

Report to CABINET SUB-COMMITTEE

The Local Improvement Fund – Project Recommendations 2021/22

Portfolio Holder:

Councillor Arooj Shah, Council Leader

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Reason for Decision

The Local Improvement Fund (LIF) provides funding of £500,000 for projects that aim to improve Oldham's neighborhoods for the benefit of local residents. The LIF Cabinet Sub-Committee are asked to review the final scores and comments provided by the advisory panel and agree which applications should receive funding.

Recommendation

Review the Advisory Panel recommendations and agree which should receive LIF funding.

1 Background

- 1.1 The Local Improvement Fund (LIF) was established in 2019 with the aim of supporting Districts to:
 - a. Encourage the active participation of residents and local organisations in improving the quality of life in the local area.
 - b. Improve community buildings, equipment and other facilities.
 - c. Engage with residents to prioritise schemes that matter to them.
- 1.2 In 2019/20 the LIF distributed £499,260 to twenty projects across Oldham that reflected the specific and diverse needs of people in our borough, ranging from an outdoor gym in St Mary's, to making a footbridge safer in Royton, to street scene improvements in Lees.
- 1.3 The LIF was included in the Council's budget again in 2021/22, with £500,000 made available. With residents having experienced such hardship over the course of the pandemic, councillors were encouraged to propose projects that would help their community recover socially and economically.
- 1.4 The latest round of the LIF launched in June 2021 and required elected members to submit expressions of interest for funding by 23rd July. In total the LIF received 42 expressions of interest.
- 1.5 The LIF Advisory Panel, consisting of representatives from Labour, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats, met in August and scored the expressions of interest, recommending that 25 of the expressions of interest be invited to submit full applications, with 14 not progressed and 3 recommended for additional consideration outside of the LIF.
- 1.6 23 full applications were ultimately submitted for consideration. The LIF Advisory Panel met again on 22nd November and scored the full applications. The Advisory Panel's recommendations and comments are included in Appendix 1. The panel have recommended that 19 projects with a total value of £482,807 be approved across all five of Oldham's districts. They have recommended that the remaining £17,193 be retained as a contingency fund for the approved projects.
- 1.7 The LIF Cabinet Sub-Committee are asked to review the final recommendations and comments provided by the advisory panel and agree which applications should receive LIF funding, totalling no more than £500k.

2 Options/Alternatives

- 2.1 Do Nothing – This is not a preferable option as the funding needs to be allocated in this financial year.
- 2.2 Review the full Advisory Panel recommendations and agree which should receive LIF funding.

3 Recommended Option

- 3.1 Review the full Advisory Panel recommendations and agree which should receive LIF funding.

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 The Capital Programme includes £0.500m to support the Local Improvement Fund for Districts. Funding requests of £0.483m are recommended for approval. Provided the sub-committee approve only the recommended schemes then £0.017m of funding remains available. If the sub-committee wishes to approve additional schemes then the total should not exceed the approved capital programme allocation of £0.500m. Colleagues are reminded that expenditure on all approved schemes must meet the statutory definition of expenditure for capital purposes. (Andy Moran, Assistant Director of Finance)

5 Legal Services Comments

- 5.1 Following the consideration of recommendations from the Local Improvement Fund Advisory Panel, the purpose of the Local Improvement Fund Sub-Committee is to allocate funding from the Local Improvement Fund to projects across the borough which promote and pursue the aims and objectives of the individual District Priorities.
- 5.2 The Sub-Committee is a constituted meeting of the Council and is subject to the Council's procedure rules, Cabinet procedure rules and the access to information procedure rules, as set out in the Council's Constitution, unless stated otherwise in the terms of reference. (Colin Brittain, Assistant Borough Solicitor).

6 Co-operative Agenda

- 6.1 As a co-operative council, we are committed to reforming public services and encouraging innovation, leading to better outcomes and delivery. The Local Improvement Fund will ensure that Districts are best able to meet the needs of both elected members and the residents they represent. (Jonathan Downs, Corporate Policy lead).

7 Human Resources Comments

- 7.1 None

8 Risk Assessments

- 8.1 None

9 IT Implications

- 9.1 None

10 Property Implications

- 10.1 None

11 Procurement Implications

- 11.1 None

12 Environmental and Health & Safety Implications

- 12.1 None

13 Equality, community cohesion and crime implications

13.1 None

14 Equality Impact Assessment Completed?

14.1 No

15 Key Decision

15.1 No

16 Key Decision Reference

16.1 N/A

17 Background Papers

17.1 Establishing a Local Improvement Fund for Districts – 24.06.2019

18 Appendices

18.1 Appendix 1 – Advisory Panel Recommendations and Comments