

CABINET – 14 FEBRUARY 2012

BIG SOCIETY FUND – ALLOCATION OF WAVE 3 FUNDING

Report by Assistant Chief Executive & Chief Finance Officer

Introduction

1. The purpose of this report is to enable Cabinet to make decisions on which bids to fund in the third 'wave' of four of the Big Society Fund.
2. In February 2011 Oxfordshire County Council launched the Big Society Fund. The Fund of £600,000 in 2011/12 is for communities to bid for start-up funding for community projects that would benefit their areas.
3. In July and October Cabinet allocated funding in the first two 'waves' of the Fund. £165,248 of the Fund remains available for the third and fourth rounds in 2011/12.
4. Two snow-related bids from West Oxfordshire totalling £13,625 have already been approved under delegated decision making powers, in time for any winter weather. This means £151,623 remains available.
5. In order to be considered for funding, bidders must demonstrate that they meet the following criteria;
 - the project is innovative and creative
 - the project meets a recognised community need
 - the project has a sustainable business case
 - the local community is involved in the project

Wave 3 Bids to the Big Society Fund

6. Response to the Fund has been positive with twenty bids submitted in this third 'wave' of applications. All twenty bids were specific to a locality.
7. A bid assessment form has been completed for each application. These assessment forms include the project details, an assessment against fund criteria, service-specific officer views (where applicable), as well as the assessment from the Locality Review Groups of local councillors. Assessment forms for all bids are set out in Annexes 1-3.
8. The assessment forms have been used to categorise bids as follows:

Annex 1 Bids that meet the assessment criteria

A number of bids are considered to have strong potential to contribute to our Big Society vision and meet the Fund criteria.

Annex 2 Bids that presently do not fully meet the assessment criteria, but may with further development

Two bids we have received shows potential to align with the criteria of the Big Society Fund and deliver positive outcomes in communities, but would benefit from further clarification and development.

Annex 3 Bids that do not meet the assessment criteria

A number of bids received do not meet the assessment criteria, do not address the fund criteria or did not have the support of local councillors.

Asset transfer requests

9. The Asset Transfer Policy was agreed by Cabinet on 21 June 2011.
10. We have received no bid to the Big Society Fund requesting an asset transfer in this round.

Financial and Staff Implications

11. The total value of bids received in wave 3 is £407,813. £151,623 of the Fund remains available to allocate over the remainder of 2011/12 including this round.
12. There are no staff implications in these proposals.
13. A grant funding agreement will be in place for all successful projects which will set out financial requirements and monitoring arrangements.

Legal Implications

14. The grant funding agreement outlined above will set out all legal requirements including health and safety and safeguarding policy requirements.

Equality and Inclusion implications

15. An equality impact assessment has been carried out on the Big Society Fund. Potential impacts on equality groups have been considered (the [impact assessment](#) was part of the paper to Cabinet in July 2011).
16. In line with the council's responsibilities for equality the grant funding agreement with successful bidders will set out requirements for equality policies to be in place.

Risk implications

17. There is a risk to the county council that projects are not sustainable and are not able to continue in the future due to a lack of resources. This would have an impact on the viability of a project in a community and may lead to further requests for funding from the county council. To mitigate this, the application form for the Fund requires a business case and on-going costs information.
18. It is proposed that funding will only be paid to successful bidders with a robust business case in place.

RECOMMENDATION

19. The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to

- (a) **Approve those bids which meet the assessment criteria**

Sue Scane
Assistant Chief Executive & Chief Finance Officer

Background papers:

Contact Officer: Alexandra Bailey, Senior Policy Manager

January 2012