

## **Report to CABINET**

# **The Local Improvement Fund 2022/23**

### **Portfolio Holder:**

Councillor Amanda Chadderton, Council Leader

**Officer Contact:** Shelley Kipling (Assistant Chief Executive)

**Report Author:** Guy Parker (Policy Manager)

**14<sup>th</sup> November 2022**

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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. This paper updates Cabinet on proposals to provide £400,000 funding for larger capital projects in line with previous iterations of LIF, and £100,000 revenue funding for smaller projects worth £500 to £3,500, responding to needs in local areas.

### **Recommendation**

Review the proposals for LIF 2022/23 and agree to the process for the distribution of funds to support projects across the borough.

## 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 Following consideration of the cross-party LIF Advisory Panel's recommendations, in 2021/22 a total of £467,807 was allocated to 18 projects across the borough, with the remaining £32,193 retained as a contingency fund to accommodate project overspend.

## 2 Proposals for 2022/23

- 2.1 In 2022/23 it is proposed that the LIF should be adapted to enable the larger local capital projects that can only be funded through LIF, while also boosting funds for smaller interventions in wards to help residents see and feel improvements quickly.
- 2.2 Under this proposal, £400,000 will be distributed through a similar process to previous years of LIF. Councillors will be asked to submit simple expressions of interest (Eoi) for projects that cost over £10,000 (**Appendix 1**). These Eois will be assessed by a cross-party advisory panel, consisting of two Councillors from the Labour Group, one Conservative and one Liberal Democrat as previously. The panel will consider the impact on residents and the value for money the project would provide. Councillors will be advised that as funding requests get larger, the expectation will be that the project's impact reaches further across the borough. Where projects are expected to cost between £30,000 and £60,000, for example, they should have a positive impact for residents across at least a couple of wards. For very large projects of more than £100,000 the expectation would be that councillors can demonstrate impact across more than one district.
- 2.3 Those projects which are progressed by the advisory panel will be asked to complete a full proposal with support from council officers. Full proposals are then

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assessed by the advisory panel, with their recommendations taken to a Sub-Committee of Cabinet for final approval.

- 2.4 The remaining £100,000 will be revenue funding and will be financed from a combination of service underspends and uncommitted reserves within Leisure, Youth and Communities division. This £100,000 must be committed and spent within the current financial year and will not be available again in 2023/24.
- 2.5 Bids for funding from this *Fast Grants* pot must be in the range £500 to £3,500 and will be assessed at a monthly meeting of the LIF Cabinet Sub-Committee, using a simple application form (**Appendix 2**). This fund can be used for anything that contributes to the following key priorities:
- Helping those adversely impacted by the cost-of-living crisis
  - Providing / improving facilities for children and young people
  - Supporting the Don't Trash Oldham campaign
- 2.6 The sub-committee will prioritise projects that have clear local support, that can demonstrate value and where there is match funding either from Councillors' personal budgets or other local funding streams.
- 2.7 The proposed timetable for the role out of the LIF is below:

25 <sup>th</sup> November 2022	Deadline for Round 1 of Fast Grant Applications
2 <sup>nd</sup> December 2022	Advisory Panel Meeting to Review Fast Grants
2 <sup>nd</sup> December 2022	Deadline for Submission of Expressions of Interest
12 <sup>th</sup> December 2022	Advisory Panel Meeting to Review Expressions of Interest
13 <sup>th</sup> January 2023	Deadline for Round 2 of Fast Grant Applications
20 <sup>th</sup> January 2023	Advisory Panel Meeting to Review Fast Grants
20 <sup>th</sup> January 2023	Deadline for Final Applications
30 <sup>th</sup> January 2023	Advisory Panel Meeting to Review Final Applications
1 <sup>st</sup> February 2023	Cabinet Sub-Committee to Review Recommendations
2 <sup>nd</sup> February 2023	Successful Projects Announced
24 <sup>th</sup> February 2023	Deadline for Round 3 of Fast Grant Applications
3 <sup>rd</sup> March 2023	Advisory Panel Meeting to Review Fast Grants

### 3 Options/Alternatives

- 3.1 Option 1: Do Nothing – This is not a preferable option as the funding supports key community projects and district initiatives, helping deliver local priorities that would not happen without investment from the LIF.
- 3.2 Option 2: Review the proposed approach and agree to proceed with the LIF.

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## **4 Recommended Option**

- 4.1 Option 2: Review the proposed approach and agree to proceed with the LIF.

## **5 Financial Implications**

- 5.1 The £400k capital expenditure will be funded from an existing allocation within the capital programme. The option to set aside one-off revenue funding of £100k in 2022/23 for smaller bids of between £500 to £3,500 will have to be identified from a combination of service underspends and uncommitted reserves in Leisure, Youth and Communities division. (Nicola Harrop – Finance Manager)

## **6 Legal Services Comments**

- 6.1 The Cabinet will ordinarily carry out all of the Council's Executive Functions that are not the responsibility of any other part of the Council unless, the Leader decides to discharge them personally or allocate them to an individual Cabinet Member or a Committee of the Cabinet.

Where the Cabinet is exercising these functions, it may delegate those functions to a Sub-Committee of the Cabinet.

Where Executive functions have been delegated, that does not prevent the discharge of delegated functions by the person or body who delegated them; or the Leader or Cabinet from reviewing decisions made in the discharge of those functions.

## **7 Co-operative Agenda**

- 7.1 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).

## **8 Human Resources Comments**

- 8.1 None

## **9 Risk Assessments**

- 9.1 None

## **10 IT Implications**

- 10.1 None

## **11 Property Implications**

- 11.1 None

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**12 Procurement Implications**

12.1 None

**13 Environmental and Health & Safety Implications**

13.1 None

**14 Equality, community cohesion and crime implications**

14.1 None

**15 Equality Impact Assessment Completed?**

15.1 No

**16 Key Decision**

16.1 N/A

**17 Key Decision Reference**

17.1 N/A

**18 Background Papers**

18.1 Establishing a Local Improvement Fund for Districts – 24.06.2019

**19 Appendices**

19.1 Appendix 1 – LIF Expression of Interest

19.2 Appendix 2 – LIF Revenue Grants