery report and an end of year report.
29. The grant scheme will be managed by Sarah Jelley in accordance with the financial regulations.
30. In line with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requirements grant awards will be published annually.

Equalities Implications

31. Councillors will need to be mindful of equalities in determining how the funding should be allocated.

RECOMMENDATION

32. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:**
- (a) Approve the governance arrangements under officers' delegated powers.
 - (b) Approve the Councillor Priority Fund Guidance Notes
 - (c) Approve the Councillor Priority Fund Funding Request Form
 - (d) Approve the process for Allocation of Funding to Internal Services.

MAGGIE SCOTT
Assistant Chief Executive

Background papers: N/A

Contact Officer: Sarah Jelley, Senior Policy Officer, 07554 103437

April 2018

2018/19 Councillor Priority Fund Guidance Notes

April 2018

Background

In February 2018, Council agreed to set aside £945,000 in 2018/19 and 2019/20 for a Councillor Priority Fund.

Further details about the council's decision are available [here](#).

This is part of our commitment to supporting local communities across Oxfordshire, building on last year's Communities Fund and the successes and lessons learnt of administering that fund.

Our Approach

The purpose of this Councillor Priority Fund is to support councillor priorities in their areas. It is for each councillor to decide how their allocation should be spent; with each area of Oxfordshire being different it's important that county councillors have the flexibility to allocate the money in the best way.

You should discuss your proposal at an early stage with your county councillor and seek their support for your proposal.

You can use the postcode search on www.writetothem.com to find your local councillor. Further information about contacting your local councillor is available on the Council's [website](#).

If your project impacts a wider area, you can put through a joint bid supported by multiple councillors.

Please read carefully the guidance notes below to make sure your organisation and project meet the grant scheme's eligibility criteria.

What do we fund?

Organisations:

To be deemed eligible for funding, applying organisations must have a committee and a constitution or appropriate rules setting out aims and objectives and how the group will operate.

- Registered charities
- Companies limited by guarantee

- Community associations
- Parent Teacher associations
- Cooperatives
- Friendly societies
- Youth clubs
- Schools
- Town and parish councils

Projects:

- All projects must address recognised needs of local communities of Oxfordshire.
- All projects must have the support of at least one county councillor.
- We will only fund specific projects with clearly defined costs and timescales.
- Projects must benefit Oxfordshire communities, be inclusive and provide good value for money.
- Types of activities we fund include: village hall refurbishment, purchasing of equipment, community activities open to all, play equipment for playgrounds.

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
- Holidays, trips or overseas travel
- 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

How to apply

Application process:

- 1) Discuss your proposal with your local county councillor
- 2) Submit your application to your local county councillor or online.
- 3) Your local councillor will sign the application and send to councillorpriorityfund@oxfordshire.gov.uk or approve via online submission.
- 4) Applications will be assessed against the schemes requirements
- 5) Applicants will be notified of the decision along with their local councillor

6) Monitoring of projects

Getting Started

Discuss your project proposal with your local county councillor.

You should discuss your project proposal with your county councillor and seek their support for your proposal.

You can use the postcode search on www.writetothem.com to find your local councillor. Further information about contacting your local councillor is available on the Council's [website](#).

If your project impacts a wider area, you can put through a joint bid supported by multiple councillors.

Completing your application

The Councillor Priority Fund form can be downloaded from our website: www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/councillorpriorityfund or submitted online. If you require a printed copy of the form, please contact us by phone at: 07795 301254 or by email: councillorpriorityfund@oxfordshire.gov.uk.

Please ensure you complete all the fields of the application form. You may also attach additional documents in support of your project.

The completed application form should be passed to your local county councillor for approval or if submitting online approval will be sought on your behalf.

We may ask you to physically sign application forms for amounts below £5,000 if awarded a grant as we cannot accept typed signatures.

Submit your application

If your local councillor(s) decides to support your application, they will sign the last page of the application form and send it to Diane Cameron, Policy Team at the Council.

The deadline for submission of applications is 31 January 2020. Funding is awarded on a rolling basis, so early applications are strongly encouraged.

Next Steps

We will assess your application within 28 days to make sure your project proposal meets the scheme's requirements and contact you if we require further information about the proposal.

Incomplete applications lead to delays in processing the funding request, so please make sure to include all requested information in your application form.

Awarding Grant

If your funding request is successful, we will notify you by email. Unsuccessful applicants will be offered feedback on their proposal and, where possible, we will work with organisations to help them identify alternative funding opportunities.

If your funding request is for £5,000 or more we will need to have a funding agreement in place before any payment can be awarded.

If your funding request is under £5,000 we will need to have a signed funding application and you will be contacted for this.

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 Policy 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.

Contact us

Diane Cameron
Policy Team
Oxfordshire County Council
County Hall
New Road,
Oxford OX1 1ND

Email: councillorpriorityfund@oxfordshire.gov.uk

CA9

Telephone: 07795 301254L

Last Updated: 1 April 2018

**COUNCILLOR PRIORITY FUND 2018/19 AND 2019/20
Funding Request Form**

The Scheme and Guidance

All county councillors in Oxfordshire have a £15,000 priority fund for 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 to support the projects that matter most to their local communities.

The scheme reflects Oxfordshire County Council's (the "Council's") commitment to Thriving Communities and the principle that councillors are best placed to recognise and meet the needs of their local communities.

Prospective applicants should contact their local councillor to check the feasibility of their proposal before submitting an application. Use the postcode search on www.writetothem.com to find your local councillor.

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

Submission to local councillor(s)

Eligible organisations can apply for funding by completing this form and passing it to their local councillor(s) or submitting online. The local councillor(s) will decide whether to support the application. If they do support the application, they will sign the final page of the form or provide e-mail confirmation to Diane Cameron, Policy Team at the Council. If the councillor(s) decides not to support the application, they will contact the applicant to explain.

Once an application is submitted to the Policy Team, we will review your project proposal and contact you if we require any further information about your project. Applicants can expect to be contacted about their application within 28 days of their form being submitted to the Policy Team.

APPLICATIONS MUST BE SUBMITTED BY 31 JANUARY 2020.

Funding is awarded on a rolling basis, so early applications are strongly encouraged.

Contacting Us

Diane Cameron, Policy Team
Oxfordshire County Council
County Hall,
New Road,
Oxford,
OX1 1ND

Email: councillorpriorityfund@Oxfordshire.gov.uk

TO BE FILLED IN BY APPLICANT

Name of your organisation:

Description of your organisation:

Organisation Address:

If a registered Charity, please specify number

Contact Name

Telephone No.

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	

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. Activity Name

2. Activity 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 project and major milestones, if any.

PLEASE NOTE: ALL PROJECTS MUST BE DELIVERED BY THE END OF MARCH 2020.

4. Analysis of Needs

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

5. Outcomes

Please state the outcomes that you expect to achieve by the end of your project.

6. Beneficiaries

What are the key beneficiary groups you will target with this funding?

7. Success Measures

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

8. Costs

Description	Total Project Cost	Grant Requested in 2018/19	Grant Requested in 2019/20
<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			

9. Other funding received

Please include details of any other grant funding you have received, including any awarded by Oxfordshire County Council.

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 (particularly in the 'About your project' section).
- For all projects £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 e.g. if funds cannot be spent in year.
- Funding awarded will not be spent on activity that does not comply the abovementioned policies of the Council.
- Details of the project 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 project 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 your councillor. Please note that while we can accept scanned signatures, **we cannot accept typed signatures.**

TO BE FILLED IN BY THE RELEVANT COUNTY COUNCILLOR(S)

I hereby approve this request for funding and in doing so undertake that:

- To the best of my knowledge, I have no pecuniary interest in the organisation or activity for which the funding is intended (in accordance with the Council's official member code of conduct).
- To the best of my knowledge, the organisation intends to spend any funding that they are awarded in accordance with the details provided above (particularly in the 'About your project' section).
- In the event of a suspected misuse of funds, I will alert the appropriate Council officer/s as soon as possible.

Cllr Name:

Cllr Signature:

Date:

We accept paper or digital applications.

Submit councillor approved funding requests to

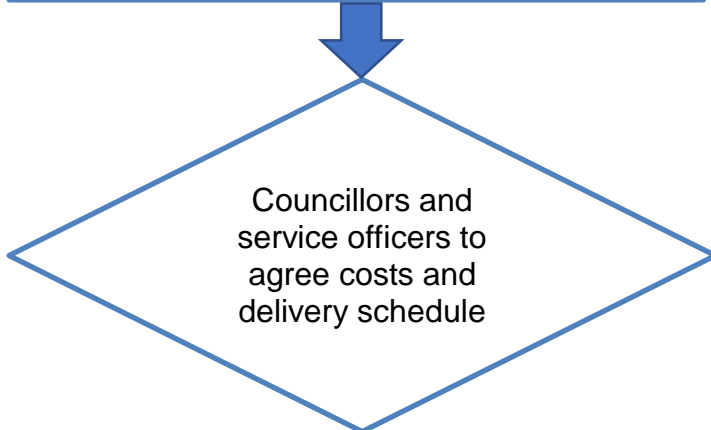
councillorpriorityfund@Oxfordshire.gov.uk or

**Diane Cameron, Policy Team
Oxfordshire County Council,
County Hall,
New Road,
Oxford,
OX1 1ND**

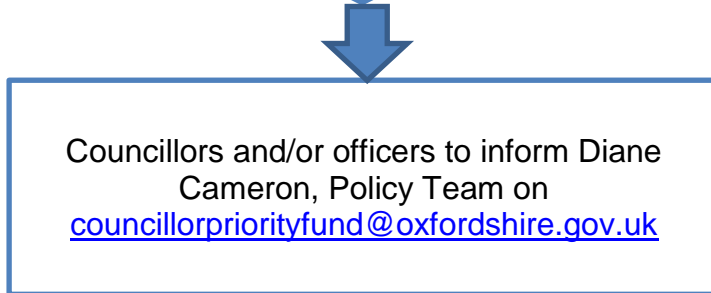
Councillor Priority Fund – Allocation of funding to internal services

Councillors to discuss proposal with service officers

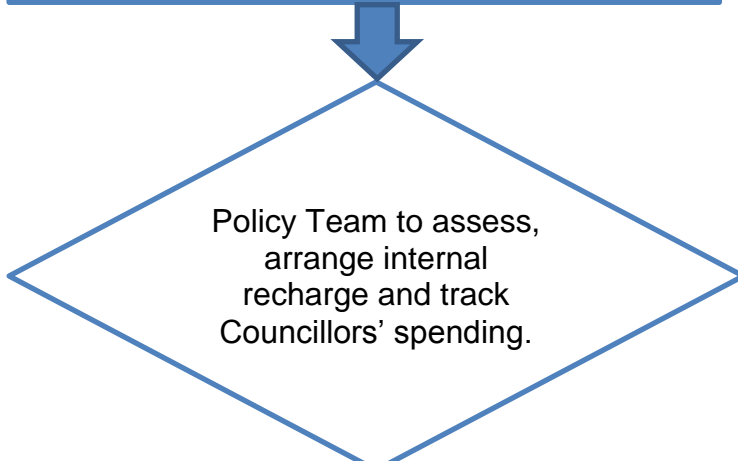
If you are unsure who to contact then please contact the Policy Team on: councillorpriorityfund@oxfordshire.gov.uk



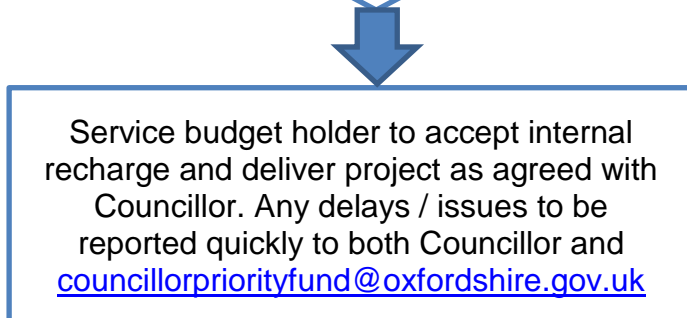
Councillors and service officers to agree costs and delivery schedule



Councillors and/or officers to inform Diane Cameron, Policy Team on councillorpriorityfund@oxfordshire.gov.uk



Policy Team to assess, arrange internal recharge and track Councillors' spending.



Service budget holder to accept internal recharge and deliver project as agreed with Councillor. Any delays / issues to be reported quickly to both Councillor and councillorpriorityfund@oxfordshire.gov.uk