

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET:	23 September 2021
TITLE:	Councillors Pride Fund - Helping to Protect, Care and Invest in our Communities.
REPORT OF:	Fliss Mercer, Director: Communities, Customer and Commercial Services
LEAD CABINET MEMBER:	Cllr Paul Watling, Cabinet Member for Co-operative Communities, Engagement and Partnerships

PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT

1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the Councillors' Pride Fund, which allows each ward Member to allocate funding to projects that will make a difference in their local area. The report summarises what the fund has achieved to date and sets out how it will be delivered over the next two years.
- 1.2 The year 2020 has been like no other, the Council has had to act quickly to support the community through the pandemic and now looks to support the recovery. Many people have experienced a difficult and isolated time during the course of the pandemic and the Councillors' Pride Fund now offers the opportunity for ward Members to help local community groups and centres to welcome people back safely. It is also an opportunity to support the green spaces that have been so important to local residents over the course of the pandemic.
- 1.3 In recognition of the importance of a strong recovery from Covid-19 the Council is making an additional £3,000 per ward Member available for the years 2021-22 and 2022-23 meaning each ward Member will have £5,000 to allocate in their ward per year. This additional funding is being made available from the Covid-19 Recovery Reserve and will see a total investment of £540,000 over the next 2 years.
- 1.4 Feedback from Members has been that even small amounts of money can have a significant and long-lasting impact. Projects funded by the Councillors' Pride Fund have encouraged people to become regularly active in their community, for example through volunteering or attending a local group supported by the fund.
- 1.5 Over the past 10 years, the Council has invested £918,000 into funds for Members to improve their wards, working co-operatively with their local communities. Since 2015, more than 1,160 community projects

have been delivered, supporting a diverse range of activities. The last two years have been the most successful to date with over 400 projects delivered and 100% of funding allocated each year.

- 1.6 In addition to the funding made available by Telford & Wrekin Council each year, some Members double the impact of their allocation by seeking match funding from their Town or Parish Council. Applicants also seek match funding from a variety of other sources. In 2019 and 2020 alone 126 applications were matched by a total of £121,656 meaning that the Councillors' Pride Fund supports and contributes to a significant delivery of local projects whilst enabling applicants to make the most of all available resources.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That an additional £3,000 allocation per member per year for the periods 2021-22 and 2022-23 funded from the Covid-19 Recovery Reserve be noted.
- 2.2 That the continued impact that the Councillors' Pride Fund (previously Ward Cooperative Fund) has had since it was launched in 2011 be noted.
- 2.3 That the change in deadline for this year's applications as set out in section 4.2.5 be noted
- 2.4 That delegated authority is given to the Group Manager of Community Services in consultation with the relevant ward Member(s) to assess and approve or refuse applications for funding in accordance with the grant criteria.

3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Co-Operative Council priority objective(s)?	
	Yes	All
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	Yes	The Councillors' Pride Fund is available Borough wide and open to all Ward Members to apply. There is potential to positively impact on a wide range of specific groups of people across all communities and wards.
TARGET COMPLETION/DELIVERY DATE	The Councillors' Pride Fund is an ongoing annual process that is aligned with the financial year.	
FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes	<p>The budget for the Councillors' Pride Fund was £54k per year for 2011/12, 2012/13 and 2013/14 rising to £108k per year from 2014/15 onwards.</p> <p>The proposed budget allocation remains at £108k for 2021/22. The additional £3k allocation per ward will be funded via the Covid 19 Recovery Reserve set aside at year end and totals £324k for 2021/22 and 2022/23. CLM 17/08/21</p>
LEGAL ISSUES	Yes	<p>The general power of competence under section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 allows local authorities to do anything which individuals generally may do.</p> <p>This is a very wide ranging power and it is for the Council to identify its priorities, setting out how the spending is envisaged through policy and budget plans.</p> <p>Every decision of the Council is open to challenge and so it is important to ensure that every allocation of funding is made in a fair, reasonable and transparent manner and is in line with the Council's Equality duties.</p>

		Ongoing legal advice can be provided in respect of this scheme and individual projects, if required. EH 18.8.21
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	Yes	<p>The sustainability impact of the Councillors' Pride Fund will depend on the specific projects that are approved. However, there is potential to positively impact on environmental sustainability, for example through projects that improve green spaces or access to green spaces.</p> <p>We will be promoting to Members how they could use their Pride Fund allocation to contribute to the Council's Sustainable Telford & Wrekin programme including our aspiration for the Borough to become carbon neutral by 2030, as set out in Paragraph 4.2.9</p>
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	Yes	The Councillors' Pride Fund will benefit all wards.

PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4. INFORMATION

4.1 Background

- 4.1.1 This report provides an update on the delivery of the “Councillors’ Pride Fund” and outlines the current delivery of the scheme.
- 4.1.2 The Councillors’ Pride Fund was established in 2015 following development of the “Ward Cooperative Fund” and previously the “Your Money Your Projects Scheme” and is allocated from the Councils base budget.
- 4.1.3 Following positive feedback about the impact the scheme was having from Members, Town and Parish Councils and the community in 2014/15 this allocation was increased to £2,000 for each ward Member
- 4.1.4 The Councillors’ Pride Fund offers a way for Members to support small and large projects in their ward, to encourage community participation, improvement of the local area and support projects that benefit the local community.
- 4.1.5 In 2021 the Councillors’ Pride Fund provides Members with an opportunity to support their communities to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic with additional financial resources.

4.2 Councillors’ Pride Fund today

- 4.2.1 In 2021 the Councillors’ Pride Fund continues to be an important source of support to local community projects particularly in light of events over the last 18 months due to the pandemic. Covid-19 has impacted on communities in many ways. Many community groups have increased what they do in order to help those vulnerable during the pandemic, brand new groups have established, others have lost funding revenues or have seen additional costs due to the pandemic, and green spaces have seen increased footfall.
- 4.2.2 Community groups are key to the Borough recovering from the pandemic, in supporting residents that have been isolated to get back out and to take part in their communities safely. The Councillors’ Pride Fund has been key to supporting communities through this difficult time. Funding has allowed Councillors to make a huge difference to the local community from supporting community groups to take steps to become Covid-19 secure, supporting the provision of food banks and community fridges at a time when many are seeing their situation change and providing funding to help local children to continue their learning whilst unable to attend school. Further details can be found under section 4.3 “Making a Difference”.

- 4.2.3 The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of the availability of flexible financial support at a local level. The Councillors' Pride Fund helps to make community projects happen by offering funding that can be difficult to achieve from other grant giving organisations with the flexibility to support even the smallest of community groups. The Councillors' Pride Fund makes things possible.
- 4.2.4 The Council recognise the difference Members can make with this funding by supporting organisations to continue to thrive and assisting community groups and facilities to be available for local residents. The current circumstances are exceptional with greater need for support to ensure the stability of these organisations and facilities that are so critical for many local residents in learning to live with the pandemic and return to actively engage in the community. The Council has therefore not only committed to continue to invest in the Pride Fund but in 2021/22 and 2022/23 an additional investment of an extra £3,000 per member per year will be made over and above the £108,000 already committed. This funding is being made available from the £1.25 million Covid-19 Recovery Reserve meaning each Member will have a total of £5,000 to allocate per year seeing a total of £540,000 invested in community projects by ward Members over the two year period.
- 4.2.5 Linked to the financial year, the Fund traditionally launches in April and closes on 1 December. This is in recognition of the fact that time is required to process applications and recipients are required to deliver their projects by the end of the financial year at the end of March. In recognition of the additional funding available this year it is proposed that the deadline will extend and the fund will close with a final deadline of 31 January 2022.
- 4.2.6 Although the deadline for applications is 31 January 2022, we encourage Members to submit applications as early as possible and throughout the year to ensure timely delivery of funding to recipients.
- 4.2.7 Applications for 2021 are already being received and to date focus on reducing social isolation, improving the physical environment, encouraging sporting activity, lifesaving equipment, projects that contribute to the sustainability of community buildings and celebrations of the resilience seen in communities during Covid-19.
- 4.2.8 Following feedback from Members, it is now a requirement for all grant recipients to keep in touch with their awarding Member to inform them of the difference the funding has made. This could include, should the Member be available, a visit to the project. Recipients are asked to liaise directly with Members in respect of this.
- 4.2.9 Members are encouraged to give due consideration to environmental projects in their ward including the wider theme of a carbon neutral

borough. Support of projects which contribute to the Council's Sustainable Telford & Wrekin programme including our aspiration for the Borough to become carbon neutral by 2030 is encouraged.

4.2.10 To support Members to achieve the Council's vision to Protect, Care and Invest to Create a Better Borough, projects seeking funding will be asked to identify which of the Council's Priorities their project supports.

4.3 Making a difference

4.3.1 Since 2011 £918,000 has been made available to ward Members to allocate to projects that make a big difference with a small amount of money. Recipients include, community and voluntary groups, Town and Parish Councils and Schools, grants have ranged from £50 to awards of £2,000.

4.3.2 Since 2015 the fund has supported more than 1,160 projects across the borough. 2019 and 2020 have been the most successful years to date with 100% of funds allocated within every ward, supporting over 400 projects across the two years.

4.3.3 Funds have supported community self-help and have strengthened the capacity within our communities to ensure people are better supported in the places where they live.

4.3.4 In 2020 the Councillors' Pride Fund was reflective of the global situation with many councillors choosing to use their funds to support children to continue their learning when unable to attend school. Over £36,570 of Councillors' Pride Funding was used to support the Laptops for Learning project across the Borough which also brought in £31,100 of match funding. Funds also supported the provision of Breakfast packs for children in receipt of income-related Free School Meals, Christmas meals for those that are on their own and isolated at Christmas and the improvement of green spaces and play facilities.

4.3.5 In addition to the funding made available by Telford & Wrekin Council each year, some Members seek match funding from their Town or Parish Council. Meaning that the value of grant funding can double and thereby increasing the impact that the Councillors' Pride Fund has at a local level. Applicants also seek match funding from a variety of other sources including grants, local fundraising and financial partners such as local businesses. In the last two years 126 applications were matched by over £170,200 meaning for every £1 invested by the Councillors' Pride Fund applicants were able to source 78p of match funding. This means that the Councillors' Pride Fund supports and contributes to a significant delivery of local projects whilst enabling applicants to make the most of all available resources.

4.3.6 Case studies from the 2020 Councillors' Pride Fund:

Case Study one:

Laptops for Learning



The Laptops for Learning Project gained support across the Borough with 44 Members choosing to allocate funding to the project. Over £36,570 of Councillors' Pride Funding was used to support the Laptops for Learning project which also brought in £31,100 of match funding meaning that more than 240 Laptops were distributed to children across the Borough to support them to continue their education at home during the closure of schools. This was part of a bigger programme which provided over 700 laptops to children across the Borough.

Case Study two:

Newport Tree Project



A Councillor in Newport North & West supported the Newport Tree Project with £800. The project saw trees planted in Norbroom Park and Strine Park to support local aims to reduce the towns impact on climate change. The Councillor worked with the Councils Specialist Environmental Officer to source and plant the trees assisted by local volunteers on the day of planting. The end result will see an improved environment for residents to enjoy plus, with the ability of trees to remove a significant amount of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere in their lifetime, will support the Boroughs aim to be Carbon Neutral by 2030.

Case Study three:

Supporting Community Buildings during Covid-19



Councillors in both Woodside and Hadley & Leegomery chose to support their local community centres through grants to help the centres to take steps to become Covid secure. Grants funded the purchase of tables to be used as sanitiser stations and the purchase of other equipment and maintenance of the centres for this purpose.

In total £1,010 was granted to two Community Centres to support steps to make the centres as Covid secure as possible.

Case Study four:

Improvements at Middle Pool



Three Councillors in Oakengates and Ketley Bank chose to pool their resources to offer a total grant of £750 to carry out improvements at Middle Pool. The grant enabled the purchase and installation of new seating, repair of existing seating wherever possible and the provision of facilities that will enhance the popular recreation area which has seen increased use during the pandemic. By working with the Town Council they were able to secure a further £500 of match funding meaning a total of £1,250 was contributed to the project.

5. IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

None

6. PREVIOUS MINUTES

Cabinet: 23 July 2015, Report: Councillors' Pride Fund

Cabinet: 9 January 2014, Report: 'Everyday Telford Pride in Your Community Programme' – investing in our infrastructure and communities

Cabinet: 23 February 2012, Report – A cooperative approach to working with the Community

Cabinet: 19 March 2020 – Report - Councillors' Pride Fund Update

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

Report prepared by Fran Bache, Community Funding Officer, 01952 385103, fran.bache@telford.gov.uk