

LOCALITIES BID FUND 2017-2018: PROCESS FOR DETERMINING FUNDING APPLICATIONS AND VOTING

Report by Service Director Customer and Communities

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

28 September 2017

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report is seeking approval for the application, assessment and voting process for the Localities Bid Fund as requested by Council at its meeting on 27 June 2017.**
- 1.2 It was agreed at Council on 27 June 2017 that the fund will be split across the 5 Area Partnerships and support projects and initiatives submitted by communities within each area. The £500k fund will be allocated per head of population and is part of a wider response to the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.
- 1.3 The proposed model will be managed through Area Partnerships, supported by SBC officers and will address a specific theme or outcome within the Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnerships' Community Plan, or an agreed local priority. Bids will be invited from local communities and pre-assessed by the Borders Assessment Panel (which will be chaired by Executive Member for Neighbourhoods and Locality Services and include all Area Partnership Chairs and key SBC officers) before going to a public vote.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **I recommend that Council:**
 - (a) Agrees the proposed model as detailed in Appendix 1**
 - (b) Agrees the proposed process as detailed in Appendix 2**
 - (c) Notes the draft application form and guidance as detailed in Appendix 3**
 - (d) Notes the proposed timetable as detailed in Appendix 4**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 It was agreed at Council on 9 February 2017 that £500k be allocated for the purpose of participatory budgeting to pilot the new Scottish Borders Council Localities Bid Fund.
- 3.2 A report was brought to Council on 27 June 2017 which gave an example of participatory budgeting in Scottish Borders, a methodology for the allocation of funding and a proposed model for how the fund would be managed.
- 3.3 Following the amendments agreed at Council, the revised model for the Localities Bid Fund is detailed in **Appendix 1**, and includes the change of wording from Locality Committees to "Area Partnerships" as detailed in changes to the Scheme of Administration.
- 3.4 A funding cap of £5k is also being proposed for non-constituted groups. This is to mitigate the risks of allocating significant funding to an individual and to ensure that the Council discharges legal, financial and duty of care requirements.

4 PROPOSED 3-STAGE PROCESS FOR LOCALITIES BID FUND

- 4.1 The proposed process detailed in **Appendix 2** outlines each stage of the Localities Bid Fund from decisions requiring to be made by each Area Partnership before the opening of the fund to monitoring and evaluation at closure.
- 4.2 **Stage 1** - the setting up and the allocation of the fund to specific themes, the opening of the fund and applications being invited. Area Partnerships will be **responsible** for:
 - (i) The allocation of funding for each of their chosen themes
 - (ii) To agree the number of funding releases in the year
 - (iii) To agree dates for each specific funding release, (a carry forward can be taken into the 2018 financial period if required, as detailed at 6.1)
- 4.3 Supported by SBC marketing and promotion, the funding round would then open and bids would be invited for the funding period specified. A proposed application form is detailed in **Appendix 3** which also includes guidance for applicants.
- 4.4 **Stage 2** – This includes pre-assessment taking place and the Borders Assessment Panel convening. The pre-assessment check will comprise of the Communities & Partnership Team ensuring that the application forms have been completed satisfactorily, meet the outcomes of the Community Plan or the agreed local priority, and are appropriate for the Localities Bid Fund, or if there are other, more appropriate funding streams. The applications will be logged by theme and locality, and a list prepared for the Borders Assessment Panel to consider when they convene. The Area Partnership Chairs may wish to share this list with their respective Area Partnership's.

4.5 The Borders Assessment Panel will be chaired by the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods and Locality Services and include all Area Partnership Chairs and key SBC officers. There may be a requirement to bring in specialist officers if the theme has a specific technical element. The panel will assess projects against the following criteria:

- (i) Does the project meet the outcomes of the Community Plan or the locally agreed priority
- (ii) How will the project benefit the local community
- (iii) How will the community be involved in delivering the project
- (iv) Has sustainability been considered
- (v) What will change in the community as a result of the project
- (vi) Does the project align with current Council policies, strategies and corporate priorities
- (vii) Does the project disadvantage any parts of the community

The projects that do not meet the above criteria will be rejected and appropriate feedback will be given by the Communities & Partnership's Team.

4.6 The agreed projects will then go forward to a public vote. Regardless of the totality of the agreed projects, a public vote will be undertaken, and the most popular projects will receive funding. However, the funding pot may be adjusted accordingly by the Area Partnership, depending on the number of projects that have been agreed.

4.7 **Stage 3** – The publication of bids and the Public Voting process. Area Partnership Members and Bid Applicants will be notified by email of bids that will and will not be going forward to public vote.

4.8 The agreed projects will be published on the SBC website with a brief summary of each project. Communities will then be invited to vote:

- (a) Using an online voting tool
- (b) Downloading a paper vote and returning by post to SBC HQ
- (c) Collecting a paper vote at Library, contact centres or from the Communities & Partnership Team and using a drop box located within Libraries and Contact Centres, SBC HQ and other appropriate key areas

4.9 Funding will be awarded to the most successful bids and publicised on the SBC website, at Area Partnerships and through social media.

4.10 Marketing and promotion of the fund at a generic Borders-wide level will be provided, but it may be that an Area Partnership would wish to undertake additional or special promotions, for which budget provision would come from their own individual funding allocation. A draft Engagement and Communication plan has been developed and will be progressed with the Chair of each Area Partnership.

4.11 The use of the Localities Bid Funding must align with current Council policies, strategies and corporate priorities.

4.12 The level of capacity within our communities in the Scottish Borders will vary, and therefore significant support will need to be given to Area Partnerships and our communities from a range of officers across the

organisation. This support will feature Community Learning and Development (CLD), the Communities & Partnership Team, Democratic Services and other services, depending on the theme or priority.

5 PROPOSED TIMETABLE

- 5.1 A proposed timetable is included in **Appendix 4** and suggests two phases of funding being released. This timetable is for guidance only, and in order to allow for community capacity building where required, the final timetable for each of the 5 areas will be decided by the Chair and members of each Area Partnership.
- 5.2 The Autumn 2017 phase could open on 15th October 2017 and would give communities from October to the 1st December 2017 to submit projects and ideas, with the Assessment Panel meeting in mid to late December 2017 and a public vote taking place in January 2018. Monies would be released in February 2018.
- 5.3 The Spring 2018 phase could open on 1st April 2018 and would give communities from April to the end of June to submit projects and ideas, with the Assessment Panel meeting in July 2018 and a public vote taking place in August 2018. Monies would be released in September 2018.
- 5.4 There will be regular updates provided to the Area Partnerships on the outcomes being achieved as the pilot progresses.
- 5.7 An Evaluation Toolkit is currently being developed by Glasgow City Council and What Works Scotland, and it is envisaged that this toolkit will be adopted for the Localities Bid Fund. Monitoring and evaluation will commence after Phase 1 and concluded in September 2018 after Phase 2 has concluded.

6 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial

A one off budget of £500k has been identified for the 2017 Localities Bid Fund. It was agreed at Council on 27 June 2017 that the funding allocation could be carried into the 2018 financial year. The continuation of the Localities Bid Fund beyond 2017/18 will require additional funding, possibly requiring savings elsewhere, to be identified as part of the budget process for 2018/19.

6.2 Risk and Mitigations

A risk management approach will be applied consistently and appropriately across the programme, based on existing grants & funding schemes and best practice. This will include an award cap of £5k for non-constituted groups. Decisions taken on the allocation of the Localities Bid Fund in 2017/18 should not expose the Council to any unfunded ongoing future financial commitment.

6.3 Equalities

Equalities Impact Assessments will be carried out to ensure that the applicants have agreed to the Equalities requirements within the application. The Localities Bid Fund will not support any projects which disadvantage any other parts of the community.

6.4 Acting Sustainably

The programme will support the approach of acting sustainably ensuring any effects are identified and the impact evaluated where appropriate.

6.5 Carbon Management

The programme will actively promote a positive impact on the Council’s carbon emissions where appropriate.

6.6 Rural Proofing

This will be undertaken within the programme where appropriate.

6.7 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation

There are no changes to be made.

7 CONSULTATION

7.1 The Chief Financial Officer, the Monitoring Officer, the Chief Legal Officer, the Service Director Strategy and Policy, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Chief Officer HR and the Clerk to the Council have been consulted and any comments received have been incorporated into the final report.

Approved by

Jenni Craig
Service Director Customer and Communities

Signature

Author

Name	Designation and Contact Number
Shona Smith	Communities & Partnership Manager

Background Papers: none

Previous Minute Reference: Scottish Borders Council, 27 June 2017

Note – You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats by contacting the address below. Clare Malster can also give information on other language translations as well as providing additional copies.

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