

ASTON WARD LOCAL INNOVATION FUND MEETING
WEDNESDAY 12 APRIL 2017 AT 6.30PM AT NEWTOWN COMMUNITY CENTRE

Present:- Councillor Muhammad Afzal (Chair), Councillor Ziaul Islam,
Councillor Nagina Kauser

Ken Brown & Kay Thomas, Neighbourhood Development & Support Unit
Jadieal Millwood, Youth Service
and 14 residents

1. Welcome & Introductions

Ken Brown gave a brief outline of the Local Innovation Fund, the criteria for proposals and the process for spend. He stressed that LIF was not a grant and could not be used in the same way as Community Chest had in the past and projects must benefit the ward and be innovative and sustainable.

There needed to be a conversation regarding priorities for the ward, the types of projects that residents would wish to see and if any groups could work together and collaborate to create one proposal between them.

In response to questions the meeting was advised that there was £48k per ward and that it was not essential to obtain match funding in order to submit a LIF proposal and receive funding. Match funding was a way of leveraging in additional funding but was not mandatory.

2. Priorities

Priority forms were circulated and the meeting asked to think of the top 3 priorities for Aston ward and ideas for a project to make the neighbourhood a better place to live. The following suggestions were put forward;

- Environment – waste management, cleaner streets, regular litter picks/clean ups
- Elderly
- Vulnerable
- Youth – partnerships with The Lighthouse, recreation, young people's voices, cohesion
- Jobs – particularly supporting young people
- Community safety
- Housing – number of hostels was an issue, more people begging

How to make things better?

- Fund skills development
- Self-employment initiatives
- Create a consortium to bid for money to come into Aston

- Recapturing/developing a sense of community
- Social media skills development, especially for older people

3. Local Innovation Fund Proposals

a) 29+ Health & Work

Zulfigar Khan outlined the proposal from GHC to provide advice and support to people aged 29+ who were out of work due to health barriers. Through a health triage system health issues would be identified by health professionals that would be dealt with and then support and advice offered to get the person into employment. Volunteers would be trained to sustain the project and offer peer to peer support.

In response to questions the meeting was advised that a record of people supported by ward could be provided and statistics for work carried out previously in Aston could also be provided. GHC was a social enterprise and employed people from Aston.

In response to a question Terry Yarnall advised that the money from LIF would be used to engage a minimum of 12 people and 6 volunteers. The meeting stressed that the people who were found employment must be from Aston.

b) Community Cafe

Dennis Hamilton, Newtown Neighbourhood Forum spoke about the disappearance of services and the need to recapture a sense of community and therefore his proposal was for a community café that would help deal with social isolation and offer space to bring the community together. A 'space in the place' would also be set aside for organisations to come in and offer advice on issues affecting the local community eg benefits advice, credit union, crime advice, domestic abuse advice etc. Also link with a part time community development worker to create links that had been lost, seek out issues in the ward and launch projects to help. The café would provide employment, retail and volunteering opportunities

c) The Garage Project

Dennis Hamilton, Newtown Neighbourhood Forum, spoke of a proposal to use disused city council garages as innovation hubs and provide opportunities for self-employment and skills training, quality apprenticeships and employment.

The meeting was supportive of the community café and the garage project.

Jadieal Millwood suggested the 'space in the place' idea could be developed at The Lighthouse. Jadieal and Dennis to meet to discuss.

The loss of The Drum had also impacted on the area but no evaluation of the effect had been undertaken. It was queried whether there would be an

evaluation of the impact of all of the LIF projects across the city. Ken advised that the Neighbourhood Development & Support Unit would be arranging evaluation of projects but that funding would be allocated in stages and groups would be required to attend ward meetings to present their outcomes before the next stage payment was made.

d) Sporting Spirit

Michael Sinclair spoke about the role of sport in helping to develop and enhance life skills especially in people from disadvantaged backgrounds. There was an opportunity to offer positive role models and sport could also offer diversionary activities. The meeting was advised of the activities that were on offer but that Sporting Spirit wanted to expand to offer sports to people with disabilities, older people and girls and also target groups to help train and gain qualifications.

The meeting was generally supportive of the idea and especially sporting activities for girls as there was little on offer for that group in the area. However other groups also wanted to offer similar and therefore, ie the community café and therefore It was suggested that people work together on a 'hub' especially involving young people. It was also suggested that other funding sources were available for sporting activities such as Sport England. The meeting felt that all of the proposals had 'community spirit' in common and therefore groups needed to work together to plan what was needed in the area and fill the gaps. GCH were also happy to offer support and invited Michael to contact them.

4. Next Steps

Ken explained the process for proposals and offered help to develop ideas and support groups through the process.

Jadieal Millwood said that The Lighthouse was part of the community and offered his support and use of The Lighthouse and invited residents to drop in for a visit.

Councillor Afzal urged residents and community groups to spread the word about the Local Innovation Fund to others who might have ideas or proposals they would wish to explore.

In conclusion Ken said that there had been some good ideas put forward and he hoped that the groups would enter into some partnership work to explore the ideas further. He offered his help with the development of the ideas and asked that written proposals be forwarded to him within the coming weeks.

Actions:-

- **Written proposals to be sent to Ken Brown within the next 3weeks by 28 April**
- **Jadieal to make a presentation on his work at The Lighthouse at a future meeting.**

Meeting ended at 7.45pm

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