

## Innovate and Cultivate Fund – Process Updates

To: Communities, Social Mobility, and Inclusion Committee

Meeting Date: 8 July 2021

From: Adrian Chapman, Service Director: Communities and Safety

Electoral division(s): All

Key decision: No

Outcome: The successful delivery of funded projects to support the overall aims of the council.

Recommendation: The Committee is asked to:

- a) Agree to update Innovate and Cultivate Fund information and guidance to better align to the priorities of the Joint Administration;
- b) Maintain the current pause on Innovate applications;
- c) Reduce the number of attendees on the Recommendation Panel, as set out in Paragraph 2.1.3 of the report; and
- d) Delegate the endorsement of Recommendation Panel outcomes to the Service Director for Communities and Partnerships, in consultation with the Chair of the Communities, Social Mobility and Inclusion Committee, with a report presented to the Committee on outcomes at the next available opportunity.

### Officer contact:

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### Member contacts:

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# 1. Background

- 1.1 The Innovation Fund was launched in November 2016 with an initial allocation of £1m from the council's Transformation Fund. A review and refresh of the fund was carried out the following year resulting in the current Innovate and Cultivate Fund as agreed by Communities and Partnership Committee on 24 August 2017.
- 1.2 In accordance with the Committee decision, a Recommendation Panel considers applications to the fund and has been made up of three County Council Service Leads or Assistant Directors, the Chief Finance Officer or Head of Finance, a senior officer involved in managing the fund, and a representative of Cambridgeshire Community Foundation. Up to May 2021 the Panel also included five elected members from the Communities and Partnership Committee politically proportionate to District Administrations (3 Conservative, 1 Liberal Democrat and 1 Labour).
- 1.3 On 22 January 2019 the General Purposes Committee resolved to transfer a further £1m from the Transformation Fund to the Innovate and Cultivate Fund. A further £300k was allocated in January 2021 taking the total allocation to £2.3 million.
- 1.4 The fund is open to voluntary, community and social enterprise sector organisations based in and outside of Cambridgeshire and public sector bodies in Cambridgeshire to deliver projects and ideas that help address the needs of local residents.
- 1.5 There are two funding streams:

**Cultivate:** grants of £2,000-£15,000 aimed at encouraging local networks where people help themselves and each other. This is a single stage application process, where the Committee considers the final recommendations of the panel before confirming awards. Funding rounds are quarterly (February, May, August, November).

**Innovate:** grants of £15,001 - £50,000 for projects that demonstrate an innovative approach. This is a two-stage application process where second stage applicants present a more detailed project plan and quarterly activity and budget plans to the panel, after which the Committee considers the panel recommendations before confirming awards. Funding rounds have been twice yearly (May and November).
- 1.6 The Fund offers prescriptive guidance to Cultivate applicants in the form of 'Cultivate Project Ideas' which are known to provide a return on investment, and contain information and guidance as well as the funding available for Community Youth Workers, Mobile Warden Schemes, Digital Inclusion Projects, Men's Sheds, Timebanks, Good Neighbour Schemes, and Dementia Friendly Communities.
- 1.7 Interested groups and organisations are encouraged to participate in pre-application advice sessions, where they receive one to one support from service leads who encourage strong applications linked to fund criteria or divert applicants to more suitable funding and support.
- 1.8 All applicants to the Fund are required to demonstrate a number of stated criteria including the following:

- Project outcomes align with key funding priorities for Children’s Services, Adult Social Care, or other council priorities
  - Projects show they will reduce pressure on council services and/or offer direct savings for the council
  - Projects must be either new or build on an existing project in a new location or with new beneficiaries.
- 1.9 Up until April 2021, total funding allocated was up to £1,792,782 (plus administrative costs). A further 13 applications to the Cultivate Fund were received in May 2021 and are yet to be considered by the Recommendation Panel but could potentially take the fund close to £2m spend leaving in the region of £300,000 for future rounds.
- 1.10 On 21 January 2021, the former Communities and Partnership Committee agreed to suspend the Innovate fund with immediate effect whilst funding levels were comparatively low, focusing on Cultivate fund applications.

## 2. Main Issues

- 2.1 Operational oversight of the Fund rests with a steering group, who consider the overall trends and identify any issues or opportunities based on their broad knowledge of communities. To better align the Fund to the priorities set out by the Joint Administration, the steering group has met recently to consider and recommend some changes to the way the Fund is delivered. Their suggestions and recommendations are set out below.
- 2.1.1 To update the Fund information and guidance to encourage a stronger focus on:
- Health and wellbeing
  - Improving social mobility and alleviating poverty
  - Local support for young people and families, and ensuring inclusion of all parts of a community
  - Covid recovery through locally led community action
- 2.1.2 To maintain the Cultivate Fund only, with the current focus on community led action.
- 2.1.3 To revise the Recommendation Panel membership from eleven scoring members (six scoring officers and five scoring Committee Members) to nine scoring members. The Chair of the Panel will remain the Think Communities Manager who will have a non-scoring role but who is able to substitute as a scoring member if the Panel becomes non-quorate (i.e. to ensure equal or more scoring Officers to Members). It is proposed the members’ roles on panel are carried out by Committee Spokes. The panel would therefore be made up as follows:

### Scoring Panel Officers

Chief Finance Officer or Head of Finance

Adult Services Representative

Children’s Services Representative

Youth and Communities Representative  
Cambridgeshire Community Foundation Representative

**Members** - taken from Communities, Social Mobility, and Inclusion Committee  
Spokesperson for the Liberal Democrat Group  
Spokesperson for the Labour Group  
Spokesperson for the Independent Group  
Spokesperson for the Conservative Group

- 2.2 Endorsement of Recommendation Panel outcomes has, to date, been carried out by the Communities and Partnership Committee immediately following the Recommendation Panel meeting. With relatively frequent Committee meetings, this ensured that applications were endorsed in a timely manner enabling community projects to commence delivery as swiftly as possible. The new pattern of quarterly Committee meetings may mean that, in some cases, there will be a delay between Recommendation Panel outcome and Committee endorsement, impacting on the ability for projects to commence delivery.
- 2.3 It is therefore proposed that the endorsement of Recommendation Panel outcomes is delegated to the Service Director for Communities and Partnerships, in consultation with the Chair of the Communities, Social Mobility and Inclusion Committee, with the Committee being informed at the next available meeting.

### 3. Alignment with corporate priorities

- 3.1 **Communities at the heart of everything we do**  
The Fund is designed to support community-led projects that meet an identified need, developed, and delivered by groups or organisations that are closest to our communities.
- 3.2 **A good quality of life for everyone**  
The focus of the Fund is supporting people to live healthy and independent lives. It focuses upon the most vulnerable groups and enables a locally delivered approach which improves the outcomes for our citizens and communities, as well as to prevent and delay demand for statutory intervention.
- 3.3 **Helping our children learn, develop and live life to the full**  
Wherever possible, the Fund supports the voluntary and community sector to make a real difference to the lives of children and families, providing opportunities for the whole population to succeed and to enable improved outcomes.
- 3.4 **Cambridgeshire: a well-connected, safe, clean green environment**  
A number of funded projects support connectivity between residents and communities.
- 3.5 **Protecting and caring for those who need us**  
The Fund affords opportunities for individuals and communities to develop their skills and resilience to undertake initiatives that improve and enable independence, health, and well-being.

## 4. Significant Implications

### 4.1 Resource Implications

The report above sets out the implications for this priority in 2.3 and Appendix 1.

### 4.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

The following bullet point sets out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- Although grants are exempt from procurement regulations, procurement advice has been taken on the grant application process and member involvement in recommending bids for award and final decision of award.

### 4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

The following bullet point sets out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- 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 following bullet point sets out details of significant implications identified by officers:

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

### 4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

The following bullet point sets out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- The plans for engagement and communication of this Fund are as agreed at 8<sup>th</sup> November 2018 Committee.

### 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 Innovate & Cultivate Fund which enhances the opportunity for local community organisations to bid for projects which harness the energy of their community.
- Members play a key role in considering each application on its own merits and against the fund criteria. The Communities and Partnership Committee receive recommendations for funding from the Recommendation Panel.

## 4.7 Public Health Implications

The following bullet point sets out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- The Innovate and Cultivate Fund affords opportunities for individuals and communities to develop their skills and resilience to undertake initiatives that improve health and well-being. The approved projects also support interventions to support those most vulnerable to prevent their health and wellbeing needs escalating and service needs increasing.

## 4.8 Environment and Climate Change Implications on Priority Areas (See further guidance in Appendix 2):

### 4.8.1 Implication 1: Energy efficient, low carbon buildings.

Positive status

Explanation: Applications will be encouraged to support energy efficient low carbon buildings, where appropriate.

### 4.8.2 Implication 2: Low carbon transport.

Positive status

Explanation: Applications which include transport will be encouraged to low carbon transport

### 4.8.3 Implication 3: Green spaces, peatland, afforestation, habitats, and land management.

Positive status

Explanation: Applications including use of green spaces will be encouraged to support appropriate environment and land management.

### 4.8.4 Implication 4: Waste Management and Tackling Plastic Pollution.

Positive status

Explanation: Applications will be encouraged to address waste Management and plastic pollution.

### 4.8.5 Implication 5: Water use, availability, and management:

Positive status

Explanation: Applications will be encouraged to address availability and management of water usage where appropriate.

### 4.8.6 Implication 6: Air Pollution.

Positive status

Explanation: Applications will be encouraged to consider air pollution and their role in mitigation, where appropriate.

### 4.8.7 Implication 7: Resilience of our services and infrastructure and supporting vulnerable people to cope with climate change.

Positive status:

Explanation: Applications are expected to be sustainable beyond the life of the funded project and provide resilience to services. They will be encouraged to support vulnerable people to understand and cope with climate change.

Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance? Yes  
Name of Financial Officer: Martin Wade

Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the LGSS Head of Procurement? Yes  
Name of Officer: Henry Swan

Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by the Council's Monitoring Officer or LGSS Law? Yes  
Name of Legal Officer: Fiona McMillen

Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact? Yes  
Name of Officer: Adrian Chapman

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  
Name of Officer: Adrian Chapman

Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health? Yes  
Name of Officer: Val Thomas

## 5. Source Documents

### 5.1 Source documents

[Cambridgeshire Community Foundation Innovate and Cultivate Fund Application Forms](#)

[Cambridgeshire Community Foundation Innovate and Cultivate Fund Guidance](#)