



## **CABINET – 16<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2024**

**SUBJECT: CORPORATE AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE RESPONSE TO CALL IN OF CABINET  
DECISION ON 24<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2024 - COMMUNITY  
EMPOWERMENT FUND – TREATMENT OF  
UNDERSPENDS**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION AND  
CORPORATE SERVICES**



### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To consider a recommendation from Corporate and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee in respect of the Call-in of the decision taken by the Cabinet on 24th July 2024 relating to Community Empowerment Fund (CEF) – Treatment of Underspends.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 Corporate and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee considered a Call-in of a Cabinet Decision on 24th July 2024 relating to Community Empowerment Fund – Treatment of Underspends- to utilise all underspends within the first six months of each financial year and return any unused balances to the General Fund. The scrutiny committee meeting was held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2024 and heard from the members who called in the decision as well as members of the committee. The scrutiny committee considered the call-in and the main points raised are set out in section 5. Members agreed they would support a recommendation to Cabinet to re-consider the decision as set out in section 3.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 The Corporate and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee recommends that:
  - 3.1.1 Cabinet reconsider its decision regarding Community Empowerment Fund, Treatment of Underspends taken on 24th July 2024.
  - 3.1.2 Cabinet agrees that voluntary organisations are contacted and advised that the

Community Empowerment Fund is available and can be used by local Councillors and a new report is brought back to Corporate and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee on the future of the Community Empowerment Fund.

#### **4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 To retain the current treatment of underspends for the Community Empowerment Fund and encourage take up.

#### **5. THE REPORT**

- 5.1 On the 24th of July 2024 Cabinet considered a report entitled Community Empowerment Fund – Treatment of Underspends. A copy of the report is attached at Appendix 1. The Cabinet decision was subsequently called-in and accepted as a valid Call-in. This was reported to Corporate and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee on the 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2024 attached at Appendix 2.
- 5.2 The Corporate and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee heard from the some of the signatories to the Call-in and heard from Councillor Judith Pritchard who requested permission to speak on the matter.
- 5.3 The scrutiny committee heard that the CEF is valued and has been a great success, it can be used to access other funds to deliver larger projects. There are barriers in some case to access the Fund which is caused by delays outside of the control of organisations. For example, delays to leases being granted for land or buildings when a new management committee takes over. Obtaining the required number of quotes can also be difficult. It was therefore requested that the decision is reconsidered and consultation with GAVO and the voluntary sector be sought before a further decision is taken.
- 5.4 The scrutiny committee members also highlighted examples where the CEF has been used in their communities and difficulties and delays with legal and planning which have affected the take up of the funding. Officers responded that there were no delays associated with accessing the funding for these reasons. Members asked for more flexibility and time for pending applications. It was suggested that a report could be brought back to Corporate and Regeneration scrutiny committee to outline any proposals for the funding for this financial year. The difficulties of single member wards were also outlined with only having access to £3k, which cannot achieve very much.

#### **Conclusion**

The Corporate and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee supported the call-in of the Cabinet decision and made recommendations as outlined in point 3.1.1 and 3.1.2.

## **6. ASSUMPTIONS**

6.1 No assumptions have been made in this report.

## **7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

7.1 As the Call-in request is a procedural matter the completion of an integrated impact assessment is not required.

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 There are no financial implications other than those set out in the Cabinet report.

## **9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no personnel implications other than those set out in the Cabinet report.

## **10. CONSULTATIONS**

10.1 This report reflects the debate on the Call-in at Corporate and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2024 and the recommendation to Cabinet.

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

11.1 Local Government Act 2000. The consideration of the call-in request is a function for the Committee; the consideration of any consequences, or recommendations, fall to the Cabinet for reconsideration and/or full Council.

Author: Catherine Forbes-Thompson Scrutiny Manager

Consultees: Robert Tranter Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer  
Lisa Lane, Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer  
Cllr Gary Johnston Chair Corporate and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee  
Dave Street Interim Chief Executive  
Richard Edmunds Corporate Director Education and Corporate Services  
Mark S Williams Corporate Director for Economy and Environment  
Gareth Jenkins Interim Corporate Director for Social Services  
Stephen Harris Head of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer

Appendices:

[Link to Appendix 1](#)

Cabinet report 24th July 2024 – Community Empowerment Fund – Treatment of Underspends

[Link to Appendix 2](#)

Corporate and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2024 Consideration of Call-in Request In relation To A Decision Made By Cabinet On 24th July 2024 - Community Empowerment Fund – Treatment Of Underspends