



CABINET – 16TH APRIL 2014

SUBJECT: WELSH GOVERNMENT TACKLING POVERTY SMALL GRANTS FUND

REPORT BY: ACTING DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval for the process to allocate and administer the Welsh Government's Tackling Poverty Small Grants Fund.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Welsh Government has allocated grant funding to support the delivery of the Tackling Poverty Action Plan – Building Resilient Communities 2012-16. The budget will be allocated per Communities First Cluster. The allocation, administration and overall responsibility for the grant will sit with the Lead Delivery Body for Communities First – Caerphilly County Borough Council.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The Communities First Programme contributes to all five Priorities within the Caerphilly Local Service Board single integrated plan, Caerphilly Delivers.

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 The Tackling Poverty Small Grants Fund has been developed by combining the Communities First Trust Fund (CFTF) and the Community Facilities and Activities Programme (CFAP). It is available to community groups/organisations that are working in or benefiting people from a Communities First Cluster. Welsh Government has allocated an in principle amount of £40,000 per Communities First Cluster for the financial year 2014/15 (therefore £160,000 in total for Caerphilly County Borough), however this has yet to be confirmed.

The purpose of the grant is to benefit those people who are most in need of support (socially excluded, young people, elderly, those with a disability or those experiencing high levels of deprivation).

Projects should only be supported if they demonstrate that they are relevant to the Welsh Government's *Tackling Poverty* Action Plan, that they complement the activities of the Communities First Cluster, are supported by the local community and do not duplicate existing provision. Applicants must engage with the appropriate Cluster Manager to discuss their application and develop realistic and measurable outcomes for the activity to be funded.

- 4.2 An assessment panel will be convened to consider applications received for each funding round. The Panel will be assessing and making recommendations with decisions made by the Head of Public Protection under delegated powers. The Panel will comprise of:

- The Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning and Sustainable Development
- Head of Public Protection and Officer Anti Poverty Champion (Chair with Delegated Powers)
- 1, nominated community member from each Communities First Cluster area
- A representative from Legal Services
- A representative from Finance
- The Community Regeneration Manager (no voting rights)

In order to restrict the potential for conflicts of interest to arise it is recommended that elected members of the Authority should not be nominated as the community representative for the Cluster. The Interim Monitoring Officer has suggested a short training session on conflict of interests for the members of the Panel.

A grant of up to a maximum value of £10,000 for Capital and Revenue will be available. As the Welsh Government Grant is awarded in arrears, in line with CCBC financial regulations, all claims for the grant awarded will be paid in arrears. Concerns have been expressed that due to inconsistencies in how the Welsh Government awards Communities First monies some Lead Delivery Bodies receive their grant in advance. The implications of this will result in inequities across Wales, as voluntary groups in other boroughs will be able to receive payments in advance. However, applicants in Caerphilly will be allowed to submit staged payments providing all the necessary accompanying evidence is provided as outlined in the Grant Guidelines.

A number of new initiatives have been included in the Communities First programme for April 2014, as a result the Welsh Government approved a request to fund an additional Finance Officer to undertake the additional workload, which will include the administration of this grant.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Groups or individuals who fall under the categories identified in Section 6 of the Council's Strategic Equality Plan are often more vulnerable to changes in employment circumstances or benefits regulations and so can be more at risk of remaining in, or entering conditions of poverty. The effective allocation and administering of the Welsh Government's Tackling Poverty Small Grants Fund can therefore support these groups and individuals to a proportionally greater degree.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no financial implications

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Training will be required by the panel members with regards to conflict of interests. Funding for an additional Finance post (Temporary) is provided as part of the project.

8. CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 The report has been sent to the consultees listed below and there are no consultation responses that have not been reflected within the report.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 Cabinet is asked to approve the suggested mechanism for the allocation, administration and management of the Welsh Government's Tackling Poverty Grant.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 In order to effectively allocate and administer the Tackling Poverty Small Grants Fund in line with Welsh Government guidance.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 Local Government Acts 1972 and 2000.

Author: Tina McMahon, Community Regeneration Manager
Consultees: Sandra Aspinall, Acting Deputy Chief Executive
Councillor Ken James, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Planning
Councillor Gerald Jones, Deputy Leader, Cabinet Member for Housing and Anti Poverty Champion
Pauline Elliott, Head of Regeneration and Planning
Gail Williams, Interim Monitoring Officer
Stephen Harris, Acting Head of Corporate Finance
Rob Hartshorn, Head of Public Protection and Anti Poverty Champion
Gareth Hardacre, Head of People Management
Dave Roberts, Principal Group Accountant
Paula Beaman, Grants Manager
David A. Thomas, Senior Policy Officer (Equalities and Welsh Language)

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - The Welsh Government Tackling Poverty Guidance
Appendix 2 - Draft Terms of Reference