

Report to CABINET SUB-COMMITTEE

The Local Improvement Fund – February 2023 Capital Project Recommendations

Portfolio Holder:

Councillor Amanda Chadderton, Council Leader

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Report Author: Jonathan Downs (Corporate Policy Lead)

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Reason for Decision

The Local Improvement Fund (LIF) in 2022/23 includes £400,000 allocated as “capital grants” for projects of £10,000 or more to improve Oldham’s neighborhoods for the benefit of 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.

Reviewing District Working in Oldham

1 Background

- 1.1 In November 2022, Cabinet agreed to include the Local Improvement Fund (LIF) in the Council's budget within the existing capital programme, with £500,000 made available. The LIF is divided into two, with £400,000 distributed as capital grants. The remaining £100,000 is to be used for "fast grants" of between £500 and £3,500. This paper focuses on the administration of the £400,000 capital grants.
- 1.2 The deadline for expressions of interest to the capital fund was 9th December 2022. In total 47 proposals were received. The Advisory Panel were asked to score the applications, using the same scoring matrix as in previous years. This involved rating each element of the bid out of five according to the extent to which the proposal:
- Addresses one or more key priority
 - Has clearly defined aims and objectives
 - Demonstrates the outcomes and benefits clearly
 - Evidences an understanding of project dependencies
 - Evidences resident consultation and support
 - Evidences project costing
- 1.3 The LIF Advisory Panel met in December and scored the expressions of interest, recommending that 31 of the expressions of interest be invited to submit full applications.
- 1.4 The deadline for receiving full applications was Friday 20th January 2023. In total we received 30 full applications for the capital fund.
- 1.5 The LIF advisory panel met in January 2023 and scored the full applications. It was noted that applications 23 and 29 were duplicates, so 23 was disregarded at the start the meeting. Following the moderation of scores, the panel agreed that anything scoring over 23 should automatically go through to the sub-committee. Anything that scored under 20 was automatically rejected. The panel then had a conversation about any application that scored between 20 – 23, rejecting or recommending the applications based on their collective analysis.
- 1.6 The Advisory Panel's recommendations and comments are included in Appendix 1. Please note, 16 applications have been recommended by the advisory panel totalling £410,735 of spend, with three projects recommended as potential reserves (highlighted in orange), totalling an additional £40,826 and taking the overall total to £451,561.
- 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 £400k.

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 – The purpose of the LIF is to support district priorities, allocating funding to projects that demonstrate they meet the required scoring criteria.

3 Recommended Option

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

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 The Capital Programme includes £0.400m to support the Local Improvement Fund for Districts as outlined in this report. Funding requests of £0.411m are recommended for approval, along with a reserve set of schemes of £0.041m subject to scheme amendments.
- 4.2 The recommended approach would exceed the funding available by £0.011m and the report does not identify a funding stream for the shortfall. As the scheme costs are based on estimates there may well be some underspending within the proposed schemes which would accommodate the approval of all of the recommended schemes. In addition, there may be some underspend from previously approved schemes. Officers will need to reconcile all prior year approval of grants in order to determine the scope of resources available. The schemes recommended in this report will be subject to close monitoring in order to ensure that there is no additional budgetary pressure
- 4.3 Given the funding allocation available, there should be no firm commitment to the £0.041m of schemes on the reserve list. The position might change if resources can be identified.
- 4.4 Colleagues are reminded that expenditure on all approved schemes must meet the statutory definition of expenditure for capital purposes. (Jit Kara)

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

18 **Appendices**

18.1 Appendix 1 – Local Improvement Fund Capital Grants February 2023 – Advisory Panel Recommendations