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Date: 17th June 2021

Dear Sir/Madam,

A special meeting of the **Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee** will be held via Microsoft Teams on **Wednesday, 23rd June, 2021 at 5.30 pm** to consider the matters contained in the following agenda. Councillors and the public wishing to speak on any item can do so by making a request to the Chair. You are also welcome to use Welsh at the meeting, both these requests require a minimum notice period of 3 working days.

This meeting will be recorded and made available to view via the Council's website, except for discussions involving confidential or exempt items. Therefore the images/audio of those individuals speaking will be publicly available to all via the recording on the Council website at www.caerphilly.gov.uk

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chrissy', enclosed in a large, loopy oval shape.

Christina Harrhy
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

AGENDA

Pages

- 1 To receive apologies for absence.
- 2 Declarations of Interest.

Councillors and Officers are reminded of their responsibility to declare any personal and/or prejudicial interest(s) in respect of any business on this agenda in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000, the Council's Constitution and the Code of Conduct for both Councillors and Officers.

A greener place Man gwyrddach



To receive and consider the following Scrutiny reports:-

- | | | |
|---|---|--------|
| 3 | Caerphilly County Borough Council - Proposals for Asylum Dispersal and Afghan Relocation. | 1 - 8 |
| 4 | Community Empowerment Fund. | 9 - 32 |

Circulation:

Councillors M.A. Adams, Mrs E.M. Aldworth, C.J. Cuss, Mrs C. Forehead, Miss E. Forehead, L. Harding, G. Johnston, G. Kirby (Vice Chair), C.P. Mann, B. Miles, J. Pritchard (Chair), R. Saralis, Mrs M.E. Sargent, G. Simmonds, J. Taylor and L.G. Whittle

And Appropriate Officers

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SPECIAL POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 23RD JUNE 2021

**SUBJECT: CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL - PROPOSALS
FOR ASYLUM DISPERSAL AND AFGHAN RELOCATION**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR SOCIAL SERVICES AND
HOUSING**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 Of the twenty-two local authorities in Wales five are Asylum Dispersal Areas (ADA): Cardiff, Newport, Swansea, Wrexham and Conwy. A recent approach has been made by the Home Office, working with the Wales Strategic Migration Partnership, and through Welsh Government, for more local authorities to participate in the scheme to alleviate pressures in the asylum system and share the role across other local authorities in Wales.
- 1.2 This report considers the implications of the local authority becoming an ADA and makes a number of recommendations to manage the implementation of the scheme, proposing a gradual start and a review after 12 months.
- 1.3 In addition a more recent request has been made to consider the relocation of Afghan nationals employed by the UK government in Afghanistan, primarily due to the instability caused by the imminent withdrawal of US troops by September 2021 and risks to life. The report considers the implications of participation in this scheme also.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report summarises the positive experience of settling refugee families that the authority has been involved in since 2015, through the UK Resettlement Scheme. While the status of asylum seekers is different to refugees, there is a degree of similarity in the case management processes, albeit that, for asylum seekers, this is the responsibility of the commissioned provider, Clearsprings Ready Homes (CRH). CRH are responsible for the provision of accommodation and support and signposting service users to third sector support.
- 2.2 An 'in principle' agreement has been given for the local authority to step forward as an ADA, the report examines the implications further and makes recommendations for a 'start small and evaluate' approach to participating in this Home Office scheme.

Information is given on how the scheme operates and the experience of the five local authorities in Wales who are already involved. A presentation is being provided to support this report and allow member questioning of the Home Office (UK Visas and Immigration) and Clearsprings Ready Homes on the support available to asylum seekers and the management of cases.

- 2.3 The situation for Afghan nationals employed by the UK government is an immediate one, however the scheme is different again to the UK Resettlement Scheme and the Asylum Dispersal Scheme. The distinctions between each and the implications for the participation of the local authority are considered and drawn out in the recommendations.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

Asylum Dispersal

- 3.1 The views of Scrutiny Committee are sought prior to a report to Cabinet on the 7th July 2021 on the local authority's participation in the Home Office Asylum Dispersal Scheme.
- 3.2 Two options are proposed:
1. Participate fully in the scheme once the decision is taken
 2. Begin with a smaller number (5) family properties and evaluate the success after 12 months
- 3.3 The view of officers, based on discussions with the Wales Strategic Migration Partnership, the Home Office, Clearsprings Ready Homes, and the other Welsh local authorities who already participate is that **Option 2** is the preferred option.

Scrutiny are asked to provide their views.

Relocation of Afghan Nationals

- 3.4 The Home Office request is to relocate Afghan staff immediately, with the case management support being provided by the local authority on a funded basis for 4 months after arrival. Given that we are proposing to embark on asylum dispersal it may be too difficult to commit to Afghan relocation at the same time. Primarily because we will need to set up new systems and internal policies for asylum dispersal and it would place additional pressure on our private sector housing supply. However, it may be possible to look again at this request within a few months.
- 3.5 The officer recommendation is that Cabinet stay abreast of the situation for Afghan national relocation over the summer months and extend the support if the capacity of services and available housing supply can absorb this scheme.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The local authority has had a positive experience of assisting with the settlement of refugee families from Syria and Cabinet decided in September last year to continue with the successor UK Resettlement Scheme, which will settle refugee families from other regions in the world. The scheme, although not without its day to day case management difficulties, has allowed learning on the issues faced by displaced people that can be used in assisting with asylum dispersal.

- 4.2 There are significant pressures in the asylum system with a larger number of people waiting for accommodation due to the pandemic. In addition, the required capacity has been carried by a small number of local authorities in Wales until now. Across the UK, the Home Office, accommodation providers and local government have committed to achieving the participation of more local authorities to alleviate the disparities in the system. For humanitarian and ethical reasons, the request to participate has been given an 'in principle' agreement at this time.
- 4.3 In relation to Afghan relocation, there is an imminent threat to the individuals involved and should be looked at again, before the end of the summer, if services are able to commit to providing the support and housing supply will be able to support an additional scheme.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 The authority has been involved in the resettlement of Syrian refugee families since late 2015 at the request of the Home Office and in response to the humanitarian crisis facing people displaced by the war in Syria. Since that time 7 families comprising 35 individuals have been settled in the county borough. The local authority receives direct funding, tapering over 5 years, from the Home Office to support integration in communities, with resettled families being granted Refugee Leave status giving them the right to work and claim benefits. Families have been resettled at a rate and volume which has been at the discretion of the local authority. The main hurdle to settling more families has been the lack of suitable accommodation in the private rented sector

In addition, Children's Services Social Services Teams are involved in a regional response to providing accommodation for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children under the National Transfer Scheme from arrival local authorities, mainly in the South East of England.

- 5.2 In February this year the Deputy Minister asked, at the behest of the Home Office, for a widening of asylum dispersal in Wales. Welsh Government declared 'Nation of Sanctuary' status for Wales to welcome people through safe and legal routes who need help on humanitarian grounds to rebuild their lives. Currently five of the twenty-two local authorities are asylum dispersal areas, with Newport, Cardiff, Swansea and Wrexham having been working on asylum dispersal for many years. There are significant pressures in the asylum system and as of December last year 2996 asylum seekers were accommodated in Wales with the majority, 1441, in Cardiff. Limited movement through the system due to the pandemic and the location of asylum seekers in unsuitable and unsafe accommodation at the old Penally Barracks in Pembrokeshire had prompted discussion with local authority Leaders and Chief Executives on widening the support among more local authorities for reasons of fairness and equity, and to alleviate pressure in the system. A few local authorities have entered into the discussion positively and Caerphilly Council gave an 'in principle' agreement to becoming an ADA working in partnership with the Home Office, as a coordinated and proactive approach was felt to be preferable.
- 5.3 Since that time officers have been meeting with the Wales Strategic Migration Partnership (WSMP) - the Home Office funded support coordination team based at the WLGA, the Home Office and their commissioned provider Clearsprings Ready Homes (CRH) to understand what the implications would be for the local authority and services in becoming an ADA. In addition, discussions have been held on an all-

Wales basis and with the current areas directly to further understand the practicalities of the scheme. The recommendations in this report have been informed by those discussions.

5.4 **The Asylum Seeker Process and Support**

In widening dispersal, the Home Office preferred option is to work in partnership with local authorities to agree the number and location of properties on a voluntary basis, although there is a legal ability for the Home office to mandate dispersal in an area under immigration legislation. Clearsprings Ready Homes (CRH) have a 10-year contract, from 2019, to source properties and provide the case management support for asylum seekers whilst they are awaiting a decision on their claim from the Home Office. Another contract, with Migrant Help, provides a 24-hour advice and assistance helpline and assists asylum seekers navigate the asylum process and helps them after decision whether positive or negative.

5.5 While asylum seekers are in the system, if they are destitute, they are provided with accommodation and sufficient money (£37.75 per week) to maintain themselves, although some are self-funded and may have their own accommodation or receive support from family and friends..

5.6 The process is that CRH will find suitable properties in the local authority but will do so by working with Housing services to understand the need in an area before approval. Only landlords registered with Rent Smart Wales are accepted. From the perspective of the local authority we are able to work with Gwent Police to discuss the proposed property and can refuse to accept a proposal if there are reasonable grounds. Although the Immigration Act does give UK Visas and Immigration powers to override this, in practice they prefer to work with a local authority to find solutions. The local authority is able to influence whether the property is used for single individuals or families, it can also be inspected by our staff at any time. If a property is found but is unsuitable it will be notified to our Housing services so that they may consider it as an option for homelessness prevention. There may be a need to use contingency accommodation if pressures in the system become too great, however, the local authority will receive early notification if this is ever the case.

5.7 There is a shortage of good quality private rented accommodation across the county borough. Currently the available social rented stock cannot accommodate all households in need of accommodation. Local authority homelessness duties can be discharged through private rented sector accommodation and there is competition from other agencies for properties. Negotiating the location of properties with Housing services, and the officer recommendation to start with five family properties only will allow a proper assessment after 12 months.

5.8 All people seeking asylum go through security screening checks. CRH are in regular contact with people in asylum accommodation and manage housing and address any issues at the property with support as appropriate from Migrant Help. People seeking asylum readily respect UK laws (note- not to do so will affect their application) and receive induction briefings on rights and responsibilities and UK laws at the initial accommodation in Cardiff. Most people will spend some time in initial accommodation, before being dispersed to the participating local authorities in Wales.

5.9 School age children have a right to education. Although a large proportion of people are over 18 and well educated and wish to study in the UK. Generally, asylum seekers are not allowed to work but can do so if they have been here for 12 months or more and possess skills on a shortage occupations list. They are allowed to

volunteer and many do with support from third sector partners.

- 5.10 After assessment, for anyone granted asylum status/refugee protection, they then have the right to work and claim benefits, they are also able to ask for housing support from the local authority if they meet the requirements. For any refusals there is an appeals process and they will be supported by the Home Office and remain in accommodation until that concludes. For families with children that support continues until the youngest child is 18 and therefore they could remain in accommodation for some time. The UK government is, however, developing a New Plan for Immigration and there may be changes to the way in which support is given.
- 5.11 In relation to the numbers of people who may be housed in a local authority the maximum proportion is 1:200 residents. This equates to 889 for the county borough but UK Visas and Immigration have stated that there is no intention to procure anywhere near that number of properties. Initially two flats, suitable for family occupation, have been identified but not yet progressed.
- 5.12 The location of properties will be negotiated with Housing staff as explained in 5.6 and there will be an option to notify local ward members. There may not be an option to make a refusal unless the grounds are reasonable i.e. based on the advice of Housing staff or Gwent Police. Notifying ward members will prepare them to answer any questions and provide any support required. Drawing a parallel with the current Syrian resettlement programme, ward members are not notified of addresses just arrivals in their constituency. The reason being to allow people to settle in the area as any other family or individual would and not to single them out or draw attention to their arrival in the country or the county borough. However, recognising that the asylum dispersal system is a different situation the address of selected properties will be made known to ward members. A member's seminar has been arranged for the 28th of June to support the proposed decision to move ahead with becoming an ADA.
- 5.13 **The experience of other Welsh local authorities**
In preparing the recommendations above information has been gathered from the other participating areas on how working on asylum dispersal operates in practice. In summary the responses were positive and reflect that good working relationships exist with the managed provider, Clearsprings Ready Homes. Some pressures on housing supply were noted but largely these can be absorbed. Many people leave the area once they are granted status, this was noted in the more rural authorities.
- 5.14 People in the asylum system are a mixture of families (approx.40%) and single individuals (approx.60%). The approach taken by Conwy, a relatively new ADA, is to begin with family properties. In discussion with CRH this would seem like a sensible option for Caerphilly also.

5.15 **Conclusion**

Participation in the Syrian Resettlement Programme/Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme and its successor the UK Resettlement Scheme has been largely positive for the local authority and has supported 35 displaced people to make their homes in the county borough. Two parents have begun nursing degrees, another family have started a local launderette business, with the help of the provider commissioned by the local authority, Displaced People in Action.

Asylum Dispersal is also supported by managed contracts, with Clearsprings Ready Homes and Migrant Help, and while there will be additional pressure on housing supply the recommendation to start small and evaluate after 12 months will provide

assurance that asylum seeking families can be absorbed within the capacity of services. Should the Asylum Dispersal Scheme go well consideration can be given to working in partnership with the Home Office to bring more properties in the private rented sector online and the extension of the scheme to asylum seeking individuals.

The situation for Afghan employees of the UK government is acute and we understand the expectation is that 3000 individuals are due to arrive in the UK before the end of June. While the decision on asylum dispersal is working its way through reports any decision on Afghan Relocation should be held off for a very short period but looked at again before the end of the summer.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 The participation in the UK Resettlement Scheme and the Asylum Dispersal Scheme assumes that suitable properties will be available in the private rented sector. One of the main barriers to date to settling more refugee families, aside from the pandemic, has been the lack of suitable affordable properties, well located next to schools. Officers seek properties regularly and we understand that the Home Office provider for asylum dispersal, Clearsprings Ready Home will do the same. Five family homes are recommended for the first 12-month period. It may not be possible to achieve that number.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 The authority has a successful track record of settling refugee families under schemes that have been in existence since 2015. On humanitarian grounds the authority should provide support to asylum seekers by working in partnership with Home Office and its contracted provider. Participation the scheme has been by a few authorities in Wales and local government has been encouraged to come forward and assist for many years. Asylum seekers are one of the most vulnerable groups in society, who are likely to have suffered significant disadvantage in their home countries. The validity of claims is assessed by the Home Office and the system seeks to support people while their claim is being assessed.

[Hyperlink to full IIA](#)

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Unlike the UK Resettlement Scheme, which supports refugee families and is fully funded by the Home Office, there is no additional financial support for local authorities that are ADAs. Welsh Government continue to lobby on this issue on behalf of the ADAs in Wales. All accommodation and weekly cash support are provided by the Home Office and no funding passes through local authority hands.
- 8.2 There will inevitably be additional pressures on services in managing any case related work that will fall to the local authority, this is not easily quantified and the make-up of families and particular issues faced by asylum seekers will not be known prior to arrival in the county borough. To mitigate the effect on local authority services referral to CRH and Migrant Help would be the first port of call. Asylum seeking families who arrive with children are entitled to education and this will need to be managed within school capacity. English language acquisition has proved to be a hurdle for refugee parents. Children are supported in schools through the Gwent Ethnic Minority Service (GEMS). For refugee families additional language teaching

and GEMS support has been commissioned. For asylum seeking families there is no funding that will allow this and so these needs will have to be met within existing budgets, where possible.

- 8.3 Corporate Management Team, have given a commitment to fund a 12-month Policy Officer post, through reserves, working 3-days a week to set up the systems, policies, process and procedures to allow the local authority to become an asylum dispersal area. The total cost of the post is £27,296 per year.
- 8.4 The officer recommendation is to start with 5 family properties in the first year and reassess the scheme before working in partnership to bring more properties on-line. This should allow a managed consideration of the full implications on internal services i.e. Housing, Social Services and Education. It may be possible to refer some support needs to some of the funded programmes that already operate in the local authority, specifically; Supporting People, Families First and Flying Start. Other third sector support may be available. Welsh Government fund the Welsh Refugee Council to provide support and one of the first tasks of the Policy Officer will be to build up these networks of funded and third sector support to minimise any additional impacts on mainstream services.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 A part time fixed term post has been created in the Policy and Partnerships Team to provide additional capacity to set up the systems and processes to support participation as an Asylum Dispersal Area.

10. CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1 The views of all consultees have been encompassed within the report.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 Local Government Acts.
Immigration Act 1999

Author: Kathryn Peters. Corporate Policy Manager, peterk@caerphilly.gov.uk

Consultees: Cllr Philippa Marsden, Leader of the Council
Cllr Lisa Phipps, Cabinet Member for Housing
Cllr James Pritchard, Chair of Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee
Cllr Gez Kirby, Vice-chair of Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee
Christina Harrhy, Chief Executive
Dave Street, Corporate Director, Social Services and Housing
Ed Edmunds, Corporate Director, Education and Corporate Services
Sue Richards, Head of Education Planning and Strategy
Rob Tranter, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer
Steve Harris, Head of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer
Keri Cole, Chief Education Officer
Sarah Ellis, Lead for Inclusion and ALN
Gareth Jenkins, Assistant Director- Head of Children's Services

Jo Williams, Assistant Director - Head of Adult Services
Fiona Wilkins, Housing Services Manager
Kerry Denman, Housing Solutions Manager
Claire Davies, Private Sector Housing Manager
Paul Cooke, Senior Policy Officer, Policy and Partnerships
Sonya Foley, Policy Officer
Kath Thomas, Policy Officer
Chris Hunt, Regional Community Cohesion Officer
Anne Hubbard, Wales Strategic Migration Partnership



SPECIAL POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 23RD JUNE 2021

SUBJECT: COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT FUND

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR EDUCATION AND CORPORATE
SERVICES**



1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present a proposed approach to the delivery of the council's newly instigated Community Empowerment Fund (CEF).
- 1.2. To seek comment and endorsement of the proposed funding criteria and grant management arrangements for the Community Empowerment Fund from Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee prior to it being considered by Cabinet.
- 1.3 To seek views on appropriate support required to enable elected members to effectively champion the Community Empowerment Fund across their communities.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The *Team Caerphilly – Better Together* transformation strategy endorsed by Cabinet in June 2019, highlights the importance of effective community engagement and the subsequently endorsed *Consultation and Engagement Framework 2020-2025* commits to promoting and supporting the principles of community empowerment and building resilient communities.
- 2.2 The council is focussed on further strengthening the relationships between it and its communities – residents, businesses, voluntary and community groups. Caerphilly county borough benefits from a vibrant and engaged voluntary and community sector, which offers significant opportunity to maximise community participation.
- 2.3. In the council's recent far-reaching resident survey 'The Caerphilly Conversation', 78% of respondents to that survey felt it was a positive suggestion to make a community budget available to residents, to enable them to do more things for themselves in future. 89% of respondents also agreed that offering incentives to communities would likely encourage them to take greater pride in their area.
- 2.4. In the council's budget setting for 2021/22, members approved a £328,000 annual funding allocation for a 'Community Empowerment Fund' to support community-led

initiatives that complement and support those provided through public services.

- 2.5. This report sets out the proposed approach to the delivery of the newly instigated Community Empowerment Fund, with the draft application form and guidance for the fund and draft community engagement guidance for ward members attached at appendix one and appendix two respectively.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee endorse the proposed approach to the delivery of the Community Empowerment Fund, and comment on and endorse the funding criteria and grant management arrangements for the fund, prior to it being considered by Cabinet.
- 3.2 That the Committee offer their views on appropriate support required to enable elected members to effectively champion the Community Empowerment Fund across their communities.
- 3.3 That the Committee support a review of the Community Empowerment Fund after 12 months in order to review take up of the fund to date and to identify and mitigate against any emerging barriers to the scheme.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To ensure the council has a Community Empowerment Fund with robust funding criteria and grant management arrangements, in order to enable communities to bid for funding to develop and deliver projects aimed at meeting local need.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 The *Team Caerphilly – Better Together* transformation strategy endorsed by Cabinet in June 2019, highlights the importance of effective community engagement and the subsequently endorsed *Consultation and Engagement Framework 2020-2025* commits to promoting and supporting the principles of community empowerment and building resilient communities.
- 5.2 Community groups are increasingly playing a strong role in planning and delivering services that meet local needs, complementing those provided by public services. This community provision has a particular strength in developing innovative and flexible activities that are valued by local people and helps to build a real sense of community pride and cohesion.
- 5.3 The council is focussed on further strengthening the relationships between it and its communities – residents, businesses, voluntary and community groups. Caerphilly county borough benefits from a vibrant and engaged voluntary and community sector, which offers significant opportunity to maximise community participation.
- 5.4 In the council's recent far-reaching resident survey '*The Caerphilly Conversation*', 78% of respondents to that survey felt it was a positive suggestion to make a community budget available to residents, to enable them to do more things for themselves in future. 89% of respondents also agreed that offering incentives to communities would likely encourage them to take greater pride in their area.

5.5 In the council's budget setting for 2021/22, members approved a £328,000 annual funding allocation for a 'Community Empowerment Fund' to support community-led initiatives that complement and support those provided through public services. This allocation amounts to £4,490 per elected member per year.

5.6 The Community Empowerment Fund will enable communities to bid for funding in order to develop and deliver community-led initiatives that complement and support those provided through public services. Projects will aim to support communities to:

- Build community capacity
- Better understand and identify their local aspirations and priorities
- Make good use of existing assets, with the projects having the support of local communities
- Increase active inclusion and develop opportunities for enhanced engagement with groups that are more vulnerable and harder to reach
- Develop local assets, services and projects that respond to the needs of the people in their local communities
- Develop projects that are capable of becoming sustainable community projects
- Complement existing services in an area by providing additional activities

5.7 Grant management

Applications must be made by a non-profit organisation based within Caerphilly county borough. All organisations must have their own bank account in the name of the organisation.

For non-constituted community groups that have an interest in bidding into the fund, support in advance of submitting the application can be sought from the council's Caerphilly Cares team, to enable them to become a constituted community organisation.

In calculating allocations the £328,000 has been divided by 73 (the number of elected representatives within Caerphilly county borough), meaning an allocation of £4,490 per ward councillor. In wards where there are more than one ward councillor, the allocation is multiplied according to the number of ward councillors. For example, Penyrheol ward has four elected representatives, therefore the Penyrheol ward would benefit from an allocation of £17,960 (£4,490 x 4).

It should be noted that the Community Empowerment Fund allocation of £328,000 for Caerphilly county borough during 2021/22 is allocated to wards, and not directly to local ward councillors.

The maximum allocation available to an organisation/community group is £4,490 (in a single member ward). Approved projects in a single member ward where the total cost is less than £4,490, can be awarded a grant of up to 100% of the project costs (depending on the number of applications received in a particular application round).

Larger projects in a single member ward costing over £4,490 can receive a grant of up to the maximum amount (depending on the number of applications received in a particular application round), with the expectation that the remainder of the funding is sourced by the organisation/community group from other sources, or their own funding.

For multi member wards the ward councillors can choose to 'pool' their allocation to fund larger projects, up to the maximum amount that the ward members have agreed to pool (i.e. up to £8,980 in a 2 member ward, up to £13,470 in a 3 member ward). Ward members are not required to pool their allocation if they do not wish to.

Organisations/community groups may be offered less than the maximum amount if there are multiple applications from organisations or groups in individual wards in a single application round.

It is suggested that all applications are for a minimum of £1,000, which can be made up of a number of different items. No group/organisation can apply for a grant in consecutive financial years.

50% of the grant amount will be paid when the grant is approved. The remaining 50% will be released on receipt of the necessary financial records to show that the grant released on project approval has been spent in accordance with the original application form submitted. Invoices/receipts and bank statements will be required as evidence.

The Policy and Partnerships Team have considerable experience of managing and administering community grants, using the Grants to the Voluntary Sector Panel as a post-allocation reporting mechanism after officer delegated decisions against the agreed criteria. It is proposed that while elected members will act as 'sponsors' for bids, the management, administration and ultimate grant allocation of the Community Empowerment Fund will follow this established mechanism, with funding allocated via officer delegated decisions and information reports to Cabinet every six months.

Full details of eligibility and grant criteria to apply to the Community Empowerment Fund is included at Appendix One.

5.8 Application criteria

The council's recent resident survey '*The Caerphilly Conversation*' sought views on what the Community Empowerment Fund could be spent on, with seven priority areas emerging from the feedback, therefore forming the basis for the application criteria for projects:

- Environmental projects, including awareness of biodiversity and increasing community activity
- Projects that support greater community cohesion
- Projects that aim to tackle isolation and loneliness across the community
- Digital inclusion projects
- Projects to encourage greater physical and mental wellbeing
- Activities for young people/educational activities (non-statutory)
- Initiatives that promote and encourage community safety
- Supporting community groups to establish

Funding would be utilised to support communities to become more sustainable and resilient, which also supports the principles of the council's newly established *Caerphilly Cares* model for service delivery and the council's Place Shaping and Wellbeing Framework.

Applicant organisations will be required to evidence the need for their project or activity

and the lasting benefits it will provide for the local community. Full application criteria for the grant can be found at Appendix One.

5.9 The role of elected members

As highlighted at section 5.5 of this report, the £328,000 annual allocation to the Community Empowerment Fund amounts to the equivalent of £4,490 per elected ward councillor per year. In wards where there is more than one elected ward councillor, communities can choose to combine their funding allocation, to enable larger scale projects to be undertaken.

Local ward councillors have a key 'sponsor' role in the roll out of the fund and in the subsequent development of community projects.

Bids for funding from the Community Empowerment Fund must have support in writing from their local elected ward councillor prior to submission, and members must consider any potential conflicts of interest before 'sponsoring' any application.

Councillors will also be encouraged to consider:

- Carrying out community engagement activity to raise awareness of the fund across their ward area
- Discuss priorities within their local area with their constituents and seek agreement and support for these priority areas in supporting groups to bid to the Community Empowerment Fund
- Work alongside other ward councillors and local organisations where possible on joint projects, where co-funding becomes the enabler for delivery
- If projects require resources, or ongoing commitment e.g. maintenance from a council service areas, agreement must be received in writing from the relevant service area(s) before the project is approved.

Supplementary community engagement guidance for local ward councillors in relation to the Community Empowerment Fund can be found at Appendix Two.

In addition, virtual training opportunities for elected members will be available over the summer in areas of public engagement including community involvement, coproduction and participatory budgeting, which will help inform conversations with community members in prioritising ward-level projects.

5.10 **Conclusion**

Community groups are increasingly playing a strong role in planning and delivering services that meet local needs, complementing those provided by public services. This community provision has a particular strength in developing innovative and flexible activities that are valued by local people and help to build a real sense of community pride and cohesion.

Feedback from residents through the '*Caerphilly Conversation*' resident survey has been instrumental in shaping the remit of the Community Empowerment Fund, enabling communities to feel empowered in the design of local services and the things that affect them.

It is considered that the implementation of the Community Empowerment Fund supports the principles of community empowerment, as outlined in the council's *Consultation and Engagement Framework 2020-2025*.

The Community Empowerment Fund will be reviewed after 12 months in order to review take up of the fund to date and to identify and mitigate against any emerging barriers to the scheme.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 This report has been written with the assumption that ongoing annual funding will be available to support the Community Empowerment Fund.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 A full Integrated Impact Assessment has been completed and submitted alongside the development of this report.
- 7.2 The premise of the Community Empowerment Fund is to engage with and empower residents to do more for themselves in future. Feedback from 'The Caerphilly Conversation' resident survey has been instrumental in the development of this fund; with 78% of respondents indicating they felt it is a positive idea to make a community budget available to residents. Feedback on how the funding should be spend has also been key in developing the criteria for submitting a bid.
- 7.3 As already highlighted, projects would aim to support communities to:
- Build community capacity
 - Better understand and identify their local aspirations and priorities
 - Make good use of existing assets, with the projects having the support of local communities
 - Increase active inclusion and develop opportunities for enhanced engagement for groups that are more vulnerable and harder to reach
 - Develop local assets, services and projects that respond to the needs of the people in their local communities
 - Develop projects that are capable of becoming sustainable community projects
 - Complement existing services in an area by providing additional activity

A link to the full Integrated Impact Assessment can be found at:
https://caerphilly.gov.uk/CaerphillyDocs/IIA/IIA_CommunityEmpowermentFund_June2021

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 As per section 6.1, this report was written with the assumption that ongoing annual funding will be available to support the Community Empowerment Fund from 2022/23 onwards.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The council's Policy and Partnerships Team have considerable experience of running and administering community grant initiatives. While capacity to manage the Community Empowerment Fund bids would be a relevant consideration particularly given the two-tiered approach to funding allocation (50% on approval, 50% on completion), it is thought that implementing a minimum £1,000 amount on applications to the fund would be appropriate for administering the fund within current resources.

10. CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1 This report has been sent to the consultees listed below and comments received are reflected in this report.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 Equality Act 2010 and Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011. One of the specific duties covers matters of engagement.

Author: Hayley Lancaster, Senior Communications Officer
Vicki Doyle, Policy Officer

Consultees: Christina Harrhy, Chief Executive
Richard Edmunds, Corporate Director Education and Corporate Services
Mark S Williams, Corporate Director Environment and Economy
Dave Street, Corporate Director Social Services and Housing
Cllr Philippa Marsden, Leader of the Council
Cllr Eluned Stenner, Cabinet Member Customer, Performance & Property
Cllr James Pritchard, Chair Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee
Cllr Gez Kirby, Vice Chair Police and Resources Scrutiny Committee
Cllr Colin Mann, Leader Plaid Cymru Group
Cllr Kevin Etheridge, Leader Independent Group
Sue Richards, Head of Education Planning and Strategy
Robert Tranter, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services
Stephen Harris, Head of Corporate Finance / Section 151 Officer
Kathryn Peters, Corporate Policy Manager
Tina McMahon, Caerphilly Cares Manager
Anwen Cullinane, Senior Policy Officer – Equalities, Welsh Language and Consultation

Background papers:

Caerphilly County Borough Council Consultation and Engagement Framework 2020-2025 - [15694ConsultationandEngagementFramework.pdf \(caerphilly.gov.uk\)](#)

Findings from 'The Caerphilly Conversation' resident survey 2020/21 - [Caerphilly - Join the Caerphilly Conversation](#)

Appendices:

- Appendix 1 Draft Application Criteria – Community Empowerment Fund
- Appendix 2 Draft Engagement Guidance for Members – Community Empowerment Fund
- Appendix 3 Draft Application Form – Community Empowerment Fund



Community Empowerment Fund - Application Criteria

Purpose of the Grant

Caerphilly County Borough Council is committed to supporting communities to become strong and resilient, and recognise that one of our county borough's greatest assets is the thriving network of local community groups and organisations across the area, particularly so in light of the Covid pandemic.

This grant scheme has been created to enable communities to develop and deliver projects aimed at meeting the needs of their residents. Key to this will be the involvement of local elected members as one of the key contact points in local communities, who will work with and support local community groups to develop project ideas that meet identified need on a ward basis.

The Council's budget setting for 2021/22 includes a £328,000 annual funding allocation for a 'Community Empowerment Fund' to support community-led initiatives that complement and support those provided through public services.

In calculating allocations the £328,000 has been divided by 73 (the number of elected representatives within Caerphilly county borough), meaning an allocation of £4,490 per ward councillor. In wards where there are more than one ward councillor, the allocation is multiplied according to the number of ward councillors. For example, Penyrheol ward has four elected representatives, therefore the Penyrheol ward would benefit from an allocation of £17,960 (£4,490 x 4).

It should be noted that the Community Empowerment Fund allocation of £328,000 for Caerphilly county borough during 2021/22 is allocated to wards, and not directly to local ward councillors.

Projects will aim to support communities to:

- Build community capacity
- Better understand and identify their local aspirations and priorities
- Make good use of existing assets, with the projects having the support of local communities
- Increase active inclusion and develop opportunities for enhanced engagement for groups that are more vulnerable and harder to reach
- Develop local assets, services and projects that respond to the needs of the people in their local communities
- Develop projects that are capable of becoming sustainable community projects
- Complement existing services in an area by providing additional activity

Who can apply?

Projects must be managed by a non-profit organisation based within Caerphilly county borough, of one of the following types:

- (i) Unincorporated voluntary/community organisation or club with an adopted constitution or rules (an agreement between a group of people who come together for a reason other than to make a profit e.g. voluntary group or sports club)
- (ii) Charities or Charitable Incorporated Organisations (CIOs) registered with the Charities Commission (these can be new or existing charities)
- (iii) Community organisations who are Companies Limited by Guarantee (CLG) with no share capital and are registered with Companies House (company is owned by guarantors and any profits are re-invested to help promote the non-profit objectives of the company)
- (iv) Community Interest Companies (CICs) which are not established or conducted for private gain: any surplus or assets are used exclusively for the benefit of the community (designed for social enterprises that want to use their profits and assets for the public good)

Please note: All organisations must have their own bank account in the name of the organisation. If the organisation does not currently have a bank account, this must be addressed before a formal grant offer can be made.

The following types of organisations will not be funded:

- (i) Any commercial/trading or profit-making organisations where the profits are shared amongst the Directors, shareholders or members
- (ii) This list is not exhaustive

What can be funded?

The council's recent resident survey 'The Caerphilly Conversation' sought views on what the Community Empowerment Fund could be spent on, with seven priority areas emerging from the feedback, therefore forming the basis for the application criteria for projects:

- Environmental projects, including awareness of biodiversity and increasing community activity
- Projects that support greater community cohesion
- Projects that aim to tackle isolation and loneliness across the community
- Digital inclusion projects
- Projects to encourage greater physical and mental wellbeing
- Activities for young people/educational activities (non-statutory)
- Initiatives that promote and encourage community safety
- Supporting community groups to establish

Applicant organisations will be required to evidence the need for their project or activity and the lasting benefits it will provide for the local community.

What cannot be funded?

- (i) Usual running costs of any organisation e.g. rent, utilities, insurance etc. The only exception to this is where organisation's have been formed in the six months prior to an application being made, where they can apply for one-off start-up costs.
- (ii) Subsequent grants for the same project or activity (by this we mean that any new application must be for activity substantially different to previous applications)
- (iii) Retrospective costs for any project i.e. costs for work already undertaken or equipment and/or materials that have been purchased or ordered prior to a formal grant offer being made and the Terms & Conditions of the grant being signed and submitted. If using a tender process, tenders cannot be awarded prior to a grant approval being made
- (iv) This list is indicative only and is not exhaustive

When can an application be submitted?

The closing date for the first round of the grant scheme will be 31st October 2021. Subsequent rounds will be dependent upon there being funding remain in the relevant ward pot, i.e. if all the funding in a particular ward is allocated in the first round there will be no further grant rounds for that ward in that financial year, however, there may be further application rounds in other wards. Applicants will be informed of the outcome of their application approximately 6-8 weeks after submission, depending on the total number of grants submitted in each round overall.

Applicants cannot apply for further grants in successive years i.e. if a successful application is made in the 2021/22 financial year (i.e. between 1st April 2021 and 31st March 2022), the applicant cannot make a further application until 1st April 2023 at the earliest.

How much can be applied for?

The maximum allocation available to an organisation/community group is £4,490 (in a single member ward). Approved projects in a single member ward where the total cost is less than £4,490, can be awarded a grant of up to 100% of the project costs (depending on the number of applications received in a particular application round).

Larger projects in a single member ward costing over £4,490 can receive a grant of up to the maximum amount (depending on the number of applications received in a particular application round), with the expectation that the remainder of the funding is sourced by the organisation/community group from other sources, or their own funding.

For multi member wards the ward councillors can choose to 'pool' their allocation to fund larger projects, up to the maximum amount that the ward members have agreed to pool (i.e. up to £8,980 in a 2 member ward, up to £13,470 in a 3 member ward). Ward members are not required to pool their allocation if they do not wish to.

Organisations/community groups may be offered less than the maximum amount if there are multiple applications from organisations or groups in individual wards in a single application round.

It is suggested that all applications are for a minimum of £1,000, which can be made up of a number of different items.

Estimates/quotes

Applicants must submit comparable estimates/quotes to support their application. A minimum two written estimates/quotes are required for every item listed in the 'Financial Details' section of the application form.

Estimates/quotes must be itemised, detailed and comparable (in terms of measurements, rates, quantities, specification etc.). They must also detail VAT where applicable.

Any grant offered is made on the basis of the cheapest quote provided. Applicants can choose a more expensive supplier or contractor to complete the work or provide goods/services, but this will be at the applicants' cost.

Payments

50% of the grant amount will be paid when the grant is approved. The remaining 50% will be released on receipt of the necessary financial records to show that the grant released on project approval has been spent in accordance with the original application form submitted. Invoices/receipts and bank statements will be required as evidence.

Project timescales

All approved projects must be completed within 18 months of the date of the formal offer letter. The funding for any projects not completed within this timescale will be automatically withdrawn.

After six months of the first tranche of funding being released, if an organisation has not made progress in undertaking the project (or is unable to offer an adequate explanation for not doing so), no further grant funding will be released and we will seek to recover the funding already paid.

Who to contact?

For more information or if you have any queries, please contact XXXXX, Policy and Partnerships Team, Caerphilly County Borough Council, Penallta House, Tredomen Park, Ystrad Mynach, Hengoed, CF82 7PG. Tel: 01443 86XXX or e-mail XXXXXX

Appendix 2

Community Empowerment Fund – Community engagement guidance for local councillors

Overview:

Caerphilly County Borough Council is committed to supporting communities to become strong and resilient, and recognise that one of our county borough's greatest assets is the thriving network of local community groups and organisations across the area, particularly so in light of the Covid pandemic.

This grant scheme has been created to enable communities to develop and deliver projects aimed at meeting the needs of their residents. Key to this will be the involvement of local elected members as one of the key contact points in local communities, who will work with and support local community groups to develop project ideas that meet identified need on a ward basis.

This guidance document has been produced using insight from the council's Consultation and Engagement Framework 2020-2025 and the LGA's 'Councillor workbook: neighbourhood and community engagement' as a handy tool for local councillors in their key role in supporting the facilitation of the Community Empowerment Fund.

Consultation and Engagement Framework 2020-2025

This key strategic document was endorsed by the council in February 2020 and states that:

"Through Team Caerphilly - Better Together, the council is committed to ensuring high quality, citizen focussed services for the communities that comprise our county borough. In future-proofing public services, we recognise the need to ensure effective engagement is central to our decision making - involving residents in the design of local services and the things that affect them.

In addition, we are focussing on further strengthening the relationship between the council and the community - residents, businesses, voluntary and community groups. Caerphilly county borough has a vibrant and engaged voluntary and community sector, which offers significant opportunity to maximise community participation".

The principles of engagement outlined in the document are that as a council:

- We will listen and understand
- Caerphilly county borough people will help inform and shape the decisions we make - and in turn we will keep people informed
- We will be inclusive and act with purpose
- We will make the most of what already exists in our communities
- Empower local residents to have greater influence over the issues that affect them

- Increase and strengthen the role of communities in how we live, work and visit Caerphilly county borough
- Help us to understand the needs of our communities which in turn, helps to ensure that the services we deliver meet those needs and that available resources are used effectively and in line with agreed priorities
- Ensure people are involved in the democratic process and enable communities to have greater input on issues that affect them
- Support communities to take action by helping them identify needs and support them in developing community-led solutions

How did the Community Empowerment Fund come about?

In the council's far-reaching resident survey 'The Caerphilly Conversation', carried out during December 2020 and January 2021, respondents told us that 78% of felt it was a positive suggestion to make a community budget available to residents, to enable them to do more things for themselves in future. 89% of respondents also agreed that offering incentives to communities would likely encourage them to take greater pride in their area.

In direct response to this feedback, in the council's budget setting for 2021/22, members approved a £328,000 annual funding allocation for a 'Community Empowerment Fund' to support community-led initiatives that complement and support those provided through public services. This allocation amounts to £4,490 per elected member per year.

What will the fund support communities to do?

The Community Empowerment Fund will enable communities to bid for funding in order to develop and delivery community-led initiatives that complement and support those provided through public services. Projects will aim to support communities to:

- Build community capacity
- Better understand and identify their local aspirations and priorities
- Make good use of existing assets, with the projects having the support of local communities
- Increase active inclusion and develop opportunities for enhanced engagement for groups that are more vulnerable and harder to reach
- Develop local assets, services and projects that respond to the needs of the people in their local communities
- Develop projects that are capable of becoming sustainable community projects
- Complement existing services in an area by providing additional activity

In calculating allocations, the £328,000 has been divided by 73 (the number of elected representatives within Caerphilly county borough), meaning an allocation of the equivalent of £4,490 per elected member. In wards where there are more than one elected member, the allocation is multiplied according to the number of ward councillors. For example – Penyrheol ward has four elected representatives;

therefore the Penyrheol ward would benefit from an allocation of £17,960 (£4,490 x 4).

What is my role in all this?

As elected representative, you have a significant role to play in the successful delivery of the Community Empowerment Fund across your communities.

Community groups will require your 'sponsorship' (support) for their project idea prior to their application for funding being submitted, with the project(s) in question needing to meet the criteria outlined above.

Bids for funding from the Community Empowerment Fund must have support in writing from you, their local elected ward councillor prior to submission, and members must consider any potential conflicts of interest before 'sponsoring' an organisation's project.

Having listened to feedback from residents on how the funding should be spent across communities, projects should also address one or more of the following:

- Environmental projects, including awareness of biodiversity and community projects
- Projects that support greater community cohesion
- Projects that aim to tackle isolation and loneliness across the community
- Digital inclusion projects
- Projects to encourage greater physical and mental wellbeing
- Activities for young people/educational activities
- Initiatives that promote and encourage community safety
- Supporting community groups to establish

Key to this will be the involvement of you as local elected members, as one of the key contact points in local communities, to work with and support local community groups to develop project ideas that meet identified need on a ward basis.

Elected members and community engagement:

The LGA's 'Councillor workbook: neighbourhood and community engagement' states that:

'Ward councillors, as democratically-elected leaders representing their communities have a unique role to play in enabling the local engagement which will drive strong, connected communities – what we refer to as 'community engagement'.

'Ward members are in the front line of neighbourhood and community engagement. As a community leader, you are best placed to understand the particular challenges faced by your constituents. And working with a wide range of individuals and organisations in the area, you can help them to decide how best to respond.

'It is only at a local level that problems such as access crime, environmental concerns and anti-social behaviour can be understood and addressed. Few other community leaders have the mandate to coordinate different interests, reconcile diverse views and encourage open debate and dialogue in the way that you can.

The particular strengths and knowledge that you bring to this engagement process are:

- An understanding of your ward – the demographics, the key issues facing local people and the way that services are being delivered
- The representation of local voices – you are a channel of communication between the communities you serve and the council, representing the views of others and speaking up for the 'hard to reach' or 'seldom heard'
- Communicating and influencing skills – you can help to ensure that the views of local people are taken into account when decisions are made by the council or outside bodies

How can I support the roll out of the Community Empowerment Fund?

The Local Government Association's useful 'Councillor workbook: neighbourhood and community engagement' gives lots of useful advice on how you as local elected representatives can encourage greater engagement with your communities.

The document can be found here: [11 26 LGA Cllr Workbook Neighbour hood engagement workbook December 2016.pdf \(local.gov.uk\)](#)

In addition, councillors will be invited to attend a series of online training opportunities on 'Community Involvement', 'Community Empowerment' and 'Coproduction' throughout the summer months. Please contact Hayley Lancaster at lancah@caerphilly.gov.uk for further details.



CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
 Penallta House, Tredomen Park, Ystrad Mynach, Hengoed CF82 7PG
 Tel: 01443 86XXXX

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT FUND – APPLICATION FORM

The completed application form and supporting documents should be returned to XXXXX, Policy and Partnerships Team at the above address.

Any additional information which cannot be supplied in the space provided may be given on a separate sheet which should be signed and dated by the applicant.

Name of organisation:

Does the organisation have a constitution?

- Yes (please provide a copy) No

Please provide the organisations' bank account details

(these must be supplied and must be in the name of the organisation. All payments will be made via BACS transfer direct to this bank account)

Name of Bank:

Branch address:

Sort code:

Account number:

Name and address of secretary or main contact:

Email address:

Telephone no:

Is the organisation a charity/voluntary organisation/other?

Charity (please state registration number)

Voluntary organisation

Other (please state)

Please give a brief description of the general aims of the organisation?

Please state which electoral ward the project is located in:

Please state the name of ward councillor(s) that is/are supporting this project, together with a brief summary of the support provided to date:

Does the ward councillor that is/are supporting this project have a personal or prejudicial interest in the organisation or its activities?

Yes (please provide details below) No

(Note: The ward councillor(s) must also complete a 'Declaration of Interests' form and submit it alongside this application)

PLEASE READ THE GUIDELINES AT THE END OF THE FORM BEFORE COMPLETING THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

THE PROJECT

Please provide a general description of the project that you are seeking funding for:
(continue on additional sheets if necessary, which should be signed and dated)

What specifically do you require funding for?

How have you identified the need for the project? How will the project help to meet the identified needs?

What benefits/effects will this project have for the local community?

If there are ongoing maintenance costs associated with the project how will these be met and who will be responsible?

BUILDING/PHYSICAL WORKS

If the project involves the undertaking of building/physical works, please complete the following. If no building/physical works are involved please go to the 'FINANCIAL DETAILS' section.

Is Planning Permission required for the planned work?

Yes (please provide details below) No

If no, why do you believe this to be the case?

Has Planning Permission been obtained if needed?

Yes (please provide details below) No

If yes, please quote Ref No and date awarded:

Have Building Regulations been obtained if needed?

Yes (please provide details below) No

If yes, please quote Ref No and date awarded:

Is the building owned by the organisation applying? Yes No

If the building is not owned by the organisation, who is it owned by?



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- (iv) Approved projects costing up to £4,490 (in single member wards, or multiples thereof in multi member wards) can be fully grant aided if there are no other applications in the same ward in the same round
- (v) Approved projects costing more than £4,490 (in single member wards, or multiples thereof in multi member wards) will need to secure match funding

Amount of grant sought?

How much is being sought from or provided by other sources? (please provide details – this can include funding provided by other organisations or funders, or match funding from the applicant organisation)

DECLARATION

I/we consent to the information provided on this form, and any information subsequently provided by me/us either verbally or in writing, to be processed for the purposes of the assessment of my/our request for assistance by Caerphilly County Borough Council. I/we understand that the information may be disclosed to other department of the Council, and to the Council's external auditors.

I can confirm that to the best of my knowledge and belief, all answers on this application form are true and accurate. I also confirm that I am authorised to sign this agreement and to act on behalf of the organisation making this application.

Print name:

Signature:

Capacity in which signed:

Date:

We are collecting your personal data (name, address, telephone number, e-mail address and bank account details) in order to process this application for grant funding. Should your application be successful, this information will also be used for the purposes of making payments in relation to your grant award.

If your grant application is successful, your information will be retained for a period of 6 years plus the current year and will also be accessed by the Authority's Corporate Finance and Audit Teams for the purposes of the administration of the financial affairs of the Authority and audit purposes. If your grant application is unsuccessful, your information will be retained for a period of 2 years.

You have a number of rights in relation to your information, including the right of access to information we hold about you and the right of complaint if you are unhappy with the way that we have handled your request or your information. If you wish to make a request to see your data, or to object to the manner in which it is processed, please contact the Data Protection Officer at the Information Unit on 01443 864322.

Under the Head of Corporate Finance's role as Section 151 Officer, with responsibility for the administration of the financial affairs of the Authority, all applications may be subject to review. As the authorised representative of the Section 151 Officer, the Council's Internal Audit Services must be granted access to all financial documents or records held by the applicant in relation to the approved grant funding. Any review may, if considered appropriate, include site visits to premises.

If it is found that the grant has been used for purposes other than those as stated within the application, or that any of the terms and conditions of the grant have not been complied with, the Authority, at its discretion, may withhold or recover part or all of the funding.

Please note:

All organisations receiving financial assistance must:

- Have principles of operation which accord with legislation on employment, health and safety, racial and sexual discrimination, disability discrimination and language for employees and volunteers.
- Demonstrate an understanding of and commitment to equal opportunities concerning access, language, culture, gender and ethnic issues.

The following principles will be followed when dealing with applications to the Community Empowerment Fund:

- (i) 50% of the grant amount will be paid when the grant is approved. The remaining 50% will be released on receipt of the necessary financial records to show that the grant released on project approval has been spent in accordance with the original application form submitted. Invoices/receipts and bank statements will be required as evidence. No organisation is able to apply in consecutive financial years.
- (ii) Retrospective costs i.e. costs for work already undertaken or equipment that has been purchased prior to a formal grant offer, are ineligible from this fund and should not be included in any application you wish to make.