

Proposed Rapid Scrutiny Exercise: Community Facilities Funding

Purpose

1. To consider the establishment of a rapid scrutiny exercise to review the proposed application and assessment process for the council's Community Facilities Fund.

Background

2. On 8 October 2019, Cabinet considered a [report](#) on the Community Funding Review for Community Facilities. This report,
 - a) Identified those community areas that have not benefitted from capital investment through the community campus and hub programme;
 - b) Suggesting a mechanism for identifying how the council might engage with identified community areas to identify potential facility projects that address local priorities; and where council investment could enable communities to develop new or improved community assets;
 - c) Recognising that some capital funding should be set aside to support the development of any appropriate facility projects identified by these community areas during this process, subject to further investigation.
3. This was to ensure that,
 - a) Community areas that have not benefited from community facility investment can identify potentially develop facility projects, which could improve local provision and support local priorities;
 - b) Any future provision within these areas explores the potential to deliver new community facilities, aligned to the principles of the Service Devolution and Asset Transfer policy;
 - c) Additional investment within the proposed community areas compliments future priorities identified through the respective leisure facilities and libraries review.
4. Having debated the proposals, Cabinet resolved to,
 - a) Confirm that option three (see paragraph 5 below) is the preferred option and should be pursued by officers as a means of developing new facility development in the seven identified community areas;

- b) Confirm the seven community areas where capital investment should be allocated as Amesbury, Bradford on Avon, Chippenham, Marlborough, Southern Wiltshire, Tidworth, Warminster and Trowbridge.
 - c) Confirm engagement should take place with the seven identified community areas to identify local opportunities suitable for facility development and to better understand local priorities.
 - d) Recommend a sum of money available for investment to develop community facilities in the seven community areas.
 - e) Recommend the CLFF model identified in this report be developed as a model to develop community facilities in the seven identified community areas.
 - f) Approve a mechanism be developed to engage with the seven community areas similar to that suggested in this report.
 - g) To prioritise projects which align to the principles of Wiltshire Council's Service Devolution and Asset Transfer policy and which are underpinned by a collaborative approach ensuring multiple community organisations benefits from investment.
 - h) Delegate authority to the Director of Communities and Neighbourhood Services in consultation with the Director of Finance and Procurement to oversee and implement an engagement mechanism and to allocate funding to any appropriate facility projects identified by community areas as part of this process.
 - i) Invite Overview and Scrutiny to assist in assessing whether the community funding process is effective in delivering social benefits.
5. Option 3 was as follows: "To set aside a sum of capital to support a community-led programme that will see some facility investment in the remaining seven community areas and engage with these communities to understand local priorities for community facilities and any gaps in provision. This approach has commenced in Westbury and would appear to be an appropriate model for investment which requires less capital investment and officer resource while still helping communities contribute to local priorities."

Overview and Scrutiny engagement

- 6. As outlined in resolution (i) above, following a request from the Leader, Cabinet invited Overview and Scrutiny (OS) to assist in assessing whether the community funding process is effective in delivering social benefits.
- 7. Since the Cabinet meeting in October, an application and assessment process for groups applying for Community Facilities Funding has been drafted and is ready for review by OS. The draft process includes,
 - Application criteria, including the kinds of projects that will be prioritised and those that will not be considered;
 - Requirements in terms of applying organisations' governance arrangements;
 - Permitted uses of the funding;
 - The governance arrangements for determining applications.

8. Following discussion with the OS Management Committee chairman and vice-chairman, a rapid scrutiny exercise with the following terms of reference is proposed to undertake the scrutiny requested by Cabinet:

To consider whether the proposed application and assessment process for submissions to Wiltshire Council for Community Facilities funding will be effective in supporting and encouraging applicants to deliver social value/benefits.

9. If the rapid scrutiny exercise is established, an open invitation for non-executive councillors to take part would be circulated and the meeting arranged. As outlined in the Rapid Scrutiny Protocol, there is no need for the resultant recommendations to be endorsed by Committee prior to submission to the Executive, though the findings of the exercise and the Executive response would be brought back to the Committee's next meeting.

Proposal

10. To establish a rapid scrutiny exercise to review the proposed application and assessment process for the council's Community Facilities Fund with the terms of reference included under paragraph 9.
11. To receive the findings of the rapid scrutiny exercise and the Executive response at the Committee's next meeting.

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Appendices

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| Appendix 1 | Report to Cabinet, 8 October 2019: Community Funding Review – Community Facilities |
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