

Item

## **USE OF THE ANTI-POVERTY RESPONSIVE BUDGET**

**To:**

Environment & Communities Scrutiny Committee, 28<sup>th</sup> January 2021

**Report by:**

Mr Andrew Limb

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**Wards affected:**

All

Non Key Decision

### **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 This report recommends extending the scope of the council's Anti-Poverty Responsive Budget to include projects delivered by community groups as well as those delivered or managed by council services. This would represent a change from the criteria agreed when the fund was proposed in a committee report in June 2018.

### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Executive Councillor is recommended to:  
Agree that the council's Anti-Poverty Responsive Budget can be used for community-led as well as council-led projects that help deliver the objectives of the Anti-Poverty Strategy.

### **3. Background**

- 3.1 The Council's Anti-Poverty Responsive Budget is a small fund which has been available in recent years to address need in the city which has become evident in-year. Its establishment was one of the recommendations set out in a committee report and agreed by the then-Executive Councillor in June 2018.
- 3.2 That report recommended that in future anti-poverty projects led by community organisations be funded through the council's community grants programme, and projects led by council services be funded through provision made in the Budget Setting Report (BSR).
- 3.3 A responsive budget would be retained to fund additional Council-led anti-poverty projects in response to any immediate needs or emergency issues affecting residents on low incomes in the city that could not wait until the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) or the BSR. The responsive budget would generally be used to support projects if there were no other budget available to support them.
- 3.4 The experience of the coronavirus emergency in 2020 has brought into focus the fact that need can emerge in the city that community groups are best placed to respond to (through their close knowledge of and relationships with their communities), but which could not have been anticipated at the time of the Community Grants round.
- 3.5 Community Grants are awarded in January each year on the basis of applications made the previous October, and subject to allocations set out in the Budget (generally the previous February). For instance, funding to community groups for the financial year 2021/22 will be made on the basis of applications submitted in October 2020. There is currently little or no provision to fund community-led projects to meet new or unanticipated need that emerges during the financial year 2021/22.
- 3.6 Broadening the scope of the Anti-Poverty Responsive Budget would allow the Council to use this money to fund community groups to deliver projects that arise after the deadline for the grants round, and are not therefore funded through the community grants. This change will give the council greater flexibility to meet new and emerging need more effectively.

- 3.7 The continuation and value of the fund is decided through the BSR process each year. It is anticipated that, if retained, this fund will remain relatively small in value, and therefore any awards made from it are likely to be relatively low value – they are expected to be projects that can be delivered rapidly to “plug a gap” until the next funding round can take effect.
- 3.8 A proportionate, light-touch process will be established for inviting proposals from community organisations once a need has been identified. The nature of this fund (“responsive”) means that the process will be more rapid, and more agile than the usual grants round and is project rather than application based.
- 3.9 The Community Services grants team will support appropriate officers to invite proposals from targeted organisations that demonstrate the capability to deliver projects promptly, with proportionate funding agreements, impact monitoring and reporting mechanisms consistent with processes already in place. Proposals will be required to set out how they add value to, rather than duplicate, existing funding or delivery arrangements.
- 3.10 It will continue to be possible for Council services to identify projects that can meet an unanticipated need too, where they are managed / delivered / commissioned directly by the service.
- 3.11 Projects for funding from the responsive budget will continue to be considered by the officer Anti-Poverty Project Board and then submitted for approval by the Executive Councillor for Communities as agreed previously. The use of the fund will be reported to this scrutiny committee as part of the annual Anti-Poverty Strategy report.

## **4. Implications**

### **a) Financial Implications**

This report has no impact on the decision whether or not to continue the budget each year, or how much funding is allocated to it. Those decisions will continue to be made through the budget-setting process. Payments made will be monitored using existing practice.

### **b) Staffing Implications**

This potentially creates additional work for the Community Grants team, who will be supported by colleagues from Corporate Strategy and other

relevant services in assessing proposals for fit with the Anti-Poverty Strategy.

**c) Equality and Poverty Implications**

An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) was produced to assess the Council's Anti-Poverty Strategy and is available [here](#).

**d) Environmental Implications**

There are no direct environmental implications arising from this decision. The environmental implications of individual projects will vary – we would expect projects to support low-carbon living in the city wherever possible.

**e) Procurement Implications**

Each funded project will need to consider appropriate procurement. Inviting proposals to achieve clear intended outcomes is in line with the current Community Grant process.

**f) Community Safety Implications**

There are no immediate community safety implications of this decision, although it is possible that the budget could be used for projects that enhance community safety, if appropriate.

**5. Consultation and communication considerations**

The Anti-Poverty responsive budget is to support emerging or emergency need. Consultations and communication considerations will need to be considered as these needs arise.

**6. Background papers**

Background papers used in the preparation of this report:  
Committee report, June 2018: [Process for funding work on Anti-Poverty Strategy outcomes](#)

**7. Appendices**

None

**8. Inspection of papers**

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact Andrew Limb, Head of Corporate Strategy, 01223 457004