
Community Investment Fund

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Karen May Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Partnerships, Economic Development & Enabling
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Assistant Director	Rachel Egan Assistant Director Regeneration and Property Services
Report Author	Georgina Harris UK Shared Prosperity Fund Manager Contact email: Georgina.harris@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01527 534082
Wards Affected	No specific ward relevance
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	
Relevant Council Priority	Economic Development, Environment, Housing, Infrastructure
Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet is asked to RESOLVE that:-

- 1) The Community Investment Fund policy be approved; and**
- 2) Recommendations in relation to the Community Investment Fund to be received from the Assistant Director Regeneration and Property with delegated authority for spend, upon receipt of those recommendations, to be granted to the Executive Director Environment and Communities following consultation with the Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Partnerships, Economic Development and Enabling and the Cabinet Member for Climate Change; and**
- 3) £93,000 of the Community Investment Fund be allocated to Members' Ward Budgets; and**

4) Up to £43,792 of the Community Investment Fund be allocated to the cost of administering the fund

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 As part of the preparation of the draft budget for 2026-27, a full review of reserves was undertaken by the Assistant Director of Finance and Customer Service to ensure that the reserves were still required for their original purpose. This review identified £5.944m of reserves that could be transferred to the general fund.
- 2.2 On 25 February 2026, the Council resolved to create a reserve of £1.25 million for a Community Investment Fund to enable agile investments to meet local community needs; supporting the Council's priorities both directly and through the authority's partners and community groups.
- 2.3 During the discussion of the Medium Term Financial Plan at the Council meeting on 25 February 2026, proposals were made to increase Members' ward budgets from £2,000 to £5,000.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 3.1 It is necessary to provide clear eligibility criteria for projects to qualify for the Community Investment Fund programme. The policy provides clarity to applicants and guidance in the assessment of project proposals.
- 3.2 It is anticipated that demand for funding will be high and decisions as to which projects are supported should be fair and transparent. The policy details the assessment criteria for each application and provides a robust governance framework for the programme.
- 3.3 The policy provides guidance on the types of organisations that can apply for funding and the projects that will be supported. Eligible projects must be aligned with the Council Plan and other published Council strategies.
- 3.4 Members will have the opportunity to act as sponsors for projects in their ward and the application form will include a section where they can provide additional information as to how the proposal may benefit the community.
- 3.5 It is proposed that applications will be evaluated against the assessment criteria in the policy and a scoring matrix based on these

criteria will be applied. A panel of at least 3 officers will independently assess each application, followed by a moderation process to review and align scores. The resulting list of proposed decisions will be reviewed by the Assistant Director Regeneration and Property Services who will make recommendations to the Executive Director Environment and Communities. The Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Partnership, Economic Development and Enabling and the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Climate Change will then be consulted on the recommended decisions before applicants are informed of the outcome.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 A reserve of £1,250,000 has been created to fund the delivery of the Community Investment Fund.
- 4.2 The promotion and administration of the fund will be supported by the existing Economic Development team but will require the addition of 0.5 full time equivalent member of staff to support the administration of the fund which will be deducted from the total funds available. This will enable the Council to manage the Community Investment Fund efficiently and transparently by increasing capacity for application processing, due-diligence checks, applicant support and monitoring. It will also enable timely decision-making, stronger governance, and better evaluation of project outcomes, ensuring the Fund delivers maximum benefit to local communities.
- 4.3 The cost of the additional staffing, up to £43792, will be funded from the £1,250,000 reserve.
- 4.4 A further £93,000 of the reserve will be used for the uplift of Members' Ward budgets from £2,000 to £5,000 pa.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Delivery of the Community Investment Fund will require the Council to enter into contracts or other agreements with external organisations. The awarding of contracts or other agreements funded by the Community Investment Fund will be subject to the Council's procurement rules and subject to appropriate due diligence

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Reorganisation

- 6.1 The fund will be fully allocated prior to Local Government Reorganisation

Relevant Council Priority

- 6.2 The investment plan supports delivery of the Council's priorities of Economic Development, Environment, Housing and Infrastructure.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.3 All funding applications will be assessed as to how well they align with the Council's priorities and the Council Plan. The Council's priorities are underpinned by the Green Thread; therefore, climate change implications will be considered in all assessments.
- 6.4 The funding will support projects that will improve green spaces and the investment in energy efficiency measures in community spaces.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.5 Equality and diversity implications will be considered throughout the delivery of fund.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 There is a risk of low take-up of grants or inequitable take-up. The programme will be promoted to all Parish Councils, voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations, stakeholders, through the Council's website and press and social media. The geographical spread of the proposed projects may be considered when assessing the applications.
- 7.2 Potential misuse of funds will be mitigated against through close programme management. This involves coordinating the full lifecycle of the fund so that it is delivered transparently, efficiently and with measurable impact. It includes setting clear funding criteria, managing publicity and engagement, supporting applicants, and overseeing a structured assessment and decision-making process. It also involves coordinating governance, ensuring due-diligence checks are completed, issuing grant agreements, and monitoring project delivery to ensure funded organisations achieve their intended outcomes. Throughout, programme management provides consistent oversight, risk management, and reporting so that the fund remains accountable and delivers tangible benefits to the community. Funding recipients will be required to demonstrate compliance with procurement regulations

and funding will be paid upon receipt of invoices and evidence of payment. In exceptional circumstances, and by prior arrangements, funding may be provided in advance.

- 7.3 There is a risk that projects may experience delays or may not be completed within the deadline. To minimise this risk, applicants will be required to provide a project timeline detailing key milestones. Project officers will monitor the delivery of the project against these milestones so any delays can be identified early and addressed.
- 7.4 Community events could expose participants to unintended safety risks. All applicants will have to demonstrate that they have in place an appropriate risk assessment for their proposed event. Applicants will be required to have appropriate public liability insurance and to demonstrate that they have all the required permissions and licences.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1 Community Investment Fund Policy

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet
2026

20 April

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Karen May, Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Partnerships, Economic Development and Enabling	30/3/26
Lead Director / Assistant Director	Rachel Egan Assistant Director Regeneration and Property Services	30/3/26
Financial Services	Julie Lorraine Interim Director of Finance & S151 Officer	30/3/26
Legal Services	Nicola Cummings Principle Solicitor – Governance And Jess Bayley-Hill, Principle Democratic Services Offier	31/3/26
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	Rebecca Green Policy Manager	25/3/26
Climate Change Team (if climate change implications apply)	Matthew Eccles Climate Change Manager	25/3/26