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**Manchester City Council  
Report for Resolution**

**Report to:** Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee - 7 September 2016

**Subject:** Neighbourhood Investment Fund and Ward plans

**Report of:** Deputy Chief Executive (Growth and Neighbourhoods)

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**Summary**

This report was requested by the Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee to provide an update on the Neighbourhood Investment Fund and ward plans.

**Recommendations**

The Committee is asked to note the contents of the report.

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**Wards Affected:** All

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**Background documents (available for public inspection):**

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

Neighbourhood Focus – Detailed Design. Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Committee – 21 July 2015

## **1.0 Introduction**

1.1 Ward coordination continues to provide the framework for elected members to oversee the delivery of city wide and local priorities at neighbourhood level. The Neighbourhood Investment Fund was established in 2015 to support local community and resident activity, based on the local priorities set out in the ward plans. It replaced the previous CASH Grant process which had originally been introduced as part of ward coordination. This report offers a summary of how this funding is being invested in the wards across the city and includes case studies which show the range of activity which has been funded.

## **2.0 Ward Plans**

2.1 The report to the Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Committee (July 2015) – “Neighbourhood Focus - Detailed Design” set out the principles and objectives of the Neighbourhoods Service. It emphasised that wards remain the fundamental building blocks for the City’s Neighbourhood Focus, and that Ward Plans would continue to be developed with Members and local stakeholders, such as Registered Providers, GMP, other Council services and residents.

2.2 The Ward Plan is the critical link between the Manchester Strategy – Our Manchester, the Area Plans, and neighbourhoods – setting out how our strategic priorities are being delivered at local level. Neighbourhood Managers provide support to Members in their place leadership role and act as the lead contact for Members, ensuring effective communication and engagement with Executive and local ward Members on neighbourhood issues.

2.3 For 2016/17 the structure of ward plans has been streamlined - these now set out key Ward priorities in a simple and short format. The intention is to provide Ward plans that have clearer and fewer priorities with a greater focus on key issues and challenges affecting local neighbourhoods. This will ensure there is greater transparency and improved accountability on delivering ward priorities that are aligned to the Our Manchester vision.

2.4 Officers support 4 serviced meetings a year to track delivery of the Ward Plan. The Ward Plans have already been drafted and are currently the subject of discussion with local members over the next cycle of ward co-ordination meetings. It is the expectation that the NIF programme will be targeted on local priorities identified in the Area Plans and Ward Plans.

## **3.0 Neighbourhood Investment Fund**

3.1 Neighbourhood teams manage the Neighbourhood Investment Fund (NIF) process. The key features of the NIF process area as follows;

- NIF grant awards will be used to support strategic priorities (work and skills, community capacity building, behaviour change to improve the environment and recycling, ward priorities within the Ward Plan).
- NIF grant awards will in the main be awarded through two rounds of applications each year.

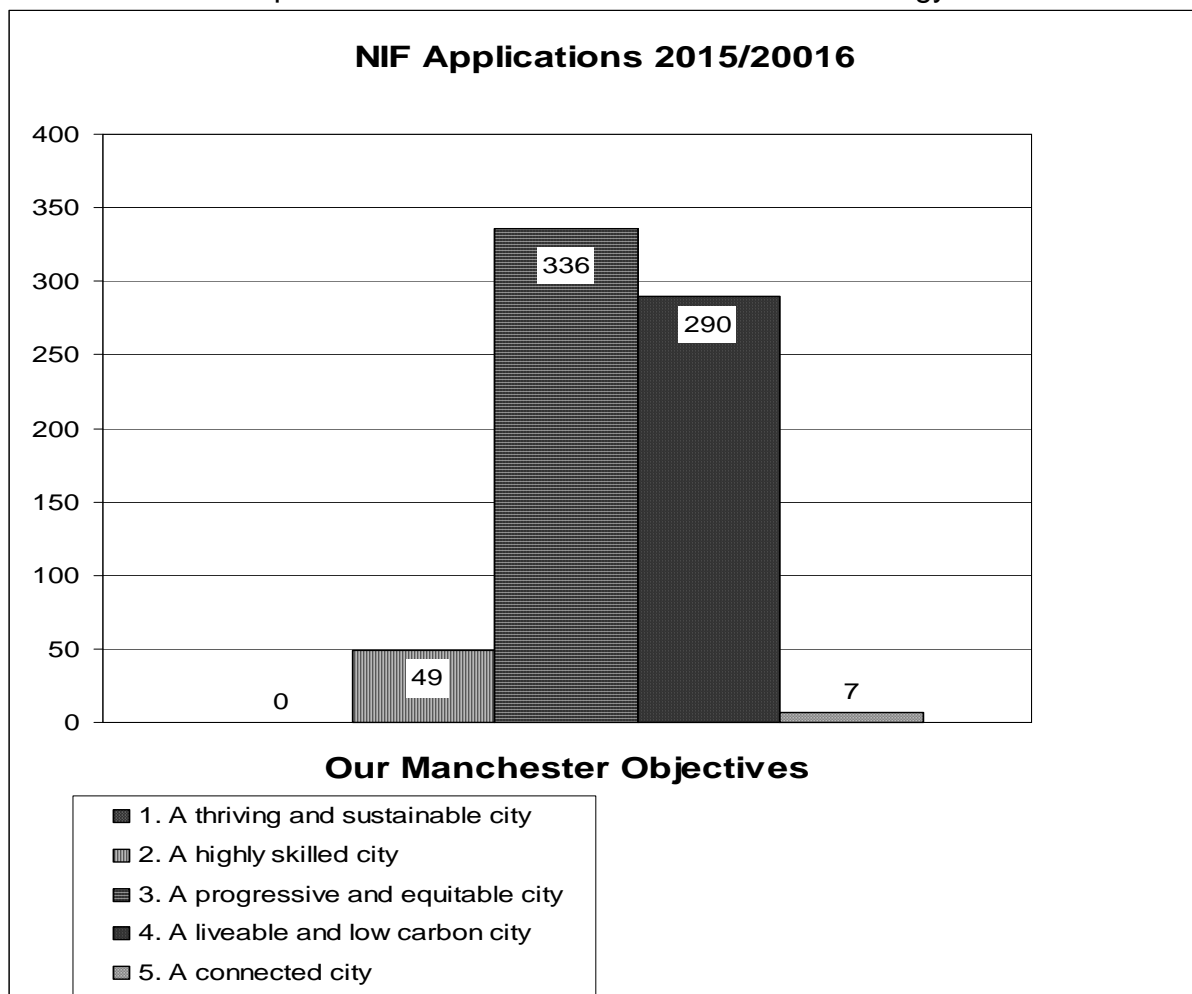
- Applicants are encouraged to apply for NIF on-line and there will be support in Libraries for those who don't have the necessary access or skills.
- NIF grants will be spent within the financial year in which it is allocated.

3.2 A total of £20,000 has been allocated to each ward in the city. This amounts to a total investment of £640,000. To date in 2016/17 a total of 99 grants have already been approved with a value of £151,603 This spend profile is similar to previous years.

#### 4.0 How has NIF been targeted?

4.1 The NIF process is designed to be simple and non-bureaucratic. This is to ensure that it easy for residents to make an application. It also means that there is flexibility to address a wide range of local issues. NIF grants have been used to support community events in a variety of contexts, for example; fun days in parks; community clean ups; parades; health programmes; youth activity; age friendly projects etc. There are also numerous examples where members have used NIF strategically to support larger projects and programmes across ward boundaries.

The following table provides a summary of how the grants awarded across the city in 2015/16 match the priorities set out in the Our Manchester strategy.



4.2 It can be seen that the majority of grants support the “Progressive and Equitable City “ theme (health related projects, work with the voluntary and community sector, work with young people etc); and the “Liveable and low carbon city” theme (environmental projects, clean ups, sport and leisure, and other activity in parks, green spaces, waterways etc). There are also many projects which cut across themes, for example work and skills activity can also incorporate digital elements.

It is clear that the NIF programme plays an important role in supporting the Our Manchester Strategy in a wide range of practical ways, typically engaging residents in clean ups, environmental work, leisure activity; learning and volunteering all of which may have range of benefits to people (health, well being, skills) or the neighbourhood (clean, safe, sustainable).

## **5.0 Examples and Case Studies**

5.1 Examples of how the NIF budget has been used are outlined below, including projects where wards have collaborated to increase the impact across a wider area. ;

### **5.2 North Area**

A total of £37,000 has been approved so far in 2016/17, funding 31 projects.

In the last financial year 113 NIF grants were awarded covering a range of activity including inter-generational projects across wards in Crumpsall and Cheetham; a series of environmental clean up projects eg; the towpath section of the Rochdale Canal in Miles Platting and Newton Heath; and projects to improve community cohesion across all wards that brought local people together (eg; celebrations, festivals and events). Health and well being projects and activities that supported participation in sports or exercise/ walking and healthy eating projects were popular across the north area. An example is highlighted below.

#### **Case Study – North Manchester Sports and Activity Forum**

The North Manchester Sports and Activity Forum were awarded £2000 to deliver the community games programme. Three wards contributed £666 each - Charlestown, Harpurhey and Moston.

The event was a great opportunity to provide a free sports and activities event for the whole family. Local clubs delivered taster sessions of their sports and community groups hosted stalls. Last year over 1000 people attended the event with many being recorded to continue participating in activities post event. GMP and GMFR support the event, plus many others.

There were over 20 local groups and sports clubs supporting the event by managing stalls or delivering activities, including;

- Collyhurst and Moston ABC
- FC United
- North Manchester Fitness
- Factory Youth Zone
- Boggart Strollers

- Blackley Athletics Club
- Simply Cycling
- Boggart Fishing Club
- North Manchester Rugby Club
- Pennine Panthers from Our Lady's
- Moston Juniors
- Blackley Volleyball Club
- Utopia
- Abraham Moss inclusive session

This is a good example of an event was well attended and popular, but which also supported wider objectives like the opportunity to improve to improve health and community cohesion. All local members were active in supporting this project and its wider contribution to North Manchester's sense of pride.

### **5.3 Central Area**

A total of £64,588 has been approved so far in 2016/17, funding 38 projects. Applications totalling further £143K are currently under consideration.

All wards have supported projects which help make neighbourhoods cleaner, and which promote activity and healthy life styles. These include events in our major parks, our libraries and neighbourhoods.

In Levenshulme and Gorton South members have used NIF resources to deliver events in Levenshulme District Centre, while Gorton North has funded a range of activities, including an annual parade, to support Gorton All Together.

Moss Side. Whalley Range and Fallowfield have worked together to support cultural events eg; the Caribbean Carnival, which promote the local area and improve the profile of Manchester. Longsight used NIF grant to secure match funding to run the Northmoor Work Club, helping local residents improve their skills and find jobs. In Rusholme a grant was made to the Anson Cabin Project to help them re turf their community garden and ensure this popular local centre remains well used.

A childrens' play area was created in Hulme using NIF grants to secure match funding from Manchester Metropolitan University, and Ardwick councillors funded a festival in Gartside Gardens to support the local community as part of the regeneration of the wider Brunswick area.

### **Case Study - City Centre**

The City Centre ward coordination group awarded a grant to the Canals and Rivers trust to fund a Community Adoption scheme which brought together residents and businesses on a regular basis to improve and maintain the canal area. It aims to encourage the positive use of the canal for walking, biking, boating and other family friendly activities which benefit residents and visitors alike. The project brings in support from the Canals and Rivers Trust, access to vehicles and equipment, and advice from experienced volunteers. There are a number of benefits, for example; volunteering opportunities where residents can acquire new skills; environmental

improvements through new planting and better recycling; and increased community safety through better use of the space. Overall this project represents a strategic approach which should reduce maintenance costs and improve the appearance of this key city centre asset.

#### **5.4 South Area**

A total of £50,015 has been approved so far in 2016/17, funding 30 projects. Applications totalling further £102K are currently under consideration.

A significant amount of funding in the South is committed to developing and supporting its network of community organisations and community learning Hubs. This includes in Barlow Moor Community Association in Chorlton Park, and Community Minded in Old Moat. In Fallowfield ward the fund has supported the development of The Place as a community library and learning facility operated by a social enterprise. In Burnage the fund assisted NGAGE, a community provider of youth provision, take over a building and start operating youth outreach provision. Whalley Range has history of using its grant to supporting its community forum and associated organisations such as Community on Solid Ground deliver a whole range of community services.

The fund is also used to support activities which raise the profile and vitality of district centres. In Chorlton support was given through the fund to the Chorlton Arts & Book Festivals and the Christmas festivities. Withington focussed its allocation on speed issues in the ward through erecting speed awareness cameras.

Some wards have a history of working collaboratively the Didsbury Wards worked collaboratively to fund the Didsbury Festival in Didsbury Park. All 5 wards in Wythenshawe allocated a total of £30,000 of the 2015/16 grant to the Wythenshawe Games. The Games has developed as Manchester's largest community sports festival encouraging people to engage with sports and healthy living.

#### **Case Study – Wythenshawe Games 2016**

The Wythenshawe Games, now in its fifth year, was first held in 2012 part of the Olympic Legacy "Be Inspired" Programme and has grown year and year to become the leading Community Sports Festival in Manchester. The Games take place over 5 days in late July in Wythenshawe Park and the packed daily schedules include sports such as Football, Rugby, Athletics, Cross Country Running, Table Tennis, Sitting Volleyball, Cricket, Golf, wheelchair tennis and Power Chair Football.

Participation in the Wythenshawe Games continues to grow and this year around 14,500 people, (up more than 4,000 from 2015), took up the challenge to enter a range of individual and team events and competitions. In addition to the sport events there were a range of activities and exhibitors to encourage people to engage with sport, exercise and healthy living, with "Real Food Wythenshawe" on hand to provide healthy snacks and cooking demonstrations. Plans are already under way to make 2017 even more successful than ever and a number of community based sports and activities programmes have already started across Wythenshawe.

## **6.0 Conclusion**

6.1 Members are requested to note the contents of this report