

INNOVATION FUND REFRESH

To: Communities and Partnerships Committee

Meeting Date: 6 July 2017

From: Sue Grace: Director Corporate and Customer Services

Electoral division(s): All

Forward Plan ref: N/a **Key decision:** No

Purpose: To set out the development to date of the Innovation Fund and the plans to refresh how this fund is allocated.

Recommendation: The Committee is asked to comment on and agree to:

- a) The plans to refresh the Innovation Fund.
- b) That the Committee Chairman and Vice Chairman be appointed to the Bid Assessment Panel.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Following a motion to full Council by Councillor Criswell in February 2016, Cambridgeshire County Council launched the Cambridgeshire Communities Innovation Fund at the Parish Council Conference in November 2016. Initially worth £1 million the fund is to help community organisations with big ideas for transformative preventative work that will make a positive impact on Council expenditure. Applications were invited for funding for projects which demonstrably make an impact on County Council priority outcomes – particularly in relation to working with vulnerable people, thereby diverting children and adults from needing high-cost Council services. Applicants have been asked to show:
 - Increased capacity within communities to help others, so helping people and communities to become more resilient;
 - Reduced need for people to use Council services
 - Clear social value in the actions undertaken, and the impact on outcomes for the most vulnerable people in our communities.
- 1.2 The monies for the Fund have been drawn from the Council's adjusted debt defrayment, and as such, a return on investment is a requirement of any funding request.
- 1.3 The Fund is being managed in partnership with Cambridgeshire Community Foundation (CCF), a local philanthropic organisation which manages grants for a range of organisations across the county. This has the added benefit of being able to link other sources of funding to the desired outcomes. It also provides the means to generate input from community partners (e.g. businesses, other statutory agencies, charities, sole benefactors).
- 1.4 A panel of Members and Officers, with expert advice provided by service leads and local businesses, consider the proposals. Advice is given on strengthening the proposal or signposting to alternative contacts for project or community support or suitable alternative funding. There is a minimum of one elected member on the panel and a maximum of two. This gives Member oversight and allows for any local conflict of interest to be mitigated.
- 1.5 Applications are invited from the voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors, based in and outside of Cambridgeshire. We also accept proposals from public sector organisations in Cambridgeshire.
- 1.6 We have promoted the opportunity for organisations to apply for projects which aim to make positive impacts for our most vulnerable people, by delivering one or more of the following outcomes:
 - Promoting independence for older people or adults with disabilities;
 - Reducing or delaying the need for home care or residential care;
 - Reducing social isolation amongst older people;
 - Increasing the capacity of communities to support their more vulnerable residents;
 - Ensuring young people with learning disabilities or autism are well prepared for adulthood.

- 1.7 The outcomes listed in paragraph 1.6 represent some of the areas where the Council spends a significant proportion of its budget and where external organisations are likely to be best placed to make an impact. Direct project deliverables could be, for example:
- Greater community resources, in particular in rural areas;
 - People with personal budgets planning together;
 - Increased volunteers and mentors working with vulnerable groups;
 - Increased opportunities for older people to take part in group activities;
 - Better support for carers;
 - Help for young people with learning disabilities to become more independent;
 - Local level practical support for older people, including personal care.
- 1.8 The Fund aims to encourage new and innovative thinking, and any proposals which have a significant positive impact are encouraged. Applicants may propose the delivery of a product, for example, a website or a piece of equipment, or the delivery of an activity, for example, a Time Bank or a lunch club for older people. Success of projects will be judged by predicted outcomes, and social and economic benefit.
- 1.9 The Fund has already received 47 applications. Five projects were funded in the first round, committing £170,483 of funds. Appendix 1 sets out summaries of the five funded projects.

2. MAIN ISSUES

- 2.1 Following the first round the opportunity was taken to review the fund. Feedback was invited from the lead Member, Councillor Criswell, applicants and key County Council officers.

2.2 Summary of key feedback

- The focus on innovation, whilst really positive, could exclude potentially good projects that would otherwise achieve the desired outcomes of the fund.
- Applicants would like greater clarity on County Council service provision gaps and challenges where bids would be particularly welcome;
- The process for receiving/reviewing applications is time consuming for County Council officers;
- The two-stage application process is onerous for small grant bids and has resulted in bidders withdrawing from the second stage of the application process;
- The project proposal forms do not provide sufficient information on budgets/ finance and project sustainability;
- Applicants find the requirement to demonstrate savings difficult as information and data on County Council spending and costs are difficult for applicants to interpret.

2.3 Taking this feedback into account, the following is proposed:

- Separate out a small grants (£2k- £10k) strand within the overall Fund. These small grants would focus on capacity building and developing and strengthening networks on the ground. Small grants will go through a separate, simpler application process with a single panel decision.

- Retain a large grants scheme (up to £50k) with a focus on projects that are innovative. The large grants would continue to go through a two-stage application process. Large grants could be used for activities which would be commissioned longer term by the County Council.
- Develop timelines for small and large grants with set application deadlines, rather than the current open process with no deadlines. Two rounds for large grants and three rounds of small grants up to Autumn 2018.
- Service leads to identify gaps and challenges within their service areas where bids would be most welcome and communicate these to applicants via workshops and promotional campaigns/materials. The workshops would also involve Business Intelligence colleagues and include plenary sessions and surgeries for potential bidders to help them source information and develop their applications.
- Large grant bids will need to robustly demonstrate potential savings with assistance offered by the Business Intelligence and Finance teams. Small grant bids will also need to demonstrate savings but this could be achieved by demonstrating that the activity proposed will lead to savings, or cost avoidance, through community capacity building and bidders then being held to account to deliver those activities. Applicants would need to show:
 - The number and type of beneficiaries;
 - The number of connections that are being made in the community;
 - How the 'prevention agenda' is being met.
- It is suggested that the new look and feel of the fund is signalled by renaming it the 'Innovate and Cultivate' fund to reflect the two separate segments of the fund – community capacity building and innovation. If agreed, the Communications team will support publicity around the new focus of the fund, and will also assist in developing promotional materials to help bidders understand County Council priorities, how the Council works, what it spends its money on now and where bids to develop additional support might best be aimed.
- A colleague from the Transformation Team will join the steering group for the Fund during the transition period to provide guidance and to support implementation.
- Bidders will be encouraged to involve their County Councillor in local projects and they will have the opportunity to provide written representation.

3. ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES

3.1 Developing the local economy for the benefit of all

There are no significant implications for this priority.

3.2 Helping people live healthy and independent lives

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- The focus of the Fund is supporting people to live healthy and independent lives.
- It focuses upon the most vulnerable groups who are most likely to experience health inequalities
- One of the aims of the review is to ensure we are delivering as effectively as possible against this priority.

3.3 Supporting and protecting vulnerable people

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- The review of the Fund aims to enhance delivery against this priority e.g. by our Service Leads outlining key gaps and challenges where the support of the voluntary and community sector could make a real difference to the lives of vulnerable people.

4. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Resource Implications

The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- The review aims to ensure that the Fund makes most efficient use of resources. Implications of the recommendations include more effective use of officer time. The finance team have agreed all recommendations

4.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

Legal advice has been taken in the setting up of this Fund and in the creation of the grant application and monitoring process.

4.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

The focus of this Fund on supporting the most vulnerable, see paragraph 1.6, will mean this investment will make a positive contribution to issues of equality.

4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

The plans for engagement and communication of this Fund are set out in this report.

4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- Community empowerment sits at the heart of the Innovation Fund. The recommendations for the refreshed Fund will enhance the opportunity for local community organisations to bid for projects which harness the energy of their community.
- Bidders will be encouraged to engage with their local Member. If agreed, the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Communities and Partnerships Committee will be members of the Selection panel.

4.7 Public Health Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

Implications	Officer Clearance
Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance?	Yes Name of Financial Officer: Tom Kelly
Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by Finance?	N/a
Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by LGSS Law?	Yes Name of Legal Officer: Fiona McMillan
Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact?	Yes Name of Officer: Sue Grace
Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?	Yes Name of Officer: Christine Birchall
Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact?	Yes. Councillor Steve Criswell Name of Officer: Wendy Lansdown
Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health	Yes Name of Officer: Val Thomas

Source Documents	Location
See: https://www.cambscf.org.uk/ccif.html	Cambridgeshire Community Foundation website

APPENDIX 1

Successful applicants to the Cambridgeshire Communities Innovation Fund as at June 2017

Carers Trust Cambridgeshire - Caring Communities in Later Life Project

Awarded: up to £49,999

Carers Trust will use their expanding network of carer-friendly Community Hubs in Cambridgeshire to offer a Health and Wellbeing activity programme and training targeted at older people. They will develop a support network for elderly carers to offer them short respite breaks from their caring responsibilities and increase local volunteering and employment opportunities in social care.

Cambridge Housing Society Group – Timebanking

Awarded: £49,984

This initiative will promote and expand the Timebanking and Time Credits schemes in Littleport and Cambourne. It will increase the number of older people involved in Timebanks and support people with mental health needs and/or low self-esteem to become active members of Timebanks. CHS will recruit new befrienders to support socially isolated people and run social events in the villages to enhance community cohesion. It will develop best practice for Timebanks and facilitate the development of sustainable Timebank schemes across the county.

Little Miracles CIO

Awarded: £35,000

Supports families with children who have additional needs, disabilities or life limiting conditions. The Innovation Fund grant will cover the costs of providing administrative support to their programmes and recruit volunteers to free up specialists' time to further develop front line services at their branches in Ramsey, St Neots, Ely, March and Wisbech. They also intend to extend their services into South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge.

Somersham Parish Council

Awarded: up to £25,000

This project will develop activities to improve the quality of life for local area residents with neurological conditions such as dementia, Parkinson's, Multiple Sclerosis and stroke, supported by new and existing members of the local Timebank. The project will also make Somersham Nature Reserve more accessible for people with neurological conditions and develop a programme of natural health interventions at the reserve. These initiatives will benefit the mental and physical wellbeing of beneficiaries and increase volunteering and community support networks.

Switch Now CIC

Awarded: £10,500

To train, support and mentor young adults with learning difficulties/ disabilities (aged 16-30) to progress toward voluntary, paid or self-employment. The grant will fund the development of a fit for purpose vocational training and enterprise centre in Eaton Socon, and a programme of support including training and mentoring, work placement matching, and personal and social skills development. The initiative will also support local businesses to employ young adults with additional needs.