

## Cambridgeshire Priorities Capital Fund

To: Communities, Social Mobility and Inclusion Committee

Meeting Date: 18 May 2023

From: Assistant Director for Communities, Employment and Skills

Electoral division(s): All

Key decision: No

Outcome: To consider the proposed criteria and application process for capital grants from the Cambridgeshire Priorities Capital Fund.

Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to:

- a) Approve the proposed criteria, eligibility and two stage process for applications to the £1,000,000 Cambridgeshire Priorities Capital Fund, as set out in the report;
- b) Reserve the remaining £500,000 of available resources to make capital improvements to Council owned community assets and projects;
- c) Subject to recommendation a), appoint seven Members to the Assessment Panel, based on political proportionality.

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# 1. Background

- 1.1 In April 2020, the Cambridgeshire Communities Capital Fund was launched across the county. The £5,000,000 fund was set up to support community-led capital bids, and 35 projects secured funding, totalling £3,490,783.
- 1.2 In July 2022, a Member-led Steering Group was set up to review incomplete projects from the Communities Capital Fund and to bring the fund to an end.
- 1.3 The Steering Group was also tasked with the development of a new capital fund, called the Cambridgeshire Priorities Capital Fund. While developing the new fund, the Steering Group set out to establish criteria that supports the Council in achieving its vision and ambitions as detailed in the 2023-2028 Strategic Framework, to align with the principles of the Care Together programme, and to propose a suitable application process which ensures potential projects meet statutory building compliance and other regulations, such as health and safety.
- 1.4 The total amount of funding available for the Cambridgeshire Priorities Capital Fund is £1,509,216.
- 1.5 Officers from the Communities service and the Property service supported the Steering Group to develop the proposals, criteria and application process outlined in this report. To inform the development of the criteria and the process, officers also sought input and advice from the voluntary and community sector, the Chief Finance Officer, Cambridgeshire ACRE and Care Together.

# 2. Main Issues

- 2.1 The Cambridgeshire Priorities Capital Fund (the fund) will support capital projects that put people at the forefront of decision making around the community buildings they value and use, providing an opportunity to bid for funding to improve or upgrade community buildings and assets to meet the needs of the communities that use them.
- 2.2 Applications to the fund must evidence how they support the Council to achieve its vision of becoming a greener, fairer and more caring Cambridgeshire through the delivery of at least three of the following ambitions, as set out in its 2023-2028 Strategic Framework:
  - Net zero carbon emissions for Cambridgeshire by 2045, and our communities and natural environment are supported to adapt and thrive as the climate changes.
  - Travel across the county is safer and more environmentally sustainable.
  - Health inequalities are reduced.
  - People enjoy healthy, safe, and independent lives through timely support that is most suited to their needs.
  - People are helped out of poverty and income inequality.

- Places and communities prosper because they have a resilient and inclusive economy, access to good quality public services and social justice is prioritised.
- Children and young people have opportunities to thrive.

2.3 Applications that support the Council to achieve the aims and ambitions of the Care Together programme will be particularly welcome. Care Together aims to:

“Keep local people at the heart of everything we do, the council works with communities and partners to design and develop local services that enable our changing population to fulfil their wish to remain independent at home for as long as possible”.

2.4 Applications will be invited that recognise the importance community assets can play in supporting people to remain independent at home for as long as possible, for example by providing spaces that support people to remain active and stay socially connected.

2.5 The principle of keeping local people at the heart of everything the Council does, and working with communities and partners to design and develop local services is at the heart of the Council's commitment to decentralisation. Therefore, applications that adhere to these principles in supporting other groups in our communities, such as children and young people, will be welcomed.

2.6 The fund will contribute to capital projects only, although it is not prescriptive beyond this. For example, projects could relate to buildings, land, equipment or other capital-related expenditure. All projects will be required to demonstrate statutory building compliance, general safety and the use of competent contractors, compliance with building regulations and the expectations of the Health and Safety Executive, value for money, due diligence, and an understanding of the Council's responsibility in issuing grants for capital spend.

2.7 The fund will open for a single round of applications during the 2023/24 financial year.

2.8 It is proposed to establish an assessment panel that will include seven Members, based on political proportionality, alongside officers from the Council's Communities service, Property service and Finance team, to assess the bids and make recommendations to the Committee.

2.9 It is recommended that the fund consist of a pot of £1,000,000 for applications from eligible groups and organisations, with the remaining £500,000 reserved for County Council owned community-based asset capital projects, for example library improvements, where this will facilitate the broadening of the offer in support of the Council's commitment to decentralisation. A future report will be presented to the Committee on the detail and proposed spend of County Council capital projects outside of the process detailed in section 2.10 of this report.

## 2.10 Cambridgeshire Priorities Capital Fund application process for eligible groups and organisations – Stage One

2.10.1 It is recommended that the fund be accessed via a two-stage application process:

- Stage one – Expression of Interest
- Stage two – Full Proposal

2.10.2 To pass from stage one to stage two, the following must be confirmed:

- The eligibility criteria, outlined in section 2.11 of this report, have been met.
- Based on evidenced need or forecast demand, the project supports the Council to tangibly and demonstrably achieve its ambitions in a measured way across a minimum of three areas out of seven areas.
- Based on evidenced need or forecast demand, the project meets the needs Cambridgeshire residents.
- The project will not incur revenue or capital costs for the County Council after it is delivered.
- The bid is no greater than £25,000 and can demonstrate it meets the public sector Value for Money test by showing that the return, monetary, environmental or social value is greater, over no more than three years, than the sum invested.

2.10.3 An officer panel will determine eligibility and confirm the progression of applications to stage two.

## 2.11 Eligibility criteria

2.11.1 The following groups and organisations are eligible to apply:

- Cambridgeshire based voluntary, community and social enterprise sector organisations. If the organisation is based outside of the County, it must have a presence in the County.
- Public sector bodies in Cambridgeshire, such as district, town and parish councils.
- Businesses are eligible to apply but will need to clearly set out the public benefit of the project as set out in 2.10.2 of this report.

Any works being carried out to a building must have the full consent of the owner, not breach lease agreements and with no dilapidation costs falling on the Council.

2.11.2 The fund is not open to individuals to apply for.

2.11.3 The fund will support capital improvements where projects aim to upgrade, extend or improve facilities or purchase capital items for community use spaces and places. Applications can relate to buildings, indoor and outdoor equipment, installation services or any other related capital item intended for community use that will support the Council to achieve its vision and ambitions. Clarification of what constitutes a capital improvement will be set out in the details of the fund.

2.11.4 The fund will not be available for projects that;

- Solely seek to repair, maintain or renew as these are revenue costs;
- Do not support the council to achieve its vision and ambitions;
- Are not intended for community use;
- Have the potential to cause detrimental impacts upon the wider determinants of health, for example improving a community space that is used for gambling activity; or
- Have an impact that is contrary to the Council's longer-term planning, such as keeping a building open that is not deemed to meet health and safety compliance requirements.

2.11.5 Organisations that have previously been awarded funding from the Cambridgeshire Community Capital Fund are not eligible to apply for funding from the Cambridgeshire Priorities Capital Fund.

## 2.12 Application process – Stage Two

2.12.1 Applicants who are successful at stage one will be invited to complete a stage two application. Officers from the Council will provide advice and guidance to applicants on the application process. The business case at stage two will be expected to provide the full detail of the project including the nature and timescale of the expected delivery, any procurements that will be needed, other funding sources and the security of these sources, and any declarations of interest. A full set of requirements will be set out in the stage two application form.

2.12.2 The assessment panel will consider full proposals using the following scoring criteria:

- (i) Does the application demonstrate how the project will support the Council to achieve its ambitions in a minimum of three out of seven areas? Maximum possible score of 30. Higher scoring will be awarded where the case can demonstrably identify a shift expected in performance / outcomes measured under that ambition.
- (ii) Does the application demonstrate how the project will achieve statutory compliance, general safety including competent contractors, certification, compliance with building regulations, Health and Safety Executive (HSE) expectancy, due diligence, value for money and an awareness of the Council's responsibility in issuing grants for capital projects? Maximum possible score of 30.

(iii) Does the application incorporate local community involvement in the project design and implementation (including formal groups such as parish councils)? Maximum possible score of 20.

(iv) Does the project satisfy local government Value for Money test, and does the proposal contain an element of match funding (match funding is an expectation for bids from a district council)? Maximum possible point score of 20.

2.12.3 For projects to be recommended for approval, it is proposed that a minimum score of 80 points in total must be achieved. All projects recommended for approval must demonstrate full compliance at stage two with statutory and legal duties in relation to building compliance, building regulations and health and safety.

2.12.4 Scoring will be moderated as appropriate for any outlying scores on particular projects. No Member will be permitted to score a proposal relating to their own division.

2.12.5 The Stage 1 and Stage 2 application windows will open for a minimum of 10 weeks. The fund will launch in the summer of 2023, with the stage two application window concluding by the end of December 2023.

2.12.6 It is proposed that the assessment panel convenes in January 2024 to score the bids and recommend projects for funding at the next available Committee meeting.

2.13 To assist with the management of risk in the allocation of Council funding, and to ensure value for money, it is expected that most capital projects will be between £10,000-£25,000. All applications reaching stage two must demonstrate how they will achieve the best value for money if funding is awarded, and this will be assessed as part of the scoring process.

2.14 Applicants must demonstrate provision for contingency planning in their project proposals and costings to address issues that might arise, such as cost over-run, poor delivery from contractors, or unforeseen circumstances that may require adaptations to the project.

2.15 Funding payments will be issued in line with the Grants to External Organisations Policy at the point of agreed milestones being met. Milestones will be agreed on a case-by-case basis during stage 2 of the application process, linked to measures of contribution to ambitions and/or delivery of works, and confirmed in the grant paperwork at the point of award.

2.16 Stage one and two application deadlines will be clearly publicised. Failure to submit applications ahead of the deadline will prevent the application from being considered for funding.

2.17 The Council reserves the right to delay payment or request repayment if the project milestones are not met. Failure to initiate projects that are successful at stage 2 by the agreed date will be terminated; applications cannot be re-submitted and terminated projects will not receive funding. All projects must commence within six months of funding being awarded, failure to do so will result in a termination of funding.

2.18 Where possible, the fund aims to award funding across all five city/district council areas across the county. The fund will be publicised through the Council's communication

channels and a seminar for Members, so that the information reaches as many communities as possible.

### 3. Alignment with ambitions

- 3.1 Net zero carbon emissions for Cambridgeshire by 2045, and our communities and natural environment are supported to adapt and thrive as the climate changes.

The Cambridgeshire Priorities Capital Fund will require all potential projects to evidence how they will support the council to achieve a minimum of three of the seven ambitions. This paper sets out the criteria and application for the Fund, therefore at this stage there are no significant implications for this ambition.

- 3.2 Travel across the county is safer and more environmentally sustainable

See wording under paragraph 3.1.

- 3.3 Health inequalities are reduced

See wording under paragraph 3.1.

- 3.4 People enjoy healthy, safe, and independent lives through timely support that is most suited to their needs

See wording under paragraph 3.1.

- 3.5 Helping people out of poverty and income inequality

See wording under paragraph 3.1.

- 3.6 Places and communities prosper because they have a resilient and inclusive economy, access to good quality public services and social justice is prioritised

See wording under paragraph 3.1.

- 3.7 Children and young people have opportunities to thrive

See wording under paragraph 3.1.

### 4. Significant Implications

- 4.1 Resource Implications

There are no significant implications within this category as the funding comes from unallocated money from the previous capital fund, and the criteria to progress must ensure there are no future revenue or capital costs to the Council in any form.

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

It is unlikely that procurement activity will arise from the administration of the fund. However, if the situation arises that procurement is necessary, applicants will need to follow the Council's Contract Procedure Rules, and the Council's Procurement team will be engaged to provide support. The fund will be managed through the Council and its officers. Funding will be issued in line with the relevant Council policies and at the point of agreed milestones being reached. The difference between grants and contracts is defined within the Grants to External Organisations Policy, and grants (as defined in that policy) are not subject to the Council's Contract Procedure Rules, except where the body that is awarded the grant needs to tender for work to be done on the project.

#### 4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

#### 4.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

#### 4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

Countywide communication of this fund to eligible organisations is essential to ensure bids are submitted that help the Council to achieve its vision and ambitions as set out in the Strategic Framework. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Association of Local Councils (CAPALC) have agreed to promote the fund alongside the Council's own communication channels and networks.

#### 4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

Local Members play a vital role in helping to promote the fund to community organisations and in supporting the process through attendance at the recommendation panel.

#### 4.6 Public Health Implications

Projects that are deemed to have a potentially negative impact upon the wider determinants of health will not be funded by the scheme.

#### 4.7 Environment and Climate Change Implications on Priority Areas:

At this stage, all implications relating to environment and climate change have been given a neutral status. It is recognised that the fund is likely to have positive impact on priority areas once the criteria and process is approved and open for applications.

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

Positive/neutral/negative Status: Neutral

Explanation: N/A



- 4.7.2 Implication 2: Low carbon transport.  
Positive/neutral/negative Status: Neutral  
Explanation: N/A
- 4.7.3 Implication 3: Green spaces, peatland, afforestation, habitats and land management.  
Positive/neutral/negative Status: Neutral  
Explanation: N/A
- 4.7.4 Implication 4: Waste Management and Tackling Plastic Pollution.  
Positive/neutral/negative Status: Neutral  
Explanation: N/A
- 4.7.5 Implication 5: Water use, availability and management:  
Positive/neutral/negative Status: Neutral  
Explanation: N/A
- 4.7.6 Implication 6: Air Pollution.  
Positive/neutral/negative Status: Neutral  
Explanation: N/A
- 4.7.7 Implication 7: Resilience of our services and infrastructure, and supporting vulnerable people to cope with climate change.  
Positive/neutral/negative Status: Neutral  
Explanation: N/A

Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance? Yes  
Name of Financial Officer: Clare Andrews

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

Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by the Council's Monitoring Officer or Pathfinder Legal? Yes  
Name of Legal Officer: Emma Duncan

Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your EqIA Super User? 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  
Name of Officer: Lisa Riddle

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

## 5. Source Documents

### 5.1 [2023-2028 Strategic Framework](#)