

## Innovate and Cultivate Fund – Endorsement of Recommendations and Future Fund

To: Communities, Social Mobility, and Inclusion Committee

From: Interim Service Director: Communities and Partnerships, Paul Fox

Meeting Date: 14 April 2022

Electoral division(s): All

Key decision: No

Forward Plan ref: Not applicable

Outcome: To provide this Committee with the outcome of the 30 March 2022 Innovate & Cultivate Fund (ICF) Recommendation Panel and an update of actions following the Member led review of the fund.

Recommendation: The Communities, Social Mobility and Inclusion Committee is asked to:

a) Agree to fund the following 13 applications through the Cultivate funding stream:

- i. Astrea Academy Trust
- ii. Cambridge & District Youth for Christ
- iii. Fusion Youth Projects CIO
- iv. The Blue Smile Project
- v. Deafblind UK
- vi. Find Your Wild CIC
- vii. March Make and Mend
- viii. The Mordens and Litlington Mobile Warden Scheme
- ix. Cambridge Re-Use
- x. Cambs Community Reuse and Recycling Network Ltd
- xi. Diamond Hampers CIC
- xii. Meadows Children and Family Win
- xiii. Anglia Ruskin University

b) Endorse the following recommendations resulting from the Member led review of the fund shown at 2.5 - 2.6.

- i. Retain a single countywide Recommendation Panel and increase the role of Think Communities place-based teams in the fund process at all stages.
- ii. Delegate the endorsement of Recommendation Panel outcomes to the Interim Service Director Communities & Partnerships, Paul Fox
- iii. Change the name of the Innovate & Cultivate Fund to Cultivate Cambs.

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# 1. Background

- 1.1 The Innovation Fund was initially launched in November 2016. A review and refresh of the fund was carried out the following year resulting in the Innovate and Cultivate Fund as agreed by Communities and Partnership Committee on 24 August 2017.
- 1.2 The original allocation of funding was £1million. In 2019 and 2020, the General Purposes Committee reviewed the fund and agreed further allocations of £1million and £300k, bringing total fund allocation for the Innovate and Cultivate Fund to £2.3million.
- 1.3 A Recommendation Panel considers applications to the fund. In accordance with the Communities, Social Mobility and Inclusion Committee decision of 8 July 2021, the panel is made up of seven elected members (or their nominated substitute) who are politically proportionate from the Communities, Social Mobility and Inclusion Committee, officers or non-members representing Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Think Communities and Finance, plus a representative of Cambridgeshire Community Foundation.
- 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 residents and have a positive impact on Council services.
- 1.5 There are two funding streams to the Innovate and Cultivate Fund:
  - 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 Communities, Social Mobility and Inclusion Committee consider the final recommendations of the panel before confirming award.
  - 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 Communities, Social Mobility and Inclusion Committee consider the panel recommendations before confirming award. This funding stream was suspended in 2020 to allow for increased focus on Cultivate grants for the remainder of the fund.
- 1.6 All applications to the fund are required to demonstrate a number of stated criteria including the following key criteria:
  - Project outcomes align with key funding priorities for Children & Families 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.

1.7 On 2 December 2021 this Committee received a paper setting out the annual evaluation of the fund and the outcome of the Member led review of the Innovate and Cultivate Fund. Committee agreed the following recommendations:

- a. Retain the current fund objectives and incorporate inclusion, biodiversity, and climate change into project criteria.
- b. Seek to increase the number of Cultivate Project Ideas to include projects which will support Anti-Poverty.
- c. Reduce potential for duplication of funding with District/City Councils.
- d. Devolve the funding to place based teams in each district.
- e. Arrange a workshop session with Cambridgeshire Community Foundation to explore a more creative application process.
- f. Remove the two-fund approach and keep only the Cultivate Fund for grants of between £2,000 and £15,000.
- g. Steering Group:
  - i. Increase the remit of the funds Steering Group to highlight achievements more often, as received through monitoring reports.
  - ii. Expand attendance at the Steering Group to include all four CoSMIC Spokes.
- h. Fund Recommendation Panel
  - i. Increase quorum to at least four members whilst removing a minimum officer requirement and ensure we can show that appropriate professional advice was taken instead.
  - ii. Review core officer representation to ensure no duplication.
- i. Support for community groups
  - i. Develop the toolkit concept further which will enable groups to become sustainable without CCC (Cambridgeshire County Council) funding.
  - ii. Develop proposal for peer support network of bidders.
- j. Make good use of reserve dates for approval by Communities, Social Mobility, and Inclusion to reduce waiting time for final decision.

- k. Increase media and communication messages to voluntary and community contacts, members and others of the timescales and opportunities to apply.
- l. Change the name of the fund to reflect removal of Innovate Fund and other changes.

- 1.8 In February 2022, as part of the business planning and budget setting process, £350,000 was allocated to the Innovate and Cultivate Fund for 2022/23.
- 1.9 This paper sets out the outcome of the 30 March 2022 Recommendation Panel for the Innovate and Cultivate Fund and updates Committee on progress made against the 2 December 2021 recommendations.

## 2. Main Issues

- 2.1 On 30 March 2022 the Recommendation Panel considered 21 applications to the Cultivate funding stream.
- 2.2 The outcome of the panel is that 13 Cultivate applications have been recommended for funding and are reported to this Committee for final decision, namely:
  - ii. Astrea Academy Trust
  - iii. Cambridge & District Youth for Christ
  - iv. Fusion Youth Projects CIO
  - v. The Blue Smile Project
  - vi. Deafblind UK
  - vii. Find Your Wild CIC
  - viii. March Make and Mend
  - ix. The Mordens and Litlington Mobile Warden Scheme
  - x. Cambridge Re-Use
  - xi. Cambs Community Reuse and Recycling Network Ltd
  - xii. Diamond Hampers CIC
  - xiii. Meadows Children and Family Win
  - xiv. Anglia Ruskin University
- 2.3 A summary of each of the recommended applications is in Appendix 1. Full feedback will be given to applicants not successful in this funding round, including where alternative funding might be available and other support to achieve their proposed project ambitions.
- 2.4 The amount of grant funding committed to date from the £2.3 million allocated to the Innovate and Cultivate Fund is up to £1,953,110 for 91 projects over the full five-year period of this fund. If the 13 Cultivate applications recommended to the Committee within this report are approved, the total committed to grants will be up to £2,097,572 for 104 projects. After administration costs, the final committed spend from the £2.3m available funds is expected to be i.r.o £2,235,823 which leaves £66,177 of the current fund remaining, which will be carried forward to the new allocation of funding.

2.5 Officers and members of the Innovate and Cultivate Steering Group have fulfilled the recommendations shown at 1.7.and, as a result of careful consideration for the future fund, suggest further recommendations as follows.

2.5.1 (1.6 d)– Devolve funding to place based teams:

Officers, service leads, the fund Steering Group and previous and potential applicants to the fund have collaborated on developing a proposal on how best to take this forward efficiently and effectively for those involved.

It is agreed that increasing support and input at a more local level by those who know that local area well is beneficial. For efficient use of time for those involved in administering and managing the fund but more importantly for the ease of applying to the fund and especially for those wishing to deliver projects across more than one area, the Steering Group recommend retaining a single countywide Recommendation Panel.

In addition, it is suggested that there is a stronger emphasis on local impact by increasing the role of Think Communities Place Coordinators and Community Connectors in the fund process to include involvement in support and advice to applicants at the pre-application advice sessions, avoiding duplication and aligning projects to other funds available including via District, City Councils or others delivering in that area. They will provide place-based input to the officer reviews of each grant application and build a sustained and supportive relationship with the funded organisation for the duration of the project (and beyond).

2.5.2 (1.6 j)– Make good use of reserve dates for approval by Communities, Social Mobility and Inclusion to reduce waiting time for final decision:

Even with the use of reserve dates, the time spent from application submission to final decision can exceed 4 months, which impacts on the start date for projects in the local delivery areas. For a fund of this size (now that the fund is focused only on the smaller £2k - £15k Cultivate funding stream), that can feel excessive and taking into account the increased Member involvement in the Steering Group and the Recommendation Panel, the Steering Group has asked for delegated approval of recommended projects to be given to the Service Director: Communities and Partnerships, which would allow fund applicants to be informed of the decision within a week of the Recommendation Panel. Thus, speeding up the process by, in some cases, 6-8 weeks.

To still allow for public scrutiny, it is proposed the outcome of the Recommendation Panel and Service Director endorsement will be shared with all elected members from Council via this Committee Chair, then added to Finance updates at the next available Committee meeting and published on the Cambridgeshire Community Foundation website. Any persons wishing to challenge a decision to fund a project can do so via Cambridgeshire Community Foundation/fund administrator.

2.5.3 (1.6 l) – Change the name of the fund to reflect the changes.

The fund Steering Group and Member review have suggested the Fund be renamed as Cultivate Cambs with immediate effect. The first funding round for Cultivate Cambs will have an application deadline of 1 August 2022 and be held quarterly thereafter.

2.6 It is therefore proposed the committee endorse the following recommendations:

- (a) To retain a single countywide Recommendation Panel and increase the role of Think Communities place-based teams in the fund process at all stages.
- (b) That the endorsement of Recommendation Panel outcomes is delegated to the Service Director: Communities and Partnerships.
- (c) The name of the Innovate & Cultivate Fund is changed to Cultivate Cambs.

### 3. Alignment with corporate priorities

3.1 Communities at the heart of everything we do

The Fund affords opportunities for individuals and communities to develop their skills and resilience to undertake initiatives that improve and enable independence, health, and wellbeing.

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

A key focus of the Fund is to enhance delivery against this priority e.g., where the support of the voluntary and community sector could make a real difference to the lives of children and families, providing opportunities for the entire population to succeed and to enable improved outcomes.

3.4 Cambridgeshire: a well-connected, safe, clean, green environment

There are no significant implications for this priority.

3.5 Protecting and caring for those who need us

The fund 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.

## 4. Significant Implications

### 4.1 Resource Implications

The report above sets out the implications for this priority in section 2 and Appendix 1.

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

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

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 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 as agreed at 8 November 2018 Communities and Partnership Committee meeting and as part of the recent member led review.

### 4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

Community empowerment sits at the heart of the 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 managing the fund as part of the Steering Group and in considering each application on its own merits and against the fund criteria.

### 4.7 Public Health Implications



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.

The recommended proposal has the potential to reduce duplication, strengthen partnership collaboration and improve the alignment of resources to address prevention and other health issues prevention.

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

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

Neutral Status:

##### 4.8.2 Implication 2: Low carbon transport.

Neutral Status:

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

Neutral Status:

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

Neutral Status:

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

Neutral Status:

##### 4.8.6 Implication 6: Air Pollution.

Neutral Status:

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

Neutral Status:

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 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 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: Paul Fox

Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?

Yes

Name of Officer: Amanda Rose

Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact? Yes

Name of Officer: Paul Fox

Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health? Yes

Name of Officer: Val Thomas

## 5. Source documents guidance

### 5.1 Source documents

Cambridgeshire Community Foundation Innovate and Cultivate Fund application forms and guidance.

### 5.2 Location

Application Form:

<https://ukcf.secure.force.com/forms/ICF>

Guidance:

<https://www.cambscf.org.uk/icf.html>