



CABINET – 26TH JUNE 2019

SUBJECT: REGENERATION GRANTS – WIDER CONSULTATION

REPORT BY: INTERIM CORPORATE DIRECTOR - COMMUNITIES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 Following a review undertaken on the revenue and capital grant schemes currently administered by the Council's Regeneration Division, a report was presented to Cabinet on the 27th February 2019 detailing how a new **Caerphilly Enterprise Fund** could operate to streamline and simplify the process of making a grant application. This Cabinet report is attached at Appendix 1.
- 1.2 Further to consideration of the report, officers were tasked with undertaking a consultation exercise in respect of the proposed change set out by officers in the original Cabinet report. This report outlines the results of the consultation which has been undertaken, predominantly with the voluntary sector and community groups, over a 4 week consultation period.
- 1.3 For completeness this report also summarises the potential to combine the five existing grant programmes into a single "**Caerphilly Enterprise Fund**" with a refocus towards offering improved support to start up businesses, stimulating economic growth, filling identified supply chain voids and supporting job creation.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 A report went before Cabinet on the 27th February 2019, detailing how a new grants regime could concentrate more activity on developing business growth and creating employment opportunities within the County Borough. The report outlined that the primary focus of a new **Caerphilly Enterprise Fund (CEF)** should be on economic growth.
- 2.2 Although the proposed grant regime would be open for community groups and social enterprises they would in future be required to evidence how their projects encourage economic activity. As the report advocated discontinuing the Community Regeneration Fund to fund the CEF, the recommendations to Cabinet on the 27th February 2019 requested that Cabinet note the contents of the report and approve a wider consultation exercise with the voluntary sector and community groups on the principles set out in the report.

2.3 This report outlines the results of the wider consultation.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet:

3.1 Note the consultation feedback on the proposals presented within the original report presented to Cabinet on the 27th February 2019.

3.2 Approve that the existing grants, namely the Commercial Improvement Grant; Business Development Grant; Business Start Up Grant and Community Regeneration Fund are amalgamated to provide a new Caerphilly Enterprise Fund with immediate effect.

3.3 Approve that the existing core grant allocations are re-aligned to provide greater economic outputs within the county borough under the Caerphilly Enterprise Fund umbrella.

3.4 Approve that the existing Community Regeneration Fund be discontinued.

3.5 Approve that Officers request that the geographic boundary for the Oakdale Community Benefit Fund be increased from 1.5 miles to 2 miles but should not be available outside of the county borough.

3.6 Considers and endorses the protocols outlined within the original cabinet report for determining grant applications.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 To offer improved support to businesses and to maximise economic growth

4.2 To standardise the process for grants administration throughout the Regeneration Division and to improve the systems by which the Regeneration and Planning Division controls and administers grants.

5. THE REPORT

Background

5.1 The report presented to Cabinet on the 27th February 2019 advocated a new grants regime that would concentrate more activity on developing business growth and creating employment opportunities within the County Borough. It is recommended that the primary focus of a new **Caerphilly Enterprise Fund** should be on:

- Business Start Ups in all sectors (less than 12 months trading);
- Underutilised/empty town centre commercial properties;
- Small and Medium Sized Enterprises;
- Established Community Groups or Social Enterprises;
- Filling identified supply chain voids identified by CCBC Procurement;

- Projects that help create or safeguard jobs - contributing to the Council's Well Being Goals.

- 5.2 The full Cabinet Report is attached at Appendix 1
- 5.2 Although the grant regime would be open for community groups and social enterprises they will need to evidence that their projects focus on economic activity.
- 5.3 It is proposed that the Community Regeneration Fund programme be discontinued and the budget should be vired into the Caerphilly Enterprise Fund. Officers will continue to offer support and guidance to groups looking for funding and will actively signpost them to suitable available external grants.
- 5.4 If approved, the new Caerphilly Enterprise Fund will offer funding support under two categories; the first being Business Support and the second being Property Improvement. It is also proposed that the existing geographical boundary for the Oakdale Community Benefit Fund is extended from 1.5 miles to 2 miles

Table 1: Proposed Grant Limits and Intervention Rates

Fund	Proposed Grant Available	Intervention Rate
Caerphilly Enterprise Fund - Theme 1 "Business Support"	£200- £2,000 revenue	Up to 45%
Caerphilly Enterprise Fund - Theme 2 "Property Improvement"	Up to £10,000 capital	Up to 50%
Oakdale Community Benefit Fund	Up to £3,000 capital Up to £3,000 revenue	Up to 80%

- 5.5 The good work that the voluntary sector and community groups undertake is fully recognised and greatly appreciated, however the recommendations contained in the report will make the overall grants system simpler and easier to navigate. It is also apparent that there are a number of external funding mechanisms that voluntary and community groups are able to bid into to secure monies for localised community projects. Officers will continue to offer support and guidance to groups looking for funding and will actively signpost them to suitable available external grants.
- 5.6 It was considered appropriate to undertake a wider consultation exercise on the proposal to discontinue the CRF due to the likely impact this would have on its current beneficiaries. Cabinet requested that a further report outlining the consultation results be presented to them.

Consultation

- 5.7 In order to reach as many groups as possible it was considered appropriate to undertake a varied series of consultation exercises/events including:

- Officers attended the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee held on the 14th March 2019, where the proposed enterprise fund was explained and feedback received from committee members;
- A delegation of voluntary sector organisations was invited to meet with the Head of Regeneration and Planning to voice their concerns over the proposals. This meeting was held on the 29th April 2019.
- Webpage Questionnaire – A short consultation questionnaire focusing on the review of CCBC Regeneration Grants was posted on the “Have Your Say” section of the CCBC webpage for 4 weeks, along with the February Cabinet report in order to give people a better understanding of the proposals. GAVO and the Council’s policy team have signposted all known voluntary sector and community groups to participate. To balance this, the Council’s Business Support Team also asked local businesses to respond to the consultation. The Town and Community Councils were notified that the consultation was taking place.

Feedback

- 5.8 The next section outlines the feedback received as the result of the consultation exercise outlined above.

Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee and Subsequent Meeting on 29th April

- 5.9 The main threads running through the feedback received at the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee and the meeting between the Head of Regeneration Planning and voluntary sector reps on the 29th April can be summarised as follows:
- The grants have been a constant in recent years and local groups have become accustomed to utilising the CRF to act as match-funding towards external funding bids for larger sums of money. As such it has been very productive at leveraging in external funding for local projects, many of which help with the prosperity of the local economy.
 - Although not necessarily economically focused, a large number of the projects supported through CRF, do provide services or support that have a positive impact on the communities’ economic strength. Instances such as providing childcare to allow parents to work or providing training to improve a person self-confidence/self-esteem may not make direct impacts but they do help enormously.
 - Concern that groups that are not constituted as Social enterprises or Community Interest Companies will miss out totally, even though they provide valuable services that do have an economic impact.
 - That the eligibility criteria will be so tight as to exclude groups from actually bidding into the CEF
 - Perceived that the CRF had more stringent conditions than the business grants in operation. Queries over which set of conditions would win out.
 - That the list of alternative grants available to these groups outlined in the original Cabinet report are not easy to access and listing these as an alternative source of funding is therefore misleading.

Caerphilly Have Your Say Webpage Consultation Results

- 5.10 There were 54 respondents of which 28 were voluntary sector organisations, 4 were social enterprises and 25 were businesses
- 5.11 All of the respondents had received some form of grant from the regeneration grant programmes previously, with 49% benefitting from the Community Regeneration Fund.
- 5.12 Between 50% and 60% of respondents supported a new grant scheme focusing on developing business growth and employment opportunities, be it for start ups, SME's or targeted at town centre businesses.. This is counterbalanced with 55% strongly supporting grants being focused on community groups and social enterprises. A further 26% agree with this focus.
- 5.13 55% of respondents considered that the focus of the CEF should be on established community groups or social enterprises; followed by small and medium sized businesses (34%); and underutilised/empty properties in town centres (29%).
- 5.14 The online survey requested that participants outline the reason for their responses and this led to a large mixture of comments which can be viewed in detail in Appendix 2 – *Regeneration Grants Consultation Survey Report/Responses*.
- 5.15 A short synopsis of the comments made is as follows:
- Small and medium sized businesses need more support and grant aid helps enormously;
 - Start-up businesses need as much support as possible to become successful;
 - Community groups do not have access to the funding that private businesses have and will find it hard to access funding under the new regime;
 - Taking away the grant that offers support to the voluntary sector is short-sighted;
 - The focus on supporting economic growth is too narrow – vibrant communities are more than this;
 - The CRF is a very effective tool at supporting groups to provide much needed services and facilities in a number of communities across the county borough. Many of the projects provide pathways to employment;
 - Community Groups should not have to compete with businesses for this grant;
 - Several replies stating that the funding should not be used to fill supply chain voids;
 - Concentrate grants to town centres.
- 5.16 When asked whether they would apply for grant under the new fund there was an even split between those saying yes (41%) and those saying no (41%) with 19% stating they may.
- 5.17 A small amount of correspondence has also been received independently from the exercises outlined above. This has predominantly come from voluntary sector

organisations and community groups who all support the retention of the CRF grants programme.

- 5.18 Town and Community Councils have been notified of this proposals and the on line consultation process. Two Town Councils have filled in the on-line survey and Blackwood Town Council have emailed the council to express their displeasure with the proposals to stop the CRF grants.

Conclusion

- 5.19 The survey results show a clear split in the responses between the replies of businesses and those of community groups/voluntary sector.
- 5.20 It is clear that voluntary sector /community groups feel threatened by the proposals and are apprehensive about being able to secure funding under the CEF. This is reflected in both the feedback from the voluntary sector liaison committee, the correspondence received and also from the survey results.
- 5.21 Local businesses however stress that they need as much help as possible in a challenging economic climate to succeed.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 It is assumed that there will be a sufficient internal budget to allow the Regeneration Service to continue operating a grants regime in the future.
- 6.2 The need for MTFP savings has put a massive strain on internal budgets and 2019/20 has seen 'one year only savings' being introduced against the business grants. These could be introduced permanently from 2020/21 to help make the necessary departmental savings.
- 6.3 That the extensive consultation exercise will have captured the views of those people wishing to express an opinion on the proposals set out in the original Cabinet report.

7. LINKS TO RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES

Corporate Plan 2018-2023.

- 7.1 The report recommendations contributes towards or impacts predominantly on the following Corporate Well-being Objectives:

Objective 2 - Enabling employment.

Objective 6 - Support citizens to remain independent and improve their well-being.

8. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

- 8.1 This proposal contributes to the Well-being Goals of the Council and is aimed at improving the economic well-being of the County Borough.

8.2 As such, the proposals align with the following well-being goals:

- ***A prosperous Wales*** – financial contributions to targeted business sectors will support opportunities for development of a skilled population in an economy which generates wealth and employment opportunities;
- ***A resilient Wales*** – targeted grant support will foster social, economic resilience and the capacity to adapt to change;
- ***A more equal Wales*** – the grant programmes encourage applications from a wide range of sectors and organisations, community, voluntary or business, and reflect a broad opportunity for participation;
- ***A Wales of cohesive communities*** – the grant programmes support measures to provide attractive and well connected communities through financial support to community based projects and environmental improvements;
- ***A globally responsible Wales*** – the grant programmes support measures which improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the County Borough.

8.3 The report recommendations are consistent with the five ways of working as defined within the sustainable development principle in the Act. The five ways of working of the sustainable development principle, listed in the Act are:

- Long Term – The importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability of future generations to meet their long-term needs
- Prevention - How acting to prevent problems occurring, or getting worse, may help public bodies meet their objectives
- Integration – Considering how the public body's well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their other objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies
- Collaboration – Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body to meet its well-being objectives
- Involvement – The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves.

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 An EQLA screening has been completed in accordance with the Council's Strategic Equality Plan and supplementary guidance and some potential for unlawful discrimination and or low level or minor negative impact have been identified affecting one or more of the target equality groups.

9.2 A full EQLA has been carried out as part of the original Cabinet Report setting out officers proposals to introduce a Caerphilly Enterprise Fund. (Appendix 1)

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 These are covered in detail in the original cabinet report. However it should be noted that the one year only savings identified for 2019/20 in the original report, may become permanent savings for 2020/21 onwards.

11. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 Currently Business Support and Funding Team officers are the primary contact for the business growth grants with enquires relating to property improvements directed to the Urban Renewal team.
- 11.2 The restructuring of the Regeneration and Planning Department will identify roles and responsibilities for officers with regards to this new grants model, should it be implemented

12. CONSULTATIONS

- 12.1 All consultation responses are reflected in the report.

13. STATUTORY POWER

- 13.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
Local Government Acts.

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Appendices:

Appendix A

Cabinet Report – 27th February 2019

Appendix B

Regeneration Grants Consultation Survey Report/Responses.

CABINET – 27TH FEBRUARY 2019

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF CCBC REGENERATION GRANTS

REPORT BY: INTERIM CORPORATE DIRECTOR - COMMUNITIES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 Following a review undertaken on the revenue and capital grant schemes currently administered by the Council's Regeneration Division, it is recommended that existing grants be amalgamated into a combined "**Caerphilly Enterprise Fund**" that focuses delivery on developing business growth and creating employment opportunities. To accommodate this officers propose merging several grant programmes including the Community Regeneration Fund and focusing their budgets into the Caerphilly Enterprise Fund. Approval to consult more widely on these proposals is being sought from Cabinet.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The current grant schemes are administered by both the Urban Renewal and the Business Support & Funding Teams within the Regeneration Division and offer financial support to both the commercial/business sectors and community/voluntary sectors. The current grant schemes are as follows:

Business Grants

- Commercial Improvement Grant (CIG)
- Business Development Grant (BDG)
- Business Start Up Grant (BSUG)

Administered By

- Urban Renewal Team
- Business Support & Funding Team
- Business Support & Funding Team

Community / Voluntary Grants

- Community Regeneration Fund (CRF) Business Support & Funding Team
- Oakdale Community Benefit Fund (OCBF) Business Support & Funding Team

- 2.2 The above are a mixture of revenue and capital funded grants and as such there is a requirement to manage and keep them separate.

- 2.3 This Report provides an evaluation of the current grant schemes and outlines the potential to combine the grants into a single "**Caerphilly Enterprise Fund**" with a refocus towards offering improved support to start up businesses, stimulating economic growth, filling identified supply chain voids and supporting job creation. The report requests further consultation with the voluntary sector and community groups on the proposals within the report.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The scheme supports the Well-being Objectives set out in the Caerphilly County Borough Council Corporate Plan 2018-2023, specifically “Enabling Employment”.
- 3.2 The scheme supports the Council’s Anti Poverty Strategy, whilst supporting and encouraging economic growth and business development which are themes running through the Council’s Regeneration Strategy entitled ‘A Foundation for Success 2018-2023’.
- 3.3 The grants programme will have a positive impact upon the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area and community it serves. In particular the grants contribute to the following goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015:
- A resilient Wales
 - A sustainable Wales
 - A prosperous Wales
 - A Wales of cohesive communities
 - A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language

4. THE REPORT

Background

- 4.1 Grants are administered by the Urban Renewal Team and Business Support & Funding Team within the Regeneration and Planning Division. Urban Renewal administers a Commercial Improvement Grant Scheme (CIG), which is a capital budget targeted towards retail and commercial property improvements in towns and villages within the County Borough. The Business Support and Funding Team administer the Business Start Up Grant (BSUG) which is revenue funded and Business Development Grant (BDG) to the business sector which is made up of a capital and revenue budget.
- 4.2 Two additional grants are aimed at the community/voluntary sector, namely: the Community Regeneration Fund (CRF) which is a mixture of capital and revenue funding along with the Oakdale Community Benefit Fund (OCBF) which also consists of revenue and capital monies.
- 4.3 Officers have undertaken a comprehensive review of the current regeneration grant regimes, including the option to merge the grants into a single, targeted grant with the aim of offering a greater focus on: supporting start up businesses; encouraging economic growth; filling identified supply chain voids and stimulating and supporting job creation within the County Borough.

Overview of current Regeneration Grant Schemes

- 4.4 The following existing grant schemes are funded by the Council’s internal capital and revenue annual budget allocations. There are no conditions which would preclude changes or mergers of the Commercial Improvement Grants or Business Support Grants. However, the Community Grants Programmes will require Cabinet Approval to revise (see also paragraph 7.6).

Commercial Improvement Grants (Urban Renewal Team)

- 4.5 Financial assistance is offered for improvements to commercial, retail and industrial premises located in town and village centres within the County Borough. Eligible works include the

conversion, extension, improvement or modification of existing commercial buildings, and the conversion of other buildings into commercial, industrial or community use. The scheme offers a grant rate of up to 50%, with the maximum amount of grant offered to any one property not exceeding £15,000. In recent years the annual budget allocation for the CIG scheme has been £50,000 per annum. There are currently over 50 expressions of interest for this fund.

Business Support Grants- (Business Support & Funding Team)

4.6 Targeted at both existing businesses and new start ups. **The Business Development Grant (BDG)** currently supports established businesses to purchase capital equipment, IT equipment, software, marketing and web site development and some internal building works to upgrade their premises. Grant funding of up to 45% of the project cost is offered to a maximum of £2,000 per project. The annual budget for 2018/19 is £51,251 although it is expected to reduce by £25,000 for one year only in 2019/20.

4.7 **The Business Start Up Grant (BSUG)** is designed to help residents of the County Borough set up a full time business for the first time. Grant funding of up to 50% of the eligible project costs, to a maximum of £500 is offered. The annual budget for 2018/19 is £5,000. Applications are invited all year round for both BDGs and BSUGs subject to budget availability and are assessed with a recommendation for grant award or refusal as and when the full assessment has been completed by the case officer. This is not a CCBC core budget and is funded by TATA steel who provides the Council with this benefit fund.

Community Regeneration Fund (Business Support & Funding)

4.8 This fund enables community and voluntary sector organisations in the County Borough to bid for capital and/or revenue funding to take forward initiatives they have developed as part of the community planning process. Funding is available up to a maximum of 80% of the total project costs. Applicants can apply for a maximum of £25,000 in capital. Revenue funding for one year can be offered, subject to the availability of resources, up to a maximum of £30,000. The annual budget for 2018/19 is £199,057 (£100,057 revenue and £99,000 Capital). This allocation will reduce in 2019/20 due to the need to establish MTFP savings.

4.9 Applications are invited up to five times a year, subject to the availability of resources where applications are discussed and assessed at a Grants Panel meeting.

Oakdale Community Benefit Fund (OCBF)

4.10 The Oakdale Community Benefit Fund was established during the development of two 2MW wind turbines amounting to circa £10,000 per annum for the duration of the lease period (25 years). The purpose of the OCBF is to support and benefit viable and sustainable communities within 1.5 miles of the turbines, which comprises the communities of Argoed, Croespenmaen, Kendon, Oakdale, Penmaen, Pentwyn and Trinant. A grant of up to 80% of total project costs is available with the maximum grant available limited to £3,000 capital and/or £3,000 revenue in a single year. It should be noted that this is not a CCBC core budget and as such it will be restricted to the terms and condition imposed by the developer who provides the Council with the benefit fund.

Evidence of Impact

4.11 This section outlines how the grants have been used over the last 3 years, identifies the positive impact of the various programmes and considers the appropriate level of funding support under the proposed "Caerphilly Enterprise Fund":

Commercial Improvement Grants (CIG)

4.12 In the financial 5 year period between 2013 and 2018 a total of 16 CIG were awarded for improvement works to properties in towns and villages throughout the County Borough.

Although the maximum grant award is £15,000 under this programme, the average grant award was £9,100. Evidence therefore suggests that reducing the maximum grant approval to £10,000 will still stimulate economic activity and will also allow more applications to be processed per annum.

Business Grants (BDG & BSUG)

- 4.13 Evidence from the 3 previous years suggests that BDG grants at a maximum of £2,000 do help create jobs in small businesses. When compared against the recent LIF programme, (which had an average grant rate of nearly £6,000) the evidence shows that the BDG regime appear to be better value for money. Although it could be argued that a more targeted approach with a maximum grant to £10,000 would help deliver greater impact to fewer businesses, the facts show that awards at a lower level do help business growth and create more jobs overall than a more targeted approach.
- 4.14 Small BSUG grants have been offered at a maximum rate of £500 per application. Feedback from officers administrating the grant suggests that this level of support is ideal to help start lifestyle micro businesses. With a small budget of £5,000 which is derived from an annual donation from TATA Steel, it appears illogical to increase the grant level as this would dramatically reduce the number of new businesses that could be supported. Also by retaining the core elements of the grant this will also help any future awards to comply with the terms and conditions imposed by TATA Steel.

Community Regeneration Grants

- 4.15 This fund enables community and voluntary sector organisations in the County Borough to take forward valuable projects that have a positive impact on the community. Since 2011 a wide range of groups have received grant aid at up to 80% intervention rate. Churches, sports clubs, scout groups, OAP groups and local community partnerships are regular recipients of the grant with bigger organisations such as GAVO and Inside Out also receiving monies from the fund.
- 4.16 The Voluntary sector and community organisations play a large and critical role in helping local communities develop and grow. They are able to access external funding that the Council cannot bid into and have been very successful in the Caerphilly county borough council area at securing external funding for a myriad of projects. It must be noted that large numbers of local people have and do currently benefit from projects supported by the Community Regeneration Fund. The Voluntary Sector and community organisations have traditionally utilised this budget to add value to the community. The Community Regeneration Fund has enabled third sector organisations to grow and thrive. Significant match funding has been levered in from other sources: between 2011/12 and 2016/17 a total of £1,897,312 was awarded via the Community Regeneration Fund, which levered in match funding of £3,351,769 from a variety of sources. However, the projects do not have an economic focus and the review of past spend shows that only a small proportion were targeted at employment, training, skills or personal development.
- 4.17 With an underlying climate of financial cut backs to the Regeneration service area, officers would recommend that Cabinet consider refocusing the Community Regeneration Grant budget towards projects with an economic focus. In an age of austerity, it is imperative that the resources that the Council has available to it are channelled to give the greatest long-term sustainable impact.

Oakdale Community Benefit Fund

- 4.18 This fund derives from an annual contribution from the private company who operate wind turbines in the area. It enables community and voluntary sector organisations in the Oakdale area (as defined in paragraph 4.10 above) to bid for funding to take forward projects delivering a social, economic or environmental impact on the area or community concerned. Since

2014, many small community groups have benefited from the Fund, receiving grant aid at up to 80% intervention rate.

- 4.19 As with the Community Regeneration Fund, although valuable to communities, most of the funding does not have a demonstrable impact on the local economy. However, if changes are made that impact on the Community Regeneration Fund budget, then it will be desirable to continue with this fund and possibly extend the geographic reach to provide wider community benefits.

Proposed New Grant Regime

- 4.20 It is proposed that a new grants regime should concentrate more activity on developing business growth and creating employment opportunities within the County Borough. It is recommended that the primary focus of a new **Caerphilly Enterprise Fund** should be on:
- Business Start Ups in all sectors (less than 12 months trading);
 - Underutilised/empty town centre commercial properties
 - Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (e.g. those with less than 250 employees, with turnover not exceeding €50 million (approx. £45 million) and / or a balance sheet not exceeding €43 million (approx. £38.7 million);
 - Established Community Groups or Social Enterprises;
 - Filling identified supply chain voids identified by CCBC Procurement;
 - Projects that help create or safeguard jobs - contributing to the Council's Well Being Goals.
- 4.21 The Council's Corporate Plan 2018-2023 outlines a number of core Well Being objectives that the Council will strive to deliver. Objective Two is Enabling Employment. The new grant regime outlined in this report will be a key tool that will allow the Council to influence / improve the levels of employment in the county borough. It is therefore considered appropriate to re focus the 'grant' budget allocated to Regeneration and Planning towards business growth and job provision in the county borough.
- 4.22 Following a review and critical appraisal of the current grant regimes, it is clear that there is scope to amalgamate the existing business-focused grant schemes, based on the clear commonality of their main economic objectives and administrative processes. If Cabinet are minded to progress with a standardisation of current regeneration grants, it is recommended that the three business focused grants (CIG; BSUG and BDG) are combined into a single fund, namely the **Caerphilly Enterprise Fund** with the OCDF continuing to be administered separately.
- 4.23 More radically, officers propose discontinuing the Community Regeneration Fund programme and focusing it's budget into the Caerphilly Enterprise fund. The good work that the voluntary sector and community groups undertake is fully recognised and greatly appreciated but it is apparent that there are a number of external funding mechanisms that they are able to bid into to secure monies for localised community projects. Larger funding bodies such as the Big Lottery, Garfield Weston Trust and Coalfields Community Grants offer substantial grants to such groups. At this current moment in time, It has been established that there are upwards of twenty external grants available to these groups (See Appendix 1) and even though it is proposed that the CRF fund is closed, officers will continue to offer support and guidance to groups looking for funding and will actively signpost them to suitable available external grants.
- 4.24 The proposed new **Caerphilly Enterprise Fund** will prioritise those projects that can demonstrate job creation, safeguarding of existing jobs and which can lever in private sector investment. It will be aimed predominantly at businesses looking to grow within the county

borough. Although the grant regime will be open for community groups and social enterprises they will need to evidence that their projects focus on economic activity.

4.25 It is proposed that from 2019/20, the new Caerphilly Enterprise Fund will offer funding support under two categories; the first being Business Support and the second being Property Improvement:

- **Fund 1 – Business Support Grants** that will operate in a very similar manner to the BDG and BSUG and will utilise the Council's core revenue allocation to offer grants of up to £500 to micro businesses and up to £2,000 to help create jobs and economic growth in small businesses, social enterprises and community groups. As this is predominantly targeted at supporting small businesses it is intended to offer grant to businesses that can prove they require it. There are concerns that small grants are being awarded to businesses with very large turnovers and that the grants have little impact on such large companies. Therefore grant applicants will need to provide financial evidence of the 'need' of the grant based on turnover, cashflow and the liquidity of the business.

The Council's Procurement Division have identified that there are opportunities for business growth to fill voids in the Council's supply chain. It is envisaged that this fund will be used as a tool to try and encourage the local business community to fill these gaps in provision.

This fund will be open to community businesses, in particular social enterprises to bid into.

- **Fund 2 – Property Improvement Grants** that will operate in a very similar manner to the existing CIG regime outlined above, with a focus on bringing empty or underutilised buildings back into beneficial use. This thematic will operate using a capital allocation and will offer capital grants of up to £10,000.

4.26 It is proposed that the existing Business Development Grant budget will form the core of the Fund 1 budget. The annual budget for 2018/19 is £51,251 with a similar budget allocation in 20/21.

Please note that under the current budget proposals, this budget is expected to reduce by £25,000 for one year only in 2019/20.

4.27 As part of the MTFP savings for 2019/20 it is proposed that the indicative Community Regeneration Grant **revenue** budget allocation is reduced from £100,000 to £50,000. It is further proposed that the remaining indicative £50,000 be allocated from the CRF to the Caerphilly Enterprise Fund to be refocused on economic outputs under Theme 1 – Business Support.

Please note that under the current budget proposals the residual £50k outlined above has been identified as a temporary 'one year only' cut in order to balance the budget for 2019/20.

4.28 Likewise it is recommended that the 2019/20 £99k indicative **capital** allocation for the Community Regeneration fund be vired to the Caerphilly Enterprise Fund Theme 2 – Property Improvements. This would result in the Community Regeneration Fund having a zero budget which would therefore effectively end that programme.

4.29 Section 7 of this report sets out in more detail the proposed allocations to be made to the new Caerphilly Enterprise fund and its two sub-categories for 2019/20.

- 4.30 With extreme pressure on senior managers to make savings for MTFP, it is likely that these grants programmes will come under scrutiny. It is therefore imperative that available resources are aligned to make the greatest impact and help take forward the Council's Corporate Objectives.
- 4.31 The Evidence of Impact section (4.11 – 4.19 above) outlines key evidence that has led officers to propose the maximum grant available under each of the priority funding categories as outlined in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Proposed Grant Limits and Intervention Rates

Fund	Proposed Grant Available	Intervention Rate
Caerphilly Enterprise Fund - Theme 1 "Business Support"	£200- £2,000 revenue	Up to 45%
Caerphilly Enterprise Fund - Theme 2 "Property Improvement"	Up to £10,000 capital	Up to 50%
Oakdale Community Benefit Fund	Up to £3,000 capital Up to £3,000 revenue	Up to 80%

- 4.32 It is further recommended that any grant funded project would need to demonstrate that it will contribute to improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well being of the County Borough:

Economic

There will need to be evidence of job creation (at least one job) where grants of up to £5,000 are awarded. Where larger grants are awarded additional job creation will need to be evidenced.

Environmental

Property Improvement Grants must deliver environmental enhancements. Projects to refurbish empty, vacant or underutilised commercial premises will be prioritised.

Social/Cultural

Social enterprises/businesses must demonstrate how their project will contribute to their future growth and development.

- 4.33 It is proposed that the existing geographical boundary for the Oakdale Community Benefit Fund is extended from 1.5 miles to 2 miles. This would add the communities of Markham, Cefn Fforest, Blackwood, part of Newbridge and Crumlin to the existing eligible communities of Argoed, Croespenmaen, Kendon, Oakdale, Penmaen, Pentwyn and Trinant. It also brings in the communities of Llanhilleth, Brynithel and Aberbeeg in Blaenau Gwent and it should be noted that a number of similar schemes across the UK cut across local boundaries. However it is not suggested that communities outside Caerphilly CBC should have access to this fund. As this fund is provided from a contribution from a private company then they would need to agree to the expansion of the boundary.

Approval Process – Options

- 4.34 Two options for the grants approval process have been considered as part of this review:
- **Written Procedure** via Case Officer Grants Approval Report (Report certified by Case Officer, Line Manager, Grants Manager, Head of Service in consultation with Cabinet Member)
 - **Panel Meeting and Assessment** – Case Officer Recommendations discussed at regular Panel meetings with designated Panel members (including Case Officer, Grants Manager, Head of Service, minimum quorum required)
- 4.35 On balance, it is recommended that the current written procedure process is retained for all new business grants under the Caerphilly Enterprise Fund that require grant funding of less than £5,000. This approach has worked for a number of years and has been effective and more responsive to business focused grants, as it allows projects to be assessed in a timely manner, on a rolling basis as they are received. It should also be noted that this process has been subjected to detailed external audits when the EU supported Local Investment Fund was delivered (up to April 2015).
- 4.36 It is acknowledged, however, that more scrutiny may be required for grant awards above £5,000. It is therefore recommended that a grants panel is established to assess grant applications over this £5,000 threshold both for revenue and capital bids. Grant panel membership would consist of:
- Project Officer presenting report
 - Section/Team Manager
 - Grants Manager, Corporate Finance
 - Cabinet Member for Economy, Infrastructure, Sustainability & Wellbeing of Future Generations
 - Head of Regeneration and Planning
- 4.37 All grant applications will undergo a stringent review, both those that go to panel and those under £5,000 that will be awarded directly. There are already review procedures in place for the existing grants and officers have developed these to be applicable for the grant regime.

5. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

- 5.1 This proposal contributes to the Well-being Goals as set out in Links to Strategy above. It is consistent with the five ways of working as defined within the sustainable development principle in the Act and is aimed at improving the economic well being of the County Borough.
- 5.2 As such the proposals align with the following well being goals:
- **A Prosperous Wales** – financial contributions to targeted business sectors will support opportunities for development of a skilled population in an economy which generates wealth and employment opportunities;
 - **A resilient Wales** – targeted grant support will foster social, economic resilience and the capacity to adapt to change;
 - **A more Equal Wales** – the grant programmes encourage applications from a wide range of sectors and organisations, community, voluntary or business, and reflect a broad opportunity for participation.
 - **A Wales of cohesive communities** – the grant programmes support measures to provide attractive and well connected communities through financial support to community based

projects and environmental improvements.

- **A globally responsible Wales** – the grant programmes support measures which improve the economic, social and environmental well being of the County Borough.

6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 An EIA screening has been completed in accordance with the Council's Strategic Equality Plan and supplementary guidance and some potential negative impact has been identified affecting one or more of the target equality groups.
- 6.2 A full EQLA has been carried out and is appended to the report. Please see Appendix 2.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The review has highlighted that up until 2018/19 that community focused grants have had an overall budget of nearly **three** times that of the funding targeted at the business community. Even the latest 2018/19 budget is nearly twice that of business orientated grants. This report seeks to alter this balance. Proposed budget allocations for 2019/20 are set out in table 2 below.
- 7.2 In order to meet MTFP targets it has been proposed that several of the grant allocations are reduced from 2019/20 onwards and amalgamated into the two Enterprise Funds identified in section 4.25. Table 2 outlines those proposed for 2019/20.
- 7.3 The 2018/19 approved budgets for CRF are £100,057 revenue and £99K capital. The proposal in this report is that the CRF be closed and the £100K revenue budget be split between a £50K MTFP saving and a £50K virement into the Caerphilly Enterprise Fund Thematic 1.
As noted above, under the current budget proposals, the residual £50k has been identified as a temporary 'one year only' cut in order to balance the budget for 2019/20. Likewise there will be a 'one year only' £25k reduction in the BDG allocation.
- 7.4 The Community Regeneration capital budget of £99k will be redirected towards the property focused category of the proposed Caerphilly Enterprise Fund.
- 7.5 These proposals are reflected in Table 2 below. In short, this report recommends the closure of the Community Regeneration Fund, with monies being refocused towards delivering tangible economic outputs.

Table 2: Proposed Grant Structure and Core Allocations

Proposed Grant Regime	Proposed Core Allocations		
	Revenue	Capital	Total
Caerphilly Enterprise Fund - Fund 1 Small businesses	£101,251 £26,251 for 19/20	£0	£101,251 £26,251 for 19/20
Caerphilly Enterprise Fund - Fund 1 Micro businesses	£5,000	£0	£5,000
Caerphilly Enterprise Fund - Fund 2 Property Grants	£0	£149,000	£149,000

Proposed Grant Regime	Proposed Core Allocations		
	Revenue	Capital	Total
Total for Business Grants	£106,251 <i>£31,251 for 19/20</i>	£149,000	£255,251 <i>£180,251 for 19/20</i>
Community Regeneration Grant	£0	£0	£0
Oakdale Community Benefit Fund	£10,000	£0	£10,000
Total for Community Grants	£10,000	£0	£10,000

- 7.6 It should be noted that any decisions relating to the CRF grants programme, will need to be viewed against the existing relationship between the Council and the Voluntary Sector. The Compact / Partnership Agreement is currently being renewed and will be presented in its final form to the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee. Via the Compact Agreement, the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee is a consultee on changes to third sector funding and should be included in the consultation process. It is therefore suggested that the recommendations in this report be presented to the voluntary sector and community groups (probably through consultation with the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee) as part of a consultation process before implementation.

8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Currently Business Support and Funding Team officers are the primary contact for the business growth grants with enquires relating to property improvements directed to the Urban Renewal team.
- 8.2 The restructuring of the Regeneration and Planning Department will identify roles and responsibilities for officers with regards to this new grants model, should it be implemented.

9. CONSULTATIONS

- 9.1 A wider consultation process is proposed with the voluntary sector and community organisations before implementation of the new grants programme. The results of this consultation will be reported back to Cabinet. The views and comments of consultees to date have been reflected in the report and certain concerns are outlined below. A response to each concern is outlined in italics below each bullet point.
- 9.2 The Community Regeneration Fund was previously administered by the Council's Policy Section. They are extremely concerned at the proposals to amalgamate the funds and refocus all of them on enterprise and job creation/employment. So rather than reflect their views and comments within the body of the report, it is considered prudent to summarise their views on the proposed refocusing of the current grant regime below.
- The Community Regeneration Fund has enabled third sector organisations to grow and thrive. The report fails to mention the significant match funding that the community grant programmes lever in from other sources. Between 2011/12 and 2016/17 a total of £1,897,312 was awarded via the Community Regeneration Fund, which levered in match funding of £3,351,769 from a variety of sources, which is a massive amount of economic benefit for the county borough as a whole.

Regeneration Officer Comments - *The proposed grant regime is not being established to deter community groups from applying but with the overall budget being cut year on year the grant regime needs to have a clear focus. This focus, as outlined in the report, will be on stimulating the local economy and as such the grants regime will concentrate on more defined economic outcomes. The voluntary sector and community groups do have access to a range of alternative funding bodies outside of this grants programme that they can apply to and expertise exists within the Council to continue to help signpost organisations and groups to these funding sources.*

- It appears very unjust that the focus is moving from supporting our local communities to only supporting businesses. The proposals in the report will make the majority of third sector organisation ineligible for the funding and, those that are will have to compete with the business sector. External grant sources such as EU funding were used to top up Council budgets to great effect. Many of the projects funded via the community grant schemes also included employing staff, so to suggest that the proposed changes will give a greater economic focus is not fully accurate.

Regeneration Officer Comments - *The recommendations in this report must be viewed in the wider context. Budgets for discretionary grants have seen severe cutbacks and although it is acknowledged that the CRF has had some positive economic benefits, its primary focus has always been around supporting community orientated projects. With dwindling resources, there is a need to make the process more competitive and it has been determined that there should be a refocus on projects that bolster the local economy. Groups who have traditionally accessed the CRF fund will still be able to bid into the fund but with more focused projects. Again it is worth re-iterating that all voluntary and community groups would acknowledge that there are numerous alternative funding mechanisms for community group support. Circa twenty alternative funding sources exist that these groups will still have access too and officers will signpost towards. Although budgets are being cut there will still exist a very strong and well staffed Community Regeneration Team offering support to these communities on a daily basis.*

- The report suggests that most of the CRF funding does not have a demonstrable impact on the local economy, and this is not the case. Had it not been for the seed funding provided by the Community Regeneration Fund, development projects like Newbridge Memo, Van Road Church in Caerphilly, Rudry Village Hall and many others simply may not have happened.

Regeneration Officer Comments - *This report does acknowledge the positive impact that the grants have had over time, but it also clearly argues that the Council must prioritise its reducing resources. It is believed that the best return on this budget will be to take a more focused economic approach to its distribution in order to bolster the robustness of local communities.*

- There is a need to consult with the voluntary sector in relation to the proposed changes. This is enshrined in the Compact agreement, which the Council is a primary signatory to. The Compact / Partnership Agreement is currently being renewed, having been approved in principle by the Public Services Board in September and will be presented in its final form to the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee in due course. CCBC is a prime signatory to the Compact and the Funding Code of Practice. Via the Compact Agreement, the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee is a consultee on changes to third sector funding and should be included in your consultation. It is suggested that this report be presented to the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee as part of the consultation process

Regeneration Officer Comments - A full consultation process with the voluntary sector and community groups will be undertaken as part of the wider consultation process before the new grants regime goes live. This engagement will also allow the Council to highlight replacement funding opportunities available to these groups.

- The report makes reference to the Well-being of Future Generations Act. The Act requires that all public bodies consider the social, economic, environmental and cultural benefits of everything that they do, so a focus purely on economic benefits would not be in keeping with the spirit of the Act. The vast majority of the projects previously funded via the CRF have impacts on multiple benefits, including economic.
- **Regeneration Officer Comments** - The Well Being of Future Generations Act has been considered in delivering this report. Focusing the impact of grants towards maximising local economic activity will, it is believed, have the most profound effect on local communities well being. Stimulating more favourable economic conditions and new employment opportunities will have a plethora of positive outputs and outcomes on the local community as people's overall financial security/stability and well-being improves.
- The report requires a full EQLA be carried out as many CRF funded projects are aimed specifically at these targeted groups. These target groups need to be fully consulted before the report is approved by Cabinet.

Regeneration Officer Comments - This has been undertaken as part of the Cabinet report consultation mechanism. The full EQLA is attached at Appendix 2.

- In a wider context Community Asset Transfer is becoming more of a focus for the Council in the current financial climate. With ever diminishing resources it is unlikely that Council will be able to maintain the range of community venues within the county borough such as community centres, sporting facilities, changing rooms etc. It will be difficult to expect community organisations to take on these sorts of facilities if the Council cannot offer financial support with grant funding. External funding sources that they can be signposted to and offered support.

Regeneration Officer Comments - The CRF is a discretionary grants regime. Community and voluntary groups would be advised not to look to build support from this funding source into their building management or financial management models as further cuts are very probable.

10. PROPOSAL SUMMARY

- 10.1 The report advocates the merging of the current Commercial Improvement Grant, the Business Development Grant, the Business Start Up Grant and the Community Regeneration Fund into the Caerphilly Enterprise Fund which will concentrate more activity on developing business growth and creating employment opportunities within the County Borough. The proposals will simplify the grants application process and seek to standardise grants administration throughout the Regeneration Division. Officers seek approval to undertake a consultation exercise with community groups and the voluntary sector over the proposals; in particular the recommendation to effectively discontinue the Community Regeneration Fund and refocus its budget into delivering this new grants programme.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 11.1 That Cabinet note the content of the report and the principles set out in it.
- 11.2 That Cabinet approve officers conducting a wider consultation exercise with the voluntary sector and community groups on the contents of the report.
- 11.3 That following consultation, a further report be presented to Cabinet.

12. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 12.1 Primarily to allow officers to consult more widely on proposals to offer improved support to businesses and to maximise economic growth.

13. STATUTORY POWER

- 13.1 Sections 70 and 71(1) of the Government of Wales Act 2006 and sections 126-128 of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.

Author: Allan Dallimore, Team Leader, Urban Renewal

Consultees: Cllr Sean Morgan, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy, Infrastructure, Sustainability & Wellbeing of Future Generations
Christina Harrhy – Interim Chief Executive
Mark S Williams, Interim Corporate Director (Communities)
Rhian Kyte, Head of Regeneration and Planning
Antony Bolter, Group Manager (Strategy Funding & Support)
Glenn Cooper, Project Officer, Urban Renewal Team
Clair Vokes, Grants Officer (Strategy Funding and Support)
Tina McMahon, Community Regeneration Manager
Dave Roberts, Principal Group Accountant
Nadeem Akhtar, Group Accountant, Corporate Finance
Kath Peters, Corporate Policy Manager
Alison Palmer, Community Planning Co-Ordinator
Vicki Doyle, Policy Officer, Statistics and Funding
Anwen Cullinane, Senior Policy Officer – Equalities and Welsh Language
Shaun Watkins, Principal Personnel Officer

Apendices:

Appendix 1 – Voluntary Sector/Community Group: Sources of External Grants
Appendix 2 – Equalities Impact Assessment

Appendix 1

GRANT SCHEME NAME	PROVIDER	GRANT DESCRIPTION	WHO CAN APPLY	CAPITAL / REVENUE	GRANT AMOUNT	MATCH FUNDING REQUIRED
Technical Assistant Grant	CCBC	To support charities and voluntary organisations in Caerphilly undertaking a capital project with costs associated with technical assistance	Voluntary or Charitable organisations in Caerphilly	Capital	Up to £4800 including VAT	Not stated
Welsh Church Fund	CCBC	To promote the activities of voluntary organisations that benefit the people of Caerphilly and enrich local communities	Registered voluntary charities, movements and institutions which contribute towards community life, community organisations, community based projects, churches and chapels	Capital	Smaller Projects up to £5,000 or larger projects up to a maximum of £10,000	Up to £5000 fully funded for larger projects of over £5000, the remaining amount will be subject to a grant rate of 75% up to a maximum grant of £10,000
Health & Wellbeing Grant	Aneurin Bevan University Health Board	The purpose of the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Grant is to support voluntary organisations working within the Caerphilly County Borough area on projects related to improving the health and wellbeing of residents.	Voluntary or community organisation, charity, community interest company or social enterprise operating in Caerphilly County Borough	Capital & Revenue	Max £4000	fully funded or match funded
GAVO Cash 4 U Grant	GwirVol Partnership	The purpose of the Cash 4 U Grant is to fund exciting and worthwhile projects that create more Volunteering opportunities for young people aged 14-25.	Voluntary organisations	Capital & Revenue		

Garfield Weston Foundation	Garfield Weston Foundation	Supports a wide range of charitable activity in the UK in areas such as arts, community, education, environment, youth, faith, health, welfare, museums and heritage	UK registered charities, Charitable Incorporated Organisations, Educational establishments including schools & universities, Churches, Housing Associations, Museums and Galleries	Capital & Revenue	Regular grants of up to £100,000 or Major Grants of £100,000 and above	Match Funding required. Capital projects 10% of total project cost. Revenue projects 10-20% of organisations total income/salary. Like to see evidence of 50% funding before applying for grant
Coalfields Community Grants - Wales	The Coalfields Regeneration Trust	The programme is for community and voluntary organisations that can clearly demonstrate that a grant will impact positively on people living in the former Coalfield Communities of Wales	Community & Voluntary Organisations	Capital & Revenue	From £500 up to £7000	Fully funded up to £7,000 or can be used to match fund
Gwent High Sheriffs' Community Fund	Community Foundation in Wales	Funding is available for community-based initiatives and projects that reduce crime and improve community safety in Gwent. The fund aims to provide a safer and better quality of life for the people of Gwent	Community groups, voluntary organisations and local charities in Gwent, ie the local authority areas of Newport, Blaenau Gwent, Torfaen, Monmouthshire and Caerphilly.	Capital	Max £5000	
National Lottery Awards for All - Wales	Big Lottery Fund	Grants are available for community organisations, schools and statutory bodies in Wales to help improve local communities and the lives of people most in need	Voluntary and community organisations, including: registered charities, constituted groups and clubs, not-for-profit companies and community interest companies, social enterprises, schools, statutory bodies including town, parish, and community council.	Capital & Revenue	Grants between £300 and £10,000	Fully funded up to £10,000 or match funded

Wales - People and Places	Big Lottery Fund	People and Places aims to support people and communities working together and using their strengths to make positive impacts on the things that matter to them the most	Voluntary or community organisation, registered charities, constituted groups or clubs, community interest companies, social enterprises, schools, statutory bodies including town, parish or community council	Capital & Revenue	Medium grant offers from £10,001 to £100,000 for projects lasting up to 5 years and Large grant offers from £100,001 to £500,000 for projects lasting up to 5 years	Funding is available for all eligible costs of the project but applicants are encouraged to seek funding from other sources
People's Postcode Trust	People's Postcode Lottery	Provides project based funding for up to 12 months in length ranging from £500 - £20,000 to organisations within Great Britain. The current themes of the Trust are: Poverty Prevention, Employability Programmes and Human Rights through combatting discrimination	Registered charity, CIO/SCIO, Constituted voluntary or community group, social enterprise, community interest company, not-for-profit organisation, local club or other constituted community group	Capital & Revenue	£500 - £20,000	
Tesco Bags of Help	Tesco / Groundwork	Bags of Help is Tesco's local community grant scheme where the money raised by the carrier bag charge in tesco stores is being used to fund thousands of community projects across the UK. The projects must meet the criteria of bringing benefits to the community.	voluntary or community organisations including registered charities/companies, schools, health bodies, NHS Hospital Trust, Foundation Trust, Parish/Town Councils, Local authorities and social housing providers	Capital	From £1000 to £4000 can be awarded	Fully funded or match funded if larger project
Tudor Trust	Tudor Trust	Core funding, unrestricted funding, project grants, capital grants	organisations/charities seeking support for work that has a charitable purpose	Capital & Revenue	No limit set	Fully funded

Local Community Projects Fund	Greggs Foundation	The Local Community Projects Fund awards grants of up to £2000 to enable not for profit organisations to do something they otherwise couldn't afford to.	Organisations supporting people in need. Any not for profit organisation can apply, however larger organisations with a turnover in excess of £300,000 will be unsuccessful	Capital	£2,000	Fully funded
Esmee Fairbairn Foundation	Esmee Fairbairn Foundation	Grants available to organisations doing legally charitable work in the UK that focuses on the Foundation's funding priorities in the arts, children and young people, the environment, food or social change	Charities and not-for-profit organisations with a regular annual turnover of at least £50,000	Capital & Revenue	Max £500,000	Match funding is not required however, it may help to have funding commitments from other sources and a credible investment raising plan
Tampon Tax Community Fund	Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport	Grants are available to local not-for-profit organisations for local projects that improve the lives of disadvantaged women and girls in local communities across the UK	Registered UK charities, constituted community groups, companies limited by guarantee with charitable aims, community interest companies, co-operatives, credit unions, social enterprises	Revenue	£10,000	Fully funded or match funded
Trusthouse Charitable Foundation	The Trusthouse Charitable Foundation	Grants are available to smaller charitable and not-for-profit organisations in the UK to fund community support, arts, education and heritage projects in areas of extreme urban deprivation or remote, socio-economically deprived rural areas	Established charitable organisations including CICs, social enterprises, not-for-profit registered companies, voluntary organisations	Capital & Revenue	Max £60,000	Applicants must have secured a minimum of 50% of the total project cost before applying for both capital & revenue projects

Co-op Local Community fund	Co-op Membership	Helps pay for local projects that co-op members care about through 1% of own brand sales and carrier bag charges	Charities, local community groups or not-for-profit organisations	Capital & Revenue		
ACT Foundation (ACT)	ACT Foundation	Provides grants to individuals and other UK charities with the aim of enhancing the quality of life for people in need, specifically the mentally and physically disabled and the aged.	UK registered charities	Not specified	No upper limit but most grant awards are for under £10,000	
Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust - Veterans Community Centres Programme	Ministry of Defence	The funding is to be used to improve existing community centres used by veterans.	Registered charity or CIC that already supports the Armed Forces Community	Capital	£30,000	Fully Funded
Baily Thomas Charitable Fund	Baily Thomas Charitable Fund	The Charity aims to support work for the aid and relief of those affected by learning disability	Voluntary organisations which are registered charities or are associated with a registered charity	Capital or Revenue	two grant schemes - small grants from £250 up to £10,000 or general grants over £10,000	Can be match funded
Improving Lives Grant Programme	The Henry Smith Charity	Grants for small and medium sized organisations in the UK to support projects and the running costs of organisations	Charities and not-for-profit organisations including social enterprises	Capital & Revenue	£20k - £60k	

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

October 2018

THE COUNCIL'S EQUALITIES STATEMENT

This Council recognises that people have different needs, requirements and goals and we will work actively against all forms of discrimination by promoting good relations and mutual respect within and between our communities, residents, elected members, job applicants and workforce.

We will also work to create equal access for everyone to our services, irrespective of ethnic origin, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment, religious beliefs or non-belief, use of Welsh language, BSL or other languages, nationality, responsibility for any dependents or any other reason which cannot be shown to be justified.

The Council is required to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- removing or minimising disadvantages experienced by people due to their protected characteristics
- taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people
- encouraging people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

The protected characteristics are:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| • Age | • Race |
| • Disability | • Religion, Belief or Non-Belief |
| • Gender Re-assignment | • Sex |
| • Marriage and Civil Partnership | • Sexual Orientation |
| • Pregnancy and Maternity | • Welsh Language* |

* The Welsh language is not identified as a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, however in Wales we also have to treat Welsh and English on an equal basis as well as promoting and facilitating the use of the Welsh language.

Further advice on completing impact assessments can be found on the equalities pages of Corporate Policy Unit Portal.

THE EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

NAME OF NEW OR REVISED PROPOSAL*	Establishment of a new Caerphilly Enterprise Fund which combines all of the current grant funding programmes run under the Regeneration Department.
DIRECTORATE	Communities
SERVICE AREA	Regeneration & Planning – Urban Renewal and Business Support & Funding Teams
CONTACT OFFICER	Allan Dallimore Urban Renewal Team Leader dallia@caerphilly.gov.uk 01443 866441
DATE FOR NEXT REVIEW OR REVISION	N/A

***Throughout this Equalities Impact Assessment Form, ‘proposal’ is used to refer to what is being assessed, and therefore includes policies, strategies, functions, procedures, practices, initiatives, projects and savings proposals.**

The aim of an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is to ensure that Equalities and Welsh Language issues have been proactively considered throughout the decision making processes governing work undertaken by every service area in the Council as well as work done at a corporate level.

The Council’s work across Equalities, Welsh Language and Human Rights is covered in more detail through the [Equalities and Welsh Language Objectives and Action Plan 2016-2020](#).

When carrying out an EIA you should consider both the positive and negative consequences of your proposals. If a project is designed for a specific group e.g. disabled people, you also need to think about what potential effects it could have on other areas e.g. young people with a disability, BME people with a disability.

There are a number of supporting guidance documents available on the [Corporate Policy Unit Portal](#) and the Council’s Equalities and Welsh Language team can provide advice as the EIA is being developed. Please note that the team does not write EIAs on behalf of service areas, the support offered is in the form of advice, suggestions and in effect, quality control.

Contact equalities@caerphilly.gov.uk for assistance.

PURPOSE OF THE PROPOSAL

1	<p>What is the proposal intended to achieve? <i>(Please give a brief description and outline the purpose of the new or updated proposal by way of introduction.)</i></p> <p>A draft cabinet report presents a proposal to combine the existing regeneration grants into a single “Caerphilly Enterprise Fund” with a refocus towards offering improved support to start up businesses, stimulating economic growth, filling identified supply chain voids and supporting job creation. Officers have undertaken a review of the current regeneration grant regimes, and have recommended merging the grants into a single, targeted grant regime with an economic output focus. This Caerphilly Enterprise Fund will look to streamline the existing grants processes and have one point of access, making it easier to navigate for applicants.</p> <p>The Cabinet report proposes the refocusing of all regeneration grants towards economic outputs under a streamlined grants protocol. The report advocates that part of the Community Regeneration Fund (CRF) budget be identified as a possible MTFP saving and the remainder re-focused towards supporting business and property grants that the department operates. The current 2018/19 approved budgets for CRF are £100,057 revenue and £100,000 capital. Likewise, it is proposed that the Community Regeneration Fund capital budget be re-directed towards the property focused category of the proposed Caerphilly Enterprise Fund.</p> <p>Effectively the report recommends the closure of the current CRF programme of grant funding as it operates at present. Whilst the purpose of the Community Regeneration Fund (CRF) has been to foster and enhance viable and sustainable communities within Caerphilly county borough, it is acknowledged that with reduced internal resources, the focus of grant activity should be focused on economic outputs. It is further acknowledged that there are external grants bodies who offer similar funding for local projects. The new Caerphilly Enterprise Fund will not exclude community groups from bidding into it, but the focus of the grants will be much narrower. It is acknowledged that the new grant regime may mean that some community groups will no longer be able to bid in for funding.</p>
2	<p>Who are the service users affected by the proposal? <i>(Who will be affected by the delivery of this proposal? e.g. staff members, the public generally, or specific sections of the public i.e. youth groups, carers, road users, people using country parks, people on benefits etc. Are there any data gaps?)</i></p> <p>The proposed Caerphilly Enterprise Fund will offer improved support to start up businesses and will offer a streamlined grants application process to existing SME’s that will be easier to access, be more responsive to the needs of the business community and help stimulate economic growth. Local businesses and entrepreneurs will benefit from a more focused and better funded grants programme.</p> <p>The Enterprise fund will harmonise the existing Regeneration grants processes under one umbrella. The current CRF is used by voluntary and community groups to deliver community based projects that must have one of more of the following aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• they will enhance employment prospects and skills of local people, particularly the young and those at a disadvantage, and promote equality of opportunity• they will protect and improve the local environment and infrastructure, and bring land and buildings into effective use• they will enhance the quality of life of people through social, cultural and recreational opportunities• they will promote and encourage local people to secure a sustainable future for local communities and/or encourage regeneration.

	<p>With the proposed new regime, community groups and social enterprises will only be able to submit bids aimed at the first of the bullet points above, specifically at economic outputs</p> <p>In 2017-18, £129K revenue and £167K capital was allocated to 17 projects in 5 bidding rounds. The ability to fund third sector projects for anything other than economically focused projects would be lost if the current funding levels were identified as MTFP savings or vired to the new Caerphilly Enterprise Fund.</p> <p>The existing CRF Fund has traditionally enabled community and voluntary sector organisations in the county borough to bid for funding to take forward initiatives they have developed for the benefit of the local community or service users. Since its inception in 2011 a wide range of groups have received grant aid at up to 80% intervention rate. Churches, sports clubs, scout groups, Older people groups and local community partnerships are regular recipients of the grant with bigger organisations such as GAVO and Inside Out also receiving monies from the fund. These groups will still be able to bid into the enterprise fund but will need to have more focused projects. In addition, Council officers will continue to work with these groups to signpost them to the various external grant bodies that they can access</p> <p>A wider consultation process will be conducted with the voluntary sector and community groups</p>
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IMPACT ON THE PUBLIC AND STAFF

<p>3</p>	<p>Does the proposal ensure that everyone has an equal access to all the services available or proposed, or benefits equally from the proposed changes, or does not lose out in greater or more severe ways due to the proposals? <i>(What has been done to examine whether or not these groups have equal access to the service, or whether they need to receive the service in a different way from other people?)</i></p> <p>The proposed Caerphilly Enterprise Fund will be delivered using protocols and processes that comply with the Council’s Strategic Equality Plan and the Welsh Language Measure. All documentation will be bi-lingual.</p> <p>The application will include questions regarding Welsh language and equalities and how the grantee will pay due regard to both.</p> <p>The application process will be easier to navigate for potential grant applicants. The programme will be open, transparent and more streamlined</p> <p>The creation of the Caerphilly Enterprise Fund will effectively bring a single application process for applicants to bid into for projects. The Voluntary Sector and community groups will be advised on how best to bid under this fund and will also be signposted to other funding opportunities for projects.</p> <p>A wider consultation exercise is advocated before the proposals are implemented</p>
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4	Is your proposal going to affect any people or groups of people with protected characteristics? <i>(Has the service delivery been examined to assess if there is any indirect effect on any groups? Could the consequences of the policy or savings proposal differ dependent upon people's protected characteristics?)</i>	
Protected Characteristic	Positive, Negative, Neutral	Relevance of the Policy or Practice
Age	negative	Some grants have been awarded to help these groups. Possible negative impact if they are discontinued
Disability	negative	Some grants have been awarded to help these groups. Possible negative impact if they are discontinued
Gender Reassignment	neutral	
Marriage & Civil Partnership	neutral	
Pregnancy and Maternity	neutral	
Race	neutral	
Religion & Belief	negative	Some grants have been awarded to help these groups. Possible negative impact if they are discontinued
Sex	neutral	
Sexual Orientation	neutral	

5	<p>In line with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards. (No.1) Regulations 2015, please note below what effects, if any (whether positive or adverse), the proposal would have on opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language, and treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.</p> <p><i>(The specific Policy Making Standards requirements are Standard numbers 88, 89, 90, 91, 92 and 93. The full detail of each Standard is available on the Corporate Policy Unit Portal. Although it is important that what is outlined in the proposal is available in Welsh and English, please consider wider impacts on Welsh speakers.)</i></p> <p>Consideration has been given to the how the project will be delivered having due regard for the Welsh language.</p> <p>All information and promotional material made available to the public will be in line with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards and is produced bilingually. All application forms under the proposed Caerphilly Enterprise Fund will also be available bilingually. Officers will ensure that the Welsh Language Standards which relate to Grants are adhered to as part of the process.</p>
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INFORMATION COLLECTION

6	<p>Please outline any evidence and / or research you have collected which supports the proposal? This can include an analysis of service users. <i>(Is this service effectively engaging with all its potential users or is there higher or lower participation of uptake by one or more protected characteristic groups? If so, what has been done to address any difference in take up of the service? Does any savings proposal include an analysis of those affected?)</i></p> <p>Commercial Improvement Grants In the financial 5 year period between 2013 and 2018 a total of 16 CIG were awarded for improvement works to properties in towns and villages throughout the County Borough. Although the maximum grant award is £15,000 under this programme, the average grant award was £9,100. Evidence therefore suggests that reducing the maximum grant approval to £10,000 will still stimulate economic activity and will also allow more applications to be processed per annum. The Council holds a very large database for property owners who have submitted an Expression of Interest. To date there are over 60 expressions of interest,</p> <p>Business Grants (BDG & BSUG) Evidence from the 3 previous years suggests that BDG grants at a maximum of £2,000 do help create jobs in small businesses. When compared against the recent LIF programme, (which had an average grant rate of nearly £6,000) the evidence shows that the BDG regime appear to be better value for money. Although it could be argued that a more targeted approach with a maximum grant to £10,000 would help deliver greater impact to fewer businesses, the facts show that awards at a lower level do help business growth and create more jobs overall than a more targeted approach. Evidence shows that the full budget is fully expended 'year on year' with strong demand for the grants programme.</p> <p>Small BSUG grants have been offered at a maximum rate of £500 per application. Feedback from officers administrating the grant suggests that this level of support is ideal to help start lifestyle micro businesses. With a small budget of £5,000 which is derived from an annual donation from TATA Steel, it appears illogical to increase the grant level as this would dramatically reduce the number of new businesses that could be supported. Also by retaining the core elements of the grant this will also help any future awards to comply with the terms and conditions imposed by TATA Steel.</p> <p>Current Community Regeneration Fund Since 2011 a wide range of groups have received grant aid at up to 80% intervention rate. Churches, sports clubs, scout groups, OAP groups and local community partnerships have been regular recipients of the grant with bigger organisations such as GAVO and Inside Out also receiving monies from the fund. Between 2011/12 and 2016/17 a total of £1,897,312 was awarded via the Community Regeneration Fund, which levered in match funding of £3,351,769 from a variety of sources, However in 2017/18 the fund was under-subscribed.</p> <p>It has been established that there are circa twenty external bodies who offer grant support to the voluntary sector and community groups and it is proposed that CCBC groups use these to a greater extent than they have to date.</p> <p>Information will be gathered during the consultation period with the voluntary sector and community groups and will be reflected in the final report to Cabinet on this proposal.</p>
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CONSULTATION

7	<p>Please outline the consultation / engagement process and outline any key findings. <i>(Include method of consultation, objectives and target audience. What steps have been taken to ensure that people from various groups have been consulted during the development of this proposal? Have you referred to the Equalities Consultation and Monitoring Guidance?)</i></p> <p>Before implementing the move towards an overarching Caerphilly Enterprise Fund that concentrates on economic outputs it is proposed that the new grants protocol will go to the Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee (and or the voluntary sector/community groups individually) The VSLC is a consultee on changes to third sector funding and as such will have a chance to comment on the proposals from this stance. In addition, the Cabinet report recommends that Cabinet approve wider consultation with community groups and voluntary sector organisations on the proposals within the report.</p>
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MONITORING AND REVIEW

8	<p>How will the proposal be monitored? <i>(What monitoring process has been set up to assess the extent that the service is being used by all sections of the community, or that the savings proposals are achieving the intended outcomes with no adverse impact? Are comments or complaints systems set up to record issues by Equalities category to be able analyse responses from particular groups?)</i></p> <p>The Caerphilly Enterprise Fund grants, like the current business grants, will have an inbuilt monitoring protocol.</p> <p>Officers within the Regeneration team will have the specific role of monitoring not only who grants have been awarded to but also the impact off the grants on those businesses/organisations who they are awarded to.</p>
9	<p>How will the monitoring be evaluated? <i>(What methods will be used to ensure that the needs of all sections of the community are being met?)</i></p> <p>Officers monitor the grants and evaluate them using a set of criteria that the grants are awarded against. The criteria currently do not include for impact on protected characteristics.</p> <p>However the Council will ensure that residents of Caerphilly are potentially able to benefit from the economic impacts of grant award and that grant applications are encouraged from all geographic locations.</p>
10	<p>Have any support / guidance / training requirements been identified? <i>(Has the EIA or consultation process shown a need for awareness raising amongst staff, or identified the need for Equalities or Welsh Language training of some sort?)</i></p>

Officers need to encourage collaborative working and encourage all grant applicants and recipients to work to sustainable development principles (I-CLIP – involvement, collaboration, long term, integration, prevention) and use the medium of Welsh where possible and practicable.

Officers from within the Council's Community Regeneration and Economic Development section will continue to offer support and advice to community and voluntary groups as to how best to take projects forward and benefit from external grant bodies

11 If any adverse impact has been identified, please outline any mitigation action.

Officers will ensure that all partners and local organisations are aware of the new Caerphilly Enterprise Fund and are encouraged to submit applications.

There are a large number of external community and voluntary sector grants programmes and vehicles that the Council can help signpost groups to, that will help alleviate any negative impact of the CRF fund being withdrawn

12 What wider use will you make of this Equality Impact Assessment?
(What use will you make of this document i.e. as a consultation response, appendix to approval reports, publicity etc. in addition to the mandatory action shown below?)

The assessment will underpin delivery of the Caerphilly Enterprise fund to ensure that all communities, groups, their protected characteristics are given the same opportunity to access the funding.

The EIA will be appended to the Cabinet report

13	<p>An equality impact assessment may have four possible outcomes, through more than one may apply to a single proposal. Please indicate the relevant outcome(s) of the impact assessment below.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Please tick as appropriate:</p> <p>No major change – the impact assessment demonstrated that the proposal was robust; there was no potential for discrimination or adverse impact. All opportunities to promote equality have been taken. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Adjust the proposal – the impact assessment identified potential problems or missed opportunities. The proposal was adjusted to remove barriers or better promote equality. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Continue the proposal – the impact assessment identified the potential problems or missed opportunities to promote equality. The justification(s) for continuing with it have been clearly set out. (The justification must be included in the impact assessment and must be in line with the duty to have due regard. Compelling reasons will be needed for the most important relevant proposals.) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Stop and remove the proposal – the impact assessment identified actual or potential unlawful discrimination. The proposal was stopped and removed, or changed. <input type="checkbox"/></p>
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Completed by:	Allan Dallimore
Date:	20.11.18
Position:	Team Leader, Urban Renewal
Name of Head of Service:	Rhian Kyte – Head of Regeneration and Planning

REVIEW OF CCBC REGENERATION GRANTS CONSULTATION REPORT

INTRODUCTION

A report was presented to Caerphilly County Borough Council's Cabinet on the 27th February 2019 on the review of CCBC Regeneration Grants. The report sought Cabinet approval to consult more widely on proposals to merge several Council run grant programmes into a Caerphilly Enterprise Fund that focuses delivery on developing business growth and creating employment opportunities. The rationale behind combining the grants into a single fund is to offer improved support to start-up businesses, stimulate economic growth, fill identified supply chain voids and support job creation.

This report provides a summary of findings of a survey undertaken as part of the wider consultation process.

METHOD

A voluntary sector, business and stakeholder consultations was undertaken from **Friday 12th April to 13th May 2019**. During this time a variety of methods were used to encourage and enable all sectors to get involved and have their say.

Survey

The questionnaire was designed to target all businesses and voluntary sector organisations across the borough who were eligible for previous grant schemes and to seek their views on the new proposed merged grant scheme. A copy of the survey is included in **Annex 1**.

Engagement

Key engagement mechanism included:

- Online – via the CCBC Website, social media (including Facebook and Twitter)
- Email alerts and correspondence to all business and voluntary sector databases
- Face to Face engagement with the businesses and voluntary sector organisations
- Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee and Newslines

Social Media

The consultation was promoted via social media with a reach of 2,735 individuals via Twitter and 5,466 via Facebook through both the main Council pages and the Caerphilly Business page. The social media activity is shown in **Annex 2**.

SURVEY FINDINGS

A total of 54 responses were received and have been included in this analysis. Where the number of responses to a particular question is higher / lower than this figure this is noted in brackets in the text of the relevant question.

Respondent Profile

A profile of respondents provides context for an analysis of the responses received.

As shown in the graph below, the largest proportion (53%) of those who responded indicated that they were from Voluntary Sector Organisations. A further 34% Limited Companies, 13% Sole Traders, 8% Social Enterprises, 6% other and the lowest response being 4% of Partnership businesses. (Note: responses are not mutually exclusive meaning that respondents were able to select more than one response therefore, the total does not equal 100%)

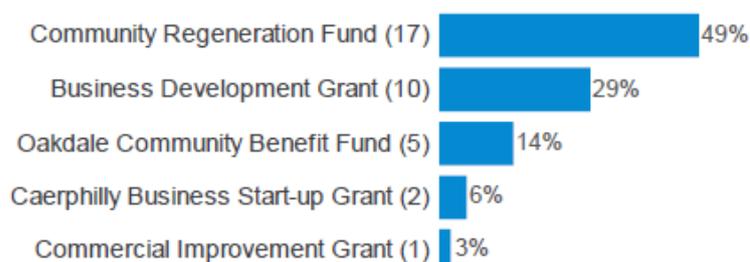
I am completing this survey as (Please tick all that apply):



Previous Grant Received

From the number of respondents who completed this survey 35 of them have previously received grant funding through the Regeneration grant schemes leaving the remaining 19 as being either unsuccessful or new potential applicants. The below chart shows the breakdown of grants received with 49% of the respondents have previously received Community Regeneration Funding.

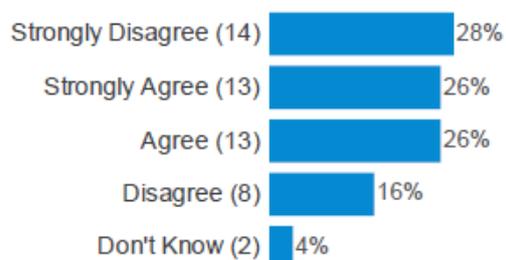
Has your organisation / business previously received a grant from one or more of the existing grant programmes? (Please tick all that apply)



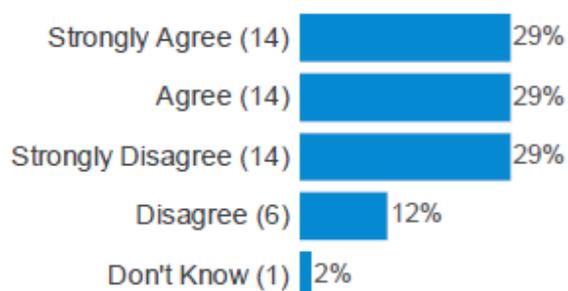
Focus of New Grant Scheme

The third question of the survey was emphasised around the new proposed grant schemes main focus on developing business growth and employment opportunities and whether they agreed or disagreed with the identified areas. Below shows the results from each identified area.

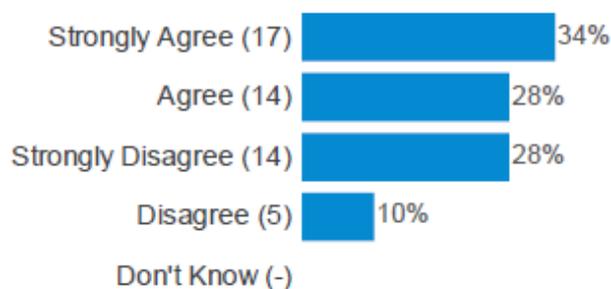
(Business Start-ups in all sectors (less than 12 months trading))



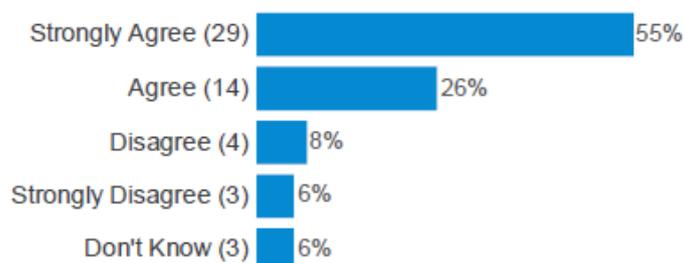
(Underutilised / empty town centre commercial properties)

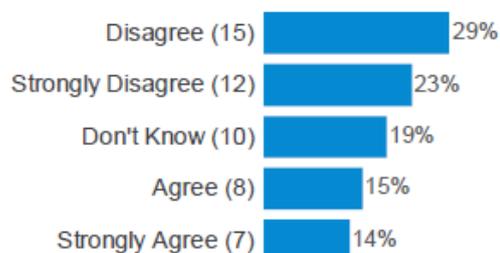
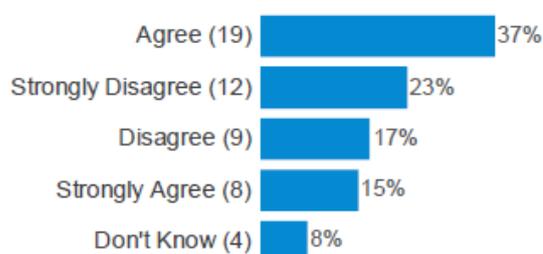


(Small and medium sized Enterprises)



(Established Community Groups or Social Enterprises)



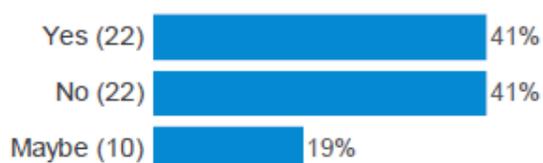
(Filling identified supply chain voids identified by CCBC Procurement)**(Projects that help create or safeguard jobs – contributing to the Council's Well Being Goals)**

From this question the majority of the respondents strongly disagreed that the focus should be around start-up businesses or filling identified supply chain voids identified by CCBC Procurement. However the majority agreed that it should have a focus around job creation or safeguarding of jobs, supporting SME's, Social Enterprises and Community Groups along with underutilised / empty town centre commercial properties.

It was also opened up for respondents to provide reasons for their decisions. Evidence of these has been provided in **Annex 3** with 46 mixed comments provided.

Apply for New Fund

The respondents were asked if they would be encouraged to apply for the new fund after reading the primary focus. The respondents were equally encouraged and not encouraged to apply for the new fund with 19% of them being unsure.

Having read the primary focus for the new proposed grant scheme would you be encouraged to apply for the new fund?

Survey Comments

REGENERATION GRANT CONSULTATIONS COMMENTS

Below are a number of comments made by respondents of the survey.....

As a small to medium sized business operating in the Caerphilly borough it has been a struggle to get our business off the ground and develop it into a company that is sustainable for both staff and the business. Whilst start up grants seem a good idea, with no track record and many businesses failing in the 1st year I feel the grants available could be better spent elsewhere. I am dubious that supply chain voids can be correctly identified and funds placed into the right hands by procurement teams as historically this has not been the case. If you wish the Caerphilly borough to prosper in my opinion the way forward would be with small to medium sized business growth, the full utilization of empty town centres and the safety of the jobs currently held in the community.

we are a small business in the Caerphilly area, pay alot of money in business rates, we have to pay for our own waste to be removed, an extra cost and burden, we are looking to invest in more technology and create jobs, any help with funding, grants would be a big help Concentrate on what makes the borough work.

Start up businesses need as much help as possible. Town centres are dying, ploughing more money in to them won't adjust peoples attitudes which have changed over the last 5 years. Small & medium sized businesses need as much help as can be given. My experience of community groups & social enterprises is not good. Funding shouldn't be given direct but in form of advice and guidance. It's a global economy; supply chain voids shouldn't be focused on. Safe guarding jobs is good.

WE NEED TO FOCUS ON REVIVING TOWN CENTRES BEFORE EVERYTHING ELSE.
OF COURSE IT HASN'T HELPED BY THIS SHORT SIGHTED COUNCIL CLOSING ALL
THE TOILETS.

A socialist council which is what the public believe they have elected would not blithely give public money away in the form of grants but would own the 'underutilised /empty town centre shops' you mention and would also have the ability to employ directly if we can afford to give the money away! The proposals are capitalist proposals which is very disappointing considering we have a labour council.

While supporting small businesses is clearly important, there are other, commercial sources that they should be able to access for funding: and anything that the Council can offer is still going to be small beer compared to the number of small businesses out there. Charities and community groups, on the other hand, will find it difficult to make a 'commercial' case to a bank or similar, and therefore will find it hard to access commercial loans, since, by definition, they are not in it to make a profit. They are, however, very worthy of support by the Council: they are often the only organisations in a position to 'take up the slack' from cut backs in Council services. We have considered applying for the current Regeneration grant, but have found its criteria too restrictive: the need to get all consents in place and to get three tenders for everything, for example. Those criteria are difficult to achieve when a charity is trying to start a new initiative, and probably affect a charity more than, say, a small business, which would probably be seeking funding to develop what it already does, rather than start something new. If you haven't been able to move all of the money you had in the Regeneration fund budget, it may be that your conditions were too tight.

I don't disagree with any of the above statements however the question is leading! I Do Not agree with the inclusion of a third sector grant in this funding pot!!! The focus of much of the 3rd sectors work is early intervention. It isn't based on getting people into work. However this happens and very successfully. More so in fact than pure small business startups. However you are acting in a very short sighted manner. Many of the Vol orgs that receive community regen funding go on to be successful employers. BUT THIS IS NOT THE FOCUS THE FOCUS IS EARLY INTERVENTION!! I answered no to the question below because you are proposing taking away the one grant that the borough offers to support the 3rd sector. Don't abandon them you need them more than you think as budgets across your directorates are cut it's the 3rd sector who through preventative and early intervention will help to keep costs down. Not the small start up businesses who use the funding buy equipment and computers then close down taking it all with them. Also it's important to note: In the last community regen funding round all applications came from 3rd sector applications!!! It is also very important to note that small business start up grants, schemes, and small low interest loans are readily available. I have a list of over 40 which I can share with you should you need them. The 3rd sectors access to funding which fits their need is getting smaller each year. I ask you to reconsider. Support your third sector in the way they support you with everything they have...

I have benefited from a business development grant in the past and believe they have been instrumental in me being able to grow and expand my business.

The priorities in the report of focus on "start up businesses, stimulating economic growth, filling identified supply chain voids and supporting job creation." is too narrow. The wider objectives of the Council of community cohesion, vibrant communities, healthy lifestyles etc are excluded from these priorities and this proposal will much to the detriment of the many community groups for whom the CRF has been a major source of support.

Support for proven growth businesses is important along with the support of startups. The world is a small place and supporting projects that bring work to the area is vital. The continued support of colleges to provide a pool of young apprentices may not be part of this scheme but skills are severely lacking at all levels in our sector (engineering). Face to face contact with businesses is also important so that we feel we are listened to regarding what's available grant wise. We have grown from 6 to 38 people on an average salary close to £30,000 the main issue halting growth is taking on further debt not finding more customers. Support in machine purchase and small infrastructure grants (switch to LED lighting etc) would help to generate more employment.

I think that there should be more funding available for small and medium enterprises, it's great getting grants when you start up a business but businesses that have been established a number of years struggle too.

I disagree with the reduction of funds for voluntary sector, especially Community Regeneration Fund, and Oakdale CB Fund, which has a specific local focus. There is no evidence that supporting the business sector has any positive impact as the Council does not monitor results 'down the line', i.e., checking to see if the business is still trading or has increased the number of staff it employs after a few years. This response is submitted on behalf of: 1. Oakdale & Penmaen Community Partnership and 2. Oakdale Community Centre.

The community regeneration grant has supported many voluntary organisations and groups to provide much needed services and facilities across the borough. It has also encouraged and provided these groups to apply for and receive match and additional funding that would otherwise be unobtainable without the community regeneration funding. Businesses have many other streams of acquiring money to support them. While there are other funding streams available for the voluntary sector, many of them have very specific criteria and

require the group to be a registered charity which would not apply to many of the groups who would be considering applying for the community regeneration grant.

I disagree with the reduction of funds for the voluntary sector, especially Community Regeneration Fund, and Oakdale CB Fund, which has a specific local focus. Widening the area of benefit of the Oakdale Fund would seriously harm organisations currently benefitting as many do not have access to other funding streams. There is no evidence that supporting the business sector has any positive impact as the Council does not monitor results 'down the line', i.e., checking to see if the business is still trading or has increased the number of staff it employs after a few years.

I see that you say Community Groups or Social Enterprises will need to prove economic worth, but it depends how you quantify that. In my experience such groups and enterprises can damage local businesses. If they use government funds and volunteers to undercut local businesses who can't compete on that level, then it may appear on paper they are creating paid jobs and boosting the economy. But if that's at the expense of a local business who was paying taxes and not receiving public funds in the same way, it's damaging the economy in a way that can't be measured. I understand fostering community spirit is vitally important in the Valleys, and such schemes are useful for youngsters coming up trying to get skills in such areas. But if you are paying these youngsters a wage below industry standards (using the public funds that subsidise you), then what happens to these youngsters once they have gained the necessary skills and try to set up their own business. They aren't receiving public funds, so they can't be as cheap as Community Groups or Social Enterprises. They aren't going to be able to get work to sustain themselves, and generally are either forced into jobs outside their fields or to large cities like London or Bristol where such work exists that pays enough to live.

Community and/or voluntary groups should NOT have to compete directly with business enterprises regarding employment/business opportunities and growth. They are two distinct and separate roles within the community and should not be shoe-horned into one category.

Community funds should be what they say they are and grant monies should be ring-fenced for the volunteer sector to improve their communities where local residents give freely of their time to improve the communities in which they live. With council cutbacks already having a considerable impact on the lack of local services and provision, it's left to volunteers to provide some of the work historically carried out by councils. I see no evidence to suggest supporting local businesses with grant funds brings about secured employment or business success and this appears to be a money saving tactic where funds are looking to be redirected to balance the council's books. Our particular volunteer organisation in Oakdale sees landscaping, litter picking, community centre support and improvement schemes being funded by such Grants and with volunteers carrying out the work enhances the area and environment for all villagers and removing funding for materials to carry out this work through redirected monies will make these operations redundant.

Get rid of Caerphilly CBC

This fund was set up for use of local community projects not to bolster up council funds for business projects. My council tax along with thousands of other council tax payers both private and business should be used for council projects. Considering the council tax has risen this year substantially I find it despicable that funds set aside for community projects are being considered as a means to bolster up the council's mismanagement of funds in recent years e.g. paying out thousands to dishonest councillors put on "garden leave".

We are a self-advocacy charity for people with learning disabilities, who are at present working with people with learning disabilities to get them to speak up for themselves and challenge discrimination. For the last 2 years we have been facilitating Protection Of

Vulnerable Adults (now called safeguarding) training. This has been so successful that we have also decided to facilitate other courses such as, Learning disability awareness, working with the workforce development team . Also we are working with the Welsh Ambulance to facilitate training on when and when not to ring for an ambulance and other tips about accidents, Our new project is to go into schools and teach students, aged 7 to 11 - we have facilitated 300 students so far. That's why we believe that we can be a small enterprise.

Important to support new businesses as well as companies wishing to expand.

It seems pretty clear on the document that all of the areas will be catered for in the new proposal.

Given the limited amount of funds I believe that more could be achieved by focussing on smaller Enterprises (therefore, exclude medium sized). Ideally the grants would target new job creation rather than safeguarding. If an ongoing business is struggling to safeguard jobs then either the market is against them or they are not executing well enough but either way I believe the grants available are too small to make a significant impact. I also believe that the grants are too small to have significant affect on supply chain voids. But the grants could make a huge difference to small start-ups or community projects. I work for a medium sized company and won't be applying for the grants as we are profitable and able to generate our own resources. I apply that this is appropriate.

While it is important to support businesses and social enterprises that enhance and equip the workforce I believe it is short-sighted to withdraw funding that supports grass-roots community groups - such as the Community Regeneration Fund - as it is often these voluntary sector organisations that provide the basic low-level interventions that act as the first steps of an individual's pathway into work. For many individuals who have been long-term unemployed, have never attained formal qualifications or have severe self-esteem and confidence issues (as well as any other barriers) it is highly unlikely that they will be able to secure and sustain more formal placements and meet the requirements of the schemes. Before these hard outcomes can be achieved there must be work to build the individual's interpersonal skills, confidence and time-management skills that are often developed by being a member of a smaller voluntary organisation where they can experience being part of a team, developing new skills in a supportive environment and building the courage to attend formal training days to gain qualifications - grass roots organisations often ensure these initial opportunities are informal and accommodating in a way that businesses cannot. They are then able to encourage individuals to progress to the more formal employment schemes that the proposed funds will be supporting. It saddens me that investment in businesses is coming at the expense of investment in voluntary organisations, who often have the same revenue and capital costs to consider as businesses. At a time when many funding streams for the voluntary sector are being reduced or dissolved I am disappointed that our council are following suit, despite the obvious implications this will have on the county's ability to meet the Well-being Goals under the Well-being of Future Generations Act as the 3rd sector is absolutely vital to creating and sustaining cohesive communities.

Not pet projects which get continuous funding and remain unsustainable. I do not see why supply chain gaps must be identified by Caerphilly procurement. Post brexit we will have local fresh produce gaps. Limited horticulture and farms still not diversifying. We will have the need to revitalise our towns through markets and different to online shopping experiences. Social enterprises should be seen as viable businesses not prop up projects moving into a new phase of funding.

The Community Regeneration Fund has supported Voluntary Sector groups for many years and this support for voluntary groups has been invaluable. Through its capital grants, it has supported funding to enable voluntary groups to restore important buildings in towns and villages throughout the borough. Revenue grants have also provided support to fund local

employment to carry out such work. The restoration of these buildings enhance the local environment, prevent the need for new build, prevent buildings falling into disuse and attracting unsocial behaviour from drug users etc. The community can take pride in their restored buildings. These organisations provide /building's to house many community activities, an important factor in supporting the well being of members of the community, which the council supports as a Welsh Assembly Directive. How do you quantify Health and Well Being? By providing activities and events that people can attend helps combat loneliness and isolation in a growing number of older folk in our community and promotes cohesion among community members. These organisations provide community support, makes provision for social activities near people's homes, especially for those who do not wish/ cannot travel/ afford to go into the cities to find similar events. Local provision of activities is at a price people can afford. Therefore we need to protect the current CRF at all costs. To concentrate on Community Enterprise Schemes to the disadvantage of the work of the voluntary sector must not happen. How long will some of these schemes last? What happens to equipment when they fail? A registered charity's assets would go to a similar organisation if that organisation closed. What will happen when an enterprise scheme fails? The criteria for the new Community Enterprise Scheme must broaden its criteria to allow Voluntary Organisations to be able to apply to a grant scheme which operates from a level playing field. Current proposals are concentrate far too much in favour of Community Enterprise Schemes. Other funders, as suggested by the council also have criteria far too limited to enable voluntary sector groups to apply.

Focus needs to be on what the community groups are currently providing and with the help of funding services can be sustained and increased.

Voluntary Community groups require support in the form of grant funding and as volunteer-led groups, they cannot give employment opportunities but opportunities for people to volunteer within their community. It is essential that voluntary community groups are still supported with grant-funding opportunities This is not a very detailed survey asking for people's opinions on the proposed changes.

I feel that the aim of the Community Regeneration Fund has always been to enable Voluntary Organisations to provide facilities in their local communities mainly to disadvantaged, vulnerable and neglected groups. The grants have been used to support a variety of projects from repairing and improving buildings, providing start-up sums for new activities and ensuring the continuation of valuable existing activities. Voluntary Organisations employ a certain number of people, usually living locally. Through their grant-funded activities they create and maintain local employment, whether by employment of local builders, support to un-paid carers and be-frienders, providers of local classes and training in a wide range of fields - healthy living, digital skills, support to volunteers and paid carers of vulnerable people Above all, voluntary organisations and volunteers are enormously good value because so many people give their time and effort to the community UNPAID AND WITHOUT PERSONAL REWARD. They contribute immeasurably to the Council's well-being agenda and seem to be increasingly called upon by the council to take over the council's functions. It seems perverse to be discouraging Voluntary Sector Organisations and volunteers at the very time when they are called upon to do more and more for the community. It is not the case that grants are readily available from other sources since funding bodies in general are cutting back as they less money to distribute and are facing higher demands. Many volunteers are older people with inadequate computer skills and find the grant application process laborious and time-consuming and can be easily discouraged by successive refusals. The promotion of business is important but it has to be remembered that the driving force behind businesses to personal gain, not the well-being of the community. Many business start-ups fail, many jobs provided do not last very long. There are alternative sources of funding and questions could be asked as to why the tax-payer should be funding businesses in the first place.

I think there is a real opportunity to tackle village/town high streets with a new type of retail though start ups. We need to ensure that a continual flow of New Business come through the system allowing for failures as well as the successful ones.

As someone who struggled to find any good quality help from anything when starting up a business that was something new to the market, I think "Business Start-ups in all sectors" is an important one. There are services to help new businesses, but mostly for specific types. A lot of towns are being degraded purely for the lack of services that aren't just another hair dressers and for the number of empty buildings not in use. I also think anything to do with well-being is a major priority in these days and times where the rate of mental health in young children and adults is increasing dramatically.

I think all the above points above are important. It would be good to focus on regeneration of the town centre and have a more diverse range of shops. I hope that CCBC tries to fill supply chain voids with local companies as much as possible. My only concern is funding for Social Enterprises, as many have failed in the past. Perhaps they need more scrutiny and/or guidance in the future.

I think it important to support community groups, having applied to countless external grants (Lottery, Coalfield etc) and being unsuccessful because they have limited funding and therefore greater competition for the funding. Please support the volunteers who give up countless hours of their own time to make our County Borough a better place.

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Because you asked to take part in consultation

Us small businesses need support. We need help to get tenable start up businesses that are in line with welsh government policy and meet the council's strategy for development and regeneration and are actually needed in the area . Small medium business and not large chains or multinational take over as they have economy of scale and opportunities not open to us small guys. We would like to expand and develop but lackaffordable and achievable investment opportunities , if these were available we would create jobs , offer tourists opportunities and make an environmental impact using regenerative stewardship of the land as well as keeping residents here spending their money locally and drawing them here from the city's . . A token amount is negiable for us . If you want all these long term benefits you need to properly invest short term and embrace our vision financially as long as its in line with policy and strategy and you think there is a market for it.. We have experienced increasing energy costs which we can not sustain, our ageing equipment doesn't help so new energy efficient equipment would really help us, this is unachievable for us . . We need a grants that we can install renewable energy sources , these may benefit the community where there is surplus, as well as allowing us to develop our business rather than stagnate or lose it. Although seasonal we create opportunities for younger workers who find it hard to get jobs locally th8s needs to be seen as valuable in the same way as other permanent, full time job creation is . . We need to invest in regenerative agriculture and agroforestry , keep supply chains as local as possible. With the growing climate concerns we have a massive opportunity here and could lead the way . We have massive vision but without financial help we are stuck .. The biggest challenge thwarting development we face as a,sme is the vat barrier , it stifles us . Perhaps some relief (or rise) so we could make the massive leap we need to meet the additional tax , which would put us out of business now before the vision was realised that would put us in the position of being able to sustain it .this is a crazy situation to be in. In regards to identifying supply chains and the allocation of funding for

certain projects over others this could be open to criticism. I think careful thought should go into transparency and processes to justify decisions.

Stop wasting money on social and community enterprises, charities, voluntary third sector etc as these generate no wealth and often fulfil roles better undertaken by private enterprise. They soak up cash better spent in developing proper commercial ventures. The new approach is a step in the right direction!!

I fully appreciate the focus of the council on increasing jobs through business start-ups and projects that help safeguard or generate new jobs. However, what I observe is that town centre commercial properties are increasingly used by the major charities to sell goods to raise money for their charities. I assume that these properties do not generate income for the council, because I know that business rent is waived for charities. So unless utilization is through commercial use, it will not assist budgets, although it may preserve town centres from dilapidation. I do not agree with removing all focus from grant funding to community projects aimed, not at generating jobs, but at improving the quality of life for those living in the borough. Although you say that you will focus on established groups, later in the document you say that officers will focus on signposting these initiatives to larger funds such as Big Lottery, Garfield Weston etc. of which you provide a list. Looking through that list, there are several things to point out - firstly, these are open to a wider geographical area than CCBC, and hence competition for funds is very high. Secondly - some of these funds have a very narrow applicability - e.g. Gwent only, focus on women and girls only, armed forces veterans only, or learning disability only. Many (especially the larger ones) require match funding, for which CRF has been useful, and many are small - e.g. £2000 to £5000, so of limited help to larger projects. Whilst focus on jobs and business is good, it fails to recognize the increasing elderly population in the Borough - for whom neither of these things will improve their quality of life. The voluntary sector is moving towards focus on these areas - with opportunities for fellowship, dementia cafes and memory halls etc. These activities are flourishing thanks to CRF funding in the past to help provide appropriate buildings in which these things can happen. I totally endorse the comments made by the present administrators of CRF, and find the answers from the regeneration officer to be unsatisfactory - basically saying that "yes, the grant has done great work, but because there is alternative funding available across the rest of the country, we will not be continuing this". Basically the borough will be reliant on outside funders to support the continuation of this work. I wonder how many of these external funders will respond positively when they know that CCBC does not support its own??.

Expecting enterprise or the third sector to take over small under utilised buildings doesn't work and sets them up to fail.

While accepting the need for a robust strategy to encourage job creation and to underpin support for existing jobs in the borough, we should not lose sight of the fact that voluntary organisations often engage in projects that provide an important "pathway" for people to find employment by offering useful volunteering opportunities. This is over and above enhancing the well-being of people living in local communities because of improvements in the physical, economic and social environment.

I think this grant should be restricted to Voluntary Organisations who do good work throughout the community usually for vulnerable people. There are other ways of funding business.

Voluntary organisations create jobs and should continue to benefit from this grant.

Voluntary sector organisations create jobs so I believe they should be given preference for the grant

I feel the voluntary section, such as the community centre I represent would not have an opportunity to apply for grants. Whilst I agree that the proposal 'could' provide employment opportunities. Our centre provides many different opportunities to the wider community to take part in, for all age ranges. This is as important to the community as employment. We have birthday parties, church on a Sunday, Zumba, Kick boxing, baby club to name just a few things. Therefore I feel strongly the voluntary section should not be discounted.

I think the CRF grant should be reserved for voluntary sector organisations to help fund the valuable work they do in the community. The voluntary sector create jobs to at least a greater extent as businesses.

Teimlwn bod yr awgrymiadau i newid y gronfa dan sylw yn mynd i gael effaith niweidiol ar y sector gwirfoddol. Mae yna perygl y bydd y newidiadau yn golygu na all nifer o fudiadau yn y Trydydd Sector ymgeisio am gyllid o'r gronfa. Mae nifer o'r mudiadau hyn yn gwneud cyfraniad gwerthfawr tu hwnt i'w cymunedau lleol ac yn cyfrannu i'r economi leol mewn amrywiaeth o ffyrdd. Mae'n bwysig bod unrhyw newidiadau yn cydnabod y cyfraniadau hyn ac os yw'r gronfa yn newid ei fod yn agored i amrywiaeth o fudiadau. Er efallai nad yw rhai mudiadau yn creu swyddi, mae'r gwasanaethau maent yn cynnig yn cefnogi nifer o drigolion i ddychwelyd i'r gweithle, dilyn hyfforddiant, gwirfoddoli a magu hyder. Mae'r gwasanaethau hyn yn cael effaith gwerthfawr a chadarnhaol ar lles trigolio