

Report

Chair of the Cabinet

Part 1

Date: 23/03/2016

Item No:

Subject Landfill Community Fund 15/16

Purpose To seek views and, if appropriate, decisions on applications for funding from the Landfill Communities Fund

Reason for Urgency

The three requests for funding have been received quite recently during quarter 4.

A decision on the funding split couldn't be made until we had an approximate figure on how much money there would be available by the end of the year as, as per Q3 landfill tax return, there wasn't enough funding available to cover the three requests, and a reduction in the funds to be awarded puts an additional pressure in these organisation to find external funding as, once the project has been submitted to Entrust for approval, if they are to receive funding they need to implement the project. As such, a reasonable estimate has been only available very recently.

The funding will be lost if not allocated and released this financial year. The risk of losing the funding if the funds cannot be released in this financial year means that the approval needs to be granted by 31st March at the latest, thus preventing the report going through the Council's agreed consultation process.

Author Silvia Gonzalez-Lopez, Waste and Recycling Strategy Manager

Ward ALL

Summary Three applications for funding, under the Landfill Communities Fund, have been received as detailed in the report.

Proposal

1. To award Landfill Tax Community Funds to the following projects:
 - i. The Friends of Newport's Ornamental Parks-building a new entertaining area in the Beechwood Park Old Paddling Pool
 - ii. Maindee Festival Association- Refurbishment of a former council-run library as a community run library and arts centre in the Maindee area of Newport
 - iii. St Woolos Cathedral-Repairs to the Cathedral roof

2. To take this decision urgently as it is so urgent that it cannot go through the Council's agreed consultation process and/or must be implemented immediately and therefore not subject to the Council's call in procedures for the reasons set out under 'Reasons for Urgency' above.
3. To make a commitment to publicise to elected members and organisations the availability of these funds for the future and to provide advice and guidance to any potential applicants as to how to apply
4. To recognise the Leader of the Council's concern about the short notice for decision making , to refer the reasons for urgency to the Audit Committee to enable the Head of Service to explain the need to take the decision without going through the normal procedures

Contact Paul Symonds, paul.symonds@newport.gov.uk, 07950 955 211
Action by Head of Streetscene
Timetable Immediate

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Senior Finance Business Partner
- Head of Law and Standards

Signed

Background

1. Under the Landfill Tax Rules the Council is allowed to donate a proportion of the money the Landfill Site would have paid in Landfill Tax to Bodies regulated by the Landfill Tax Regulator [ENTRUST]. This is the landfill Communities Fund.
2. Entrust's role is to ensure the proposed activities contribute to the objectives this Fund was created for; they will also monitor that the project is implemented and the funds are correctly spent. Therefore before any funding can be approved and released, any organisation interested in taking part of this scheme needs to register with Entrust and submit the specific project they need funding for to them. Only if approval is granted can the activity go ahead.
3. We will not be sure of the amount available to distribute until the close down of the financial year as until that time we will not know how much waste has been landfilled at the Docksway Waste Disposal Site. However, being so close to the end of the financial year, we can provide a close estimate and £208,000 is a reasonable estimate made up of the return from the Landfill Tax, plus suitably matched funding found by the grant applicants (it is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure the match funding meets the Entrust conditions).

Only three bids have been received, as follows:

- The Friends of Newport's Ornamental Parks
 - Project: building a new entertaining area in the Beechwood Park Old Paddling Pool,
 - Funding request: £100,000 plus matching funding
- Maindee Festival Association
 - Project: refurbishment of a former council-run library as a community run library and arts centre in the Maindee area of Newport
 - Funding request: £54,000 plus matching funding
- St Woolos Cathedral
 - Project: repairs to the Cathedral roof
 - Funding request: up to £54,000 plus matching funding

The three bids are detailed in the attached appendices and all three are registered with Entrust and already have Entrust scheme approval

It is proposed to award the following (excluding match funding):

- The Friends of Newport's Ornamental Parks-£100,000
- Maindee Festival Association-£54,000
- St Woolos Cathedral-up to £54,000 (this project will get the difference between the available funds and the amount requested by the other organisations, up to £54,000, as we do not know what the exact amount of funding available will be yet)

Which means that the funding available will be enough to match the amounts initially requested from the fund (apart from the match funding they need to contribute to).

	Year 1 (Current) £	Ongoing £	Notes including budgets heads affected
Costs (Income)	208,000	0	Bid applicants must find the match funding in order to claim the monies identified in the previous paragraph No cost to Newport City Council
Net Costs (Savings)	208,000	0	
Net Impact on Budget	0	0	

Future Opportunities for Bids

The Leader of the Council is keen to ensure that the fund is available as widely as possible and that potential applicants are able to formulate an application. To this end we will make a commitment to publicise to elected members and organisations the availability of these funds for the future and to provide advice and guidance to any potential applicants as to how to apply

Audit Committee

The Leader of the Council expressed concern about the short notice for decision making, and asked for the reasons for urgency to be explained to the Audit Committee by the Head of Service in line with normal procedures

Declaration of Interest

The Chair of the Cabinet took this decision as the Cabinet Member for Streetscene and City Services had declared a personal interest in this item

Options Considered/Available

1. To award monies for bids made in 2015/2016 as detailed in the report and advertise the availability of these funds for the future
2. Not to award funding

Preferred choice and reasons

Option 1-To award funding and advertise the availability of these funds for the future

The landfill community fund enables organisation working on the Newport area to implement projects that will benefit the communities they work with and the Newport area as a whole, contributing towards the Council priorities. The fund scheme operates on a financial year basis-that means that the funds generated on a given year have to be released within that same financial year, otherwise they are lost. As the organisations requesting the funding have had their projects approved by Entrust, they will need to implement the activity, so if they don't receive the funds this year they will have to apply in the next financial year-hence reducing the funding opportunities for other organisations that may be interested and that can receive funds from April 2016 on.

As a matter of urgency, due to the risk of losing the funding if it is not released before the end of the financial year, it is advised to approve the release of the funds to the 3 organisations that applied to it. However, as this scheme can potentially benefit a higher number of organisations within Newport, it is deemed necessary to advertise more widely the availability of these funds for the future and provide advice to organisations on how to apply, so any organisation needing funding can consider this option.

Sustainability and Environmental Issues

None

Crime Prevention Impact

None

Comments of Monitoring Officer

There are no legal implications. The proposed awards are to Entrust approved bodies in accordance with the Landfill Tax Community Fund scheme.

Comments of Chief Financial Officer

I confirm that there is no financial impact upon the Council in supporting these bids. Streetscene role is that of examining the bids and supporting those considered eligible to receive funding under the Landfill Tax Community Fund scheme.

Comments of Head of People and Business Change

None

Comments of Cabinet Member

This report would have normally been sent to the Cabinet Member for Streetscene, but in this case the Cabinet Member has a personal interest in these matters as she is a trustee of some organisations with involvement in the projects and is, therefore, disqualified from taking the decisions herself. For that reason, the report is being referred to the Leader for approval.

Scrutiny Committees

None

Equalities Impact Assessment

No

Children and Families (Wales) Measure

None

Other Relevant Consultation

Background Papers

See attached appendixes with information on the projects

Dated: 23/03/2016