

Appendix A: Further Essential Background / Detail on the Proposal

i) Business Case and Options Appraisal for PCRF Priorities and Allocations

Background

In March 2015 Cabinet approved the set up, from the sale of the Port freehold and in consultation with Cabinet members and local Councillors, of a £1 million local investment fund 'to stimulate local regeneration projects' in Avonmouth and Kingsweston wards (the new Avonmouth & Lawrence Weston ward after the boundary changes of April 2016).

Later in 2015, through a dialogue between the Mayor, Cabinet members and local Councillors, the 3 priorities for a local regeneration capital fund were agreed which also broadly reflected and brought together needs and priorities for action identified in the existing process with community stakeholders supported by the Council to develop Neighbourhood Plans, over 2015-16.

As a result of the Mayor's consultation, it was decided, in view of the relatively high socio-economic deprivation across most of Kingsweston and Avonmouth wards, with problems of high benefit dependency and low levels of income and low skills / qualifications being prevalent, that the Fund should have a major emphasis on supporting community economic development, alongside wider community and social infrastructure. This was reflected in the setting of 2 of the 3 objectives / priorities for the Fund around this – Jobs & Enterprise and Thriving High Streets, and recognition that both residents and businesses based in the Ward(s) needed a much better, modernised support infrastructure than existed, particularly after the closure of the City of Bristol College, to help them gain more secure, quality jobs and/or start or sustain businesses locally.

Improving community centres and facilities for social, health and leisure provision in each of the four 'villages' of the Ward, and at the same time, creating a more financially resilient and sustainable community infrastructure, was also regarded as a key Priority / set of principles in this process and featured in the Neighbourhood Plan and the Lawrence Weston Community Plan. However, the weighting of two-thirds of the PCRF resource on economic development has been determined not solely by the lack of local employment, training and business support services operating in the area, but also by the existing priority and indicative resources from the NHS and Council for a community health hub in Lawrence Weston.

Key Facts and Issues

A summary of the main economic and social case and wider evidence justifying the need for the PCRF and the three Priorities is given below, and more information / statistics appended below.

- The Port freehold sale for £10 million was of major significance for the City, and the adjacent Avonmouth Severnside industrial area is developing quite rapidly, giving rise to environmental issues as well as new economic opportunities .
- But many in the local communities perceive mostly adverse impacts and disconnection from the 'enterprise area', instead of benefits and income from its growth, despite their historical connection to the Port as the major employer.

- 10 LSOAs (neighbourhoods) across the Ward, with the large majority of its 20,757 population, rank among the most 30% disadvantaged in England, according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015
- 16.2 % of Kingsweston and 12.1 % of Avonmouth ward working age populations were claiming out of work benefits at May 2016 (13.9 % across the area as a whole) - significantly above a City of Bristol average of 10.1%, affecting 2,035 residents.
- Job Seekers Allowance rates are lower at 2.4% (344 individuals) for the area but still above the Bristol average of 1.6%.
- Skills and qualification levels are generally very poor - with 62% of the overall Avonmouth and Kingsweston area ranking inside the worst 25% in England for lack of or low qualifications.
- Hundreds of new jobs in logistics and industrial sectors have been created in the Avonmouth Severnside Enterprise Area (adjacent to the communities) over the last 2-3 years but, according to employers surveys and anecdotal evidence collected by the SevernNet Working project and BCC Employment Learning and Skills Team, very few local unemployed or benefit dependent people are being regularly recruited for a number of reasons – lack of appropriate skills, difficulty to access the industrial areas by public transport, or safely on foot or bicycle etc
- the area has a very low level of business start ups with Kingsweston ranking in the bottom quartile of Bristol wards (32nd of 35) for new business start ups over 2009-15 – average of 52 per annum . Avonmouth ward ranked higher over that period, but still only within the third quartile (20th) with 89 per annum – despite a large part of the ward located within the industrial area.
- Over 33% of the housing stock is in social ownership and community centres, sports, leisure and social facilities are, through the lack of any significant new investment in the last 20-30 years, generally unmodernised and in a poorer condition than other parts of the city.
- According to the 2015 Bristol Quality of Life survey, only 67% of residents were satisfied with the local area as a place to live (compared to the 82% citywide average) and only 20% with the way the Council runs things (compared to 36% citywide). 35% concerned about anti-social behaviour
- The loss of local facilities from the closure of the Robin Cousins Sports Centre at Avonmouth and the Shirehampton Pool in 2005 was compounded by the closure of the City of Bristol College building in Lawrence Weston in 2011 and reductions in other local community services for both younger and older people and closure of other general facilities such as the public toilets adjacent to Avonmouth Park.

- The local centres / high streets, whilst far from blighted by dereliction (being relatively well used by local people in the absence of larger supermarket in the area), are of variable quality and vitality, with a limited mix of products and services in each centre and a 'tired' appearance – due to again a lack of investment in the public realm and the marginal profitability of many shops.
- Neighbourhood and Community Plans have consistently highlighted these needs and issues, and at several meetings and a special conference held in 2016 the Neighbourhood Partnership and community fora have shaped and endorsed the 3 proposed priorities and weighting of PCRF to invest in 2/3 economic and 1/3 social regeneration.
- A significant benefit of the proposed Community Facilities Grant Scheme (£315,000) will be to stimulate new plans and initiatives from community organisations not only to improve existing buildings and facilities and services / activities offered to their users and the wider community, but to operate them on resilient and resource efficient principles, with the requirement to find external match funding and income, which should reduce reliance on Council revenue support.
- Overall, in the objectives and design of the PCRF programme, there is a commitment to embedding a resilient and sustainable approach to ensure best use of available financial and human resources (economic and social capital) both at the individual scheme level and in creating networks and collaboration between schemes across the 4 villages of the Ward.

Options Appraisal

Following the initial consultations with the Ward Councillors and Neighbourhood Partnership which set the three priorities for the PCRF, officers from Economic Development and Neighbourhoods and Communities Teams were tasked with proposing appropriate funding allocations to those priorities and technical / programme management support functions, taking into account further research into the economic, social and environmental needs and issues in the Ward. The main options considered were as follows:

Option 1: divide the Fund equally between the 3 Priorities, after allocating the maximum permitted by finance rules in relation to a capital scheme to programme management and technical assistance (around 10%).

Option 2: divide the Fund equally between the 3 Priorities, and allocate a smaller or nil sum to programme management and technical assistance, assuming that existing Council staff resources were sufficient for the latter functions.

Option 3: weight the Fund towards the priority with evidence of greatest need for resource, taking into account both research carried out and other existing / planned initiatives and investments alongside PCRF, whilst including technical / programme management support.

Appraisal: the view of the Councillors and Neighbourhood Partnership in 2015-16 was that technical / programme management support to the maximum level permissible was essential if community organisations were to be effectively engaged in developing and managing capital projects, as distinct from Council service teams or external agencies spending the entire Fund, and that existing resources available in Council service teams, then and now subject to budget

reductions, were not adequate; that dedicated resources were needed to enable delivery and that a 5% (£50,000) allocation would be insufficient to both support project feasibility costs and manage the overall programme. This ruled out Option 2. After assessing the appropriate balance of resources between priorities according to need and existing initiatives, **Option 3**, with a weighting towards Jobs & Enterprise, was recommended to, and endorsed by the Neighbourhood Partnership and wider community through the consultation event because:

- i) between the two 'economic' priorities, the analysis showed that high streets in the Ward were in need of physical / environmental improvements but relatively lower in priority to investing a significant sum in new or improved jobs & enterprise facilities which were either very limited in scale / quality or lacking in each community.
- ii) the Jobs & Enterprise priority, on further investigation, un-packed into three inter-linked support strands for design into new facilities and initiatives – related to job search, training, and enterprise (both before and after a business start up).
- iii) research showed up equally strong needs / issues on both economic and social indicators for the Ward and neighbourhoods within it. However, account was taken of the major investment (£2.9 m) being planned for the Lawrence Weston Community Hub, which is primarily orientated to improvement of health and community facilities and services – for that neighbourhood and the wider area.
- iv) therefore, in that context, the 2/3rd weighting of PCRF towards local economic support via the Jobs & Enterprise and High Streets priorities and 1/3rd to social support via the Community Facilities Grant Scheme was justifiable.

(ii) Communities Facilities Grant Scheme (CFGs)

Proposed fund allocation: **£315k** plus **£25k** towards the project development costs of the preferred applicants. This latter funding will come out of the allowed capitalised revenue section of the £1 million (technical assistance scheme)

Why is this grant fund the best way to address the needs of the Avonmouth and Lawrence Weston Ward?

Needs

- Avonmouth and Lawrence Weston Ward contains 10 LSOAs within the 30% most deprived areas in England - 2 are in the 10-20% most deprived and 3 within the 10% most deprived.
- 2015/16 Quality of Life Survey results for Avonmouth & Lawrence Weston that are directly relevant to this strand of the PCRf are:
 - % satisfied with the neighbourhood: **67%** against Bristol average 81.7%
 - % respondents satisfied with leisure facilities/services: **30%** against Bristol average of 52.4% **This is the lowest satisfaction rate recorded in the city**
- Lawrence Weston residents rated the following facilities as 'Poor and needs improvement' in the LW Community Survey 2012:
 - Sports/Leisure facilities: 62.7%
 - Places to socialise: 62.%
- In Lawrence Weston the closure of the City of Bristol College in 2011 has been followed by loss or reductions in other local community services and facilities including the library
- The existing community buildings in the area are ageing and often in a poor state of repair or have poor accessibility – this includes the Rock in LW; Avonmouth Community Centre, Shire Public Hall and the Sea Mills Community Centre. This tends to make them poor quality, inefficient to run and expensive to maintain and manage.
- The impact of noise, dust and environmental pollution (the 'flies' incident in 2015; frequent unpleasant odours drifting over the area) coming from the Port and Avonmouth industrial area leaves local residents feeling that they experience high negative impacts on behalf of the city but receive little benefit or quality investment in their social and community facilities in return.
- The loss of all open access youth provision and the closure of Ridingleaze House. In Avonmouth the closure of the Robin Cousins Centre and Avonmouth Road toilet are persistent community concerns and facilities at Avonmouth Football Club acknowledged as in need of improvement. Sea Mills Community Centre is increasing its local use but lacks disabled access and is an old, inefficient building; This lack of suitable facilities also limits other (city wide) service providers from delivering more services locally (Community Learning, City of Bristol College, Outset Bristol, advice agencies).
- Residents feel that they experience high negative impacts on behalf of the city but receive little benefit or quality investment in their social and community facilities in return.
- 2015/2016 Quality of Life records Avonmouth and Lawrence Weston as slightly below the city average (25.3%) in feeling able to influence decisions that affect their local area (24%); but they are the third lowest area in Bristol in terms of feeling able to influence decisions that affect public services they use; and record the third lowest rate of all city wards around whether a directly elected mayor is improving/will improve the leadership of the city

- The ward has a high % of council and other social landlord tenants, many of whose residents are vulnerable people with complex needs. Community groups, clubs and organisations provide a range of services and social capacity building which will become increasingly important as public services reduce their presence. The lack of appropriate venues makes it difficult for key services to operate in the area. An example of this in Sea Mills is where the Sea Mills community centre is eager to accommodate activity around jobs and skills – but poor accessibility makes it unsuitable.
- Neighbourhood and Community Plans have consistently highlighted these gaps within local communities - ‘Communities with sustainable, thriving facilities which meet the needs of all community members’ was a Neighbourhood Partnership priority, endorsed by community Forums, and the Lawrence Weston Community Survey 2012 recorded majority opinion that local community facilities were poor quality and needed improvement.
- The Ward, and individual communities to a greater or less degree, have been disadvantaged by relative under-investment and/or withdrawal of services over the last 10 years. However, in view of the substantial reductions in Council revenue support, it is necessary to concentrate the capital investment in those community organisations that can demonstrate the capacity to manage buildings and offer services in a more resilient way.
- Whilst the Council is planning further cuts to services, there is also the opportunity to improve the way they are delivered through the new Lawrence Weston Locality Hub.

How the proposed fund will impact to address these issues.

- It is expected that around 6-8 local community organisations running community centres, resources and sports clubs will benefit from the PCRF Community Facilities strand to improve their buildings, facilities and equipment by the end of 2019.
- At the ward-wide conference held in November 2016 the community participants endorsed the 3 proposed priorities and weighting of PCRF to invest in 2/3 economic and 1/3 social regeneration. The Community Facilities workshop was well attended and made clear recommendations that any funds allocated through the PCRF process to community organisations must be matched 100% by externally-sourced funding, support in kind and materials to deliver the role of this funding in generating inward-investment into the Ward and strengthening the future sustainability of community facilities.
- All community organisations will be required to evidence:
 - Their capacity to manage a capital investment project
 - Their assessment of organisational strengths and weaknesses and those of the community they are serving and to describe a clear, plausible ‘theory of change’ for how their project will deliver improved sustainability and resilience for their organisation and its impact on their community of benefit
 - That they can deliver a minimum match of 100% of any funding received in direct additional funding; contributions in kind and increased volunteering
- Strong components of all successful projects will include improved accessibility; improved energy efficiency, improved income-generation and partnership working and increased impact on local deprivation and health outcomes; Funded projects will offer better quality and more cost efficient services to the community. Many of the buildings/facilities that are in need of this support are BCC owned and leased out on CAT arrangements or contract. They offer an ongoing cost to BCC. For these buildings/facilities the community facilities strand of the fund will facilitate the transition away from ongoing BCC financial support.

- BCC is currently consulting the city about further savings; the area could potentially lose all three libraries. Whilst it is not possible to know 100% what projects will come forward, we are expecting both the sites that are within shared community centres to apply for the CFGS to take opportunity of adapting the shared buildings to work better – this could help to mitigate the loss of the Library by better utilising the space/adding further chargeable space to the building and potentially helping the organisation itself provide some kind of book sharing service.
- The assessment process explored and proposed at the November 2016 event includes a strong component of participatory budgeting as an element in exploring community support for potential funding applicants and their project proposals. This should strongly improve the sense of local influencing and confidence in Mayoral efficacy within the city and root successful projects within their communities.
- Lawrence Weston has, for the past 6 years had ambitions for a services hub. The scheme, working with NHS, the local GPs, BCC and the voluntary sector is linked to the OPE 4 programme. The Jobs and Enterprise Priority will contribute towards the investment into this building to build relevant space within the building and it is expected that an application for the CFGS will also be submitted to contribute towards other community resources within the building.

How were the decisions made to allocate the funds and deliver the grant scheme?

- The original purposes and themes for this fund were developed through exploration with the then Mayor, Ward Councillors and the Neighbourhood Partnership, drawing on priorities identified within the Neighbourhood Partnership Plan:
 - Local people benefit from a thriving economy
 - Explore ways to support High Streets/local shopping centres to thrive
 - Communities with sustainable, thriving facilities which meet the needs of all community members
- Mayor and Councillors want to see additional resources and funding raised to add to the £1 million to deliver the maximum possible benefits to these neighbourhoods
- Delivery of these aims was to be achieved through ensuring that community groups, local residents and the Neighbourhood Partnership helped BCC shape the design and delivery of the Resilience Fund.

Objectives, criteria and processes are detailed below:

The PCRf strategic board, after research and a consultation/stakeholder event in Nov 2016, agreed that the Community Facilities strand of the fund should be delivered by open bidding for grants between £10k - £100k (up to the maximum of £315k allocated to the Priority) linked to key criteria:

- Contribute to communities' health in the widest sense (linking to Mayors Priority - 'where life chances and health are not determined by wealth and background')
- Reduce deprivation - Avonmouth and Lawrence Weston ward has 3 LSOAs in the lowest 10% nationally. (This project will contribute towards the mayoral priority 'everyone benefits from the city's success and no-one is left behind'.)
- Improve accessibility of public buildings (MP that 'services and opportunities are accessible')

- Get more people participating and active in their community and increase the sense of belonging and having a stake in their community
- Increase the organisation's ability to generate income, reduce reliance on any one source of income/grant/support such as the public sector
- Increase the ability of the organisation and/or the area to become more energy efficient, cheaper to run and reduce the negative impact on the environment (MP 'leads on tackling climate change and the damaging impact of air pollution')
- Make effective partnerships with other groups and organisations to achieve its aims
- All projects will need to identify and secure at least 50% match funding which can be revenue or capital (total external match funding expected as a minimum is £340k)

The grant scheme will be delivered **via a similar set of processes to the Bristol Impact Fund approved in 2016** as follows:

Stage 1 – to publicise the CFGS via community channels and at the Gorum Fair at Blaise Castle on 9th Sept, invite proposals and consider eligibility, need and plausibility / deliverability. initially the plan was to use the Gorum Fair to deliver a participatory budgeting exercise, however the time it has taken to negotiate the decision making pathway has made this impossible. Instead the event will be used to launch the fund and recruit a team of resident appraisers to participate in an e – decision making process at stage 2.

Stage 2 – to undertake initial screening and appraisal of proposals using both community participation methods (a community panel and/or electronic voting app) and a formal technical appraisal panel of officers (Property, Neighbourhoods, Finance and Economy), to determine which projects are invited to apply at stage 3.

Stage 3 – the preferred projects (up to £350k worth of projects) will be invited to further work up their projects, this will involve producing full business plans, showing how the projects will increase the sustainability of the organisation and benefit the community, including architects drawings, planning consent and the matching capital / revenue funding sources. Applicants will be able to access an additional small grant (up to 5% of the total project grant request max £5k if the applicant was applying for £100k grant) towards the professional fees associated with capital projects, eg. architects fees, planning permissions.

During this process the **Council will also work with the businesses in the Avonmouth Severnside / Port area to link projects with mentors and potential match funders.**