

Somerset County Council (SCC) Invest to Save Fund Guidance



Background:

The Invest to Save Fund (£500,000) supports Somerset's County Plan's commitment to work with partners, voluntary groups and communities to encourage and enable co-operation to support services that meet local needs.

With reducing income and increasing demand, it is clear that in the future we will need to change how we work and what we are able to do. We will have to reduce what we do in some areas and stop what we do in others.

We are looking for innovative applications, new ways of working, which support the preventative and Localism agenda. Applications are encouraged which help build community capacity, promote collaborative working and in turn reduce demand for SCC services or enhance service delivery but at lower cost. For example, a community could apply for cash to purchase equipment and then take on the running of a function or service which is usually carried out by the Council. Both staff and communities are encouraged to come forward with their ideas.

The Invest to Save Fund places greater emphasis on the need to demonstrate what return on investment will be achieved, including how any savings or benefits will be realised as a result of the proposed initiative. **Any initial investment should in turn lead to a subsequent reduction in demand or cost for services provided by Somerset County Council.**

Any initiatives supported by the fund need to demonstrate how they support [County Plan priorities](#) and the Council's strategic objectives. These include informed commissioning, better customer experience, stronger local engagement and value for money. Key SCC priorities are child protection, modernising Adult Social Care, economic growth and ensuring that the County Council remains a sustainable and viable entity, best placed to deliver our ambitions.

Governance Arrangements:

1. All applications need to be submitted via a sponsoring County Councillor (community bids) or Senior Director (staff bids):
 - Members are encouraged to involve relevant Local Authority Officers to help develop proposals prior to submitting any application for consideration. In submitting / endorsing any application Members must ensure they comply with their Code of Conduct and the Scheme Guidance.
 - Whilst bids will be invited from community-based providers, independent voluntary sector groups and Parish Councils, bids are also now encouraged from members of staff.
2. Proposals can be brought forward at any time. However, during a County Council Election year (2017) the deadline will be 31 January to take into account the pre-election notice period and end of financial year deadlines.
3. There is no maximum limit in terms of funding to be allocated and the funding can be used for revenue or capital costs.

4. Completed application forms need to be submitted to the Community Development Team mailbox, communities@somerset.gov.uk and they will arrange for the proposal to be considered by the Invest to Save Panel.
5. Providing sufficient information has been included the Invest to Save Fund Panel comprising the Cabinet Member for Resources and senior officers from Finance, Community Governance and Customers and Communities will meet to consider the bids against a number of criteria (see below).
 - Where appropriate the sponsoring Member or Senior Director may be asked to attend, as well as the relevant service manager or commissioner who will assist the panel to enable a clear understanding of the opportunities and benefits to be realised and identify any possible duplication in funding.
6. Following consideration by the Panel the options would be:
 - further information is requested to fully consider bid;
 - bid refused, Member or Senior Director informed with feedback behind decision and Member or Senior Director to feedback to those involved in submitting the bid;
 - bid recommended for approval.
7. Where a bid has been recommended for approval a key/non key decision paper will be prepared for sign off by the Director for Finance and Performance. Where appropriate, each bid will be supported by an impact assessment.
8. On formal approval of the proposal, a letter of award will be sent to the Member or Senior Director to outline the conditions of the grant and to coordinate payment of any funding. Service providers will be required to comply with the terms and conditions under which any grant is made and to provide regular progress updates on the use of any funds granted.

If the grant is not used for the intended purpose or does not deliver the expected return on investment, some or all, of the grant will be repaid. There is an expectation that any funded initiatives should start or have already started within six months of the funding being awarded.

9. An annual report to Senior Leadership Team and Cabinet / Scrutiny will summarise any initiatives supported by the fund and Members / Directors will be asked to provide updates on the progress and outcomes of supported initiatives. Successful bids will be notified to relevant service managers and commissioners.

Criteria:

The Invest to Save Fund Evaluation Panel will consider any submitted bids against a number of criteria including (but are not restricted to):

- Supports Somerset County Plan priorities and targets, including [Social Value](#)
- County Council business risks are reduced
- Service costs are reduced or remain constant but quality of delivery improves
- Supports preventative working
- Helps support and develop Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise infrastructure or sustainable capacity in communities

NB: Availability of other resources and linkages with any other initiatives / funding sources will be considered. Applications should not seek to replace funding for service provision

removed by the MTFP process. The Panel will also be asked to consider the sustainability of the fund. Consideration will be given as to how any identified financial savings are used most effectively, such as possible further investment in other schemes, replenishing the overall Invest to Save Fund and / or reduction in associated service area budget.

The scheme must embrace the principles of good decision making as set out in the [Constitution](#). Given that the scheme is intended to span the four year election year (2017), the deadline for any applications, during election year, will be the end of January 2017, to avoid overlap with the pre-election notice period when there are restrictions on Council publicity and decision-making.

The Evaluation Panel will comprise of:

- The Cabinet Member for Resources
- Finance and Performance Director
- SCC Monitoring Officer from Community Governance
- Customers and Communities Strategic Manager and Service Manager for Community Development
- The Cabinet Lead and or Supporting Member for Customers and Communities will also have an invitation to attend and be part of the Evaluation Panel
- Relevant service manager and / or commissioner to attend, where they will be asked to contribute supporting information and advise regarding any recommendation on the proposal as well as identifying any possible duplication in funding from other SCC initiatives
- Where appropriate the sponsoring Member or Senior Director may be invited to attend to provide additional information.

A summary flow diagram of the process and governance is outlined on page four.

Invest to Save Fund: Application Decision Process

