

Report to CABINET SUB-COMMITTEE

The Local Improvement Fund – February 2023 Fast Grant Project Recommendations

Portfolio Holder:

Councillor Amanda Chadderton, Council Leader

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Reason for Decision

The Local Improvement Fund (LIF) in 2022/23 includes £100,000 allocated as “fast grants” for projects of £500 - £3,500 to improve Oldham’s neighborhoods for the benefit of local residents. After the first round, £72,428 remained available for projects. 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. 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. Councillors were asked to focus on projects that would help Oldham's residents to recover from the pandemic.
- 1.4 In 2022/23 the LIF is divided into two, with £400,000 distributed as capital grants as in previous years. The remaining £100,000 is to be used for "fast grants" of between £500 and £3,500, distributed as revenue to support one of three 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
- 1.5 The £100,000 must be completely allocated in the financial year 2022/23, with bidding for projects taking place over multiple rounds as needed.
- 1.6 In the first round, 22 bids were received with a total value of £49,196. Following a review by a cross-party advisory group, the LIF Cabinet Sub-Committee met on 6th December 2022 and agreed to fund projects worth £27,572, leaving £72,428 available.
- 1.7 One proposal from the first round, requesting funding for the replacement of litter bins in Dogford Park, was recommended for approval by the advisory group but was rejected by the sub-committee. This occurred because of what was subsequently identified as incomplete advice about the availability of alternative funding for the project. It is therefore recommended that this proposal, for the replacement of litter bins in Dogford Park in Royton, be approved for funding in this second round at a cost of £1,860.
- 1.8 Apart from the Dogford Park litter bins application, in the second round 52 applications were included, with a total potential funding value of £146,804. These

applications included new bids and bids that were deferred from the first round pending additional information.

- 1.9 The cross-party advisory group has reviewed these bids and made recommendations as detailed in Appendix 1. Including the Dogford Park litter bin project, the group recommend funding 26 projects with a total value of £71,134.63. This paper asks the Cabinet Sub-Committee to review the bids and the recommendations of the advisory group and allocate funds accordingly.
- 1.10 If the sub-committee accept the advisory group's recommendations there will be £1,293.37 remaining in the funding pot. The advisory group recommend that this remaining funding be used as contingency funding for the approved projects, rather than opening a third round of proposals.

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 advisory group recommendations and agree which should receive LIF funding, including the Dogford Park litter bins proposal from the first round.

3 Recommended Option

- 3.1 Review the advisory group recommendations and agree which should receive LIF funding, including the Dogford Park litter bins proposal from the first round.

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 There is a set aside of £100,000, which is a one-off revenue resource to be utilized in 2022/23 for LIF fast grants. £27,572 was allocated in the first round.
- 4.2 The second round of applications totaled £146,804 with £71,134.63 recommended to be approved. This would leave a balance to allocate for further rounds of £1,293.37.

(Nicola Harrop – Finance Manager)

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

17.2 The Local Improvement Fund 2022/23 – 14.11.2022

17.3 Consideration of LIF Bids 2022/23 – 06.12.2022

18 Appendices

18.1 Appendix 1: Local Improvement Fund Fast Grants Round 2 – Advisory Panel Recommendations