

Communities Capital Fund – Progress Report

- To: Communities, Social Mobility, and Inclusion Committee
- Meeting Date: 8 July 2021
- From: Service Director for Communities and Partnerships, Adrian Chapman
- Electoral division(s): All
- Key decision: No
- Outcome: Investment in community-led capital schemes to improve facilities and opportunities for residents will help to improve outcomes. Scrutinising the progress made to date across the programme will help to ensure we are achieving value for money and the outcomes originally intended.
- Recommendation: The Committee is asked to:
- a) Note and comment on the progress being made by projects funded by the Community Capital Fund; and
 - b) Consider and suggest ways of further enhancing the impact of funded projects on the Council's overall objectives.

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Member contacts:

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1. Background

- 1.1 The Cambridgeshire Communities Capital Fund was launched on 1 April 2020 and set aside up to £5m to help support community-led capital projects across the county, including those that improve health, wellbeing, social and economic opportunities in our communities.
- 1.2 The fund provided up to £0.5m capital funding for each community-based project which addressed issues which were a specific priority for the local community, addressed inequality of access to services or activities, and implemented community involvement in delivery or design of the project.
- 1.3 Over the summer of 2020, the Communities and Partnership Committee agreed funding for 35 projects across the county, fully allocating the £5m budget. This report provides a progress report on the programme.

2. Main Issues

- 2.1 A mixture of projects were funded, from relatively modest improvements to outdoor children's' play equipment, to large scale new build community buildings. Each project is unique and had a different starting point, with some projects already at an advanced stage of development, whereas others were at the start of their journey. As a result, some projects have progressed faster than others.
- 2.2 Many projects have reported that their progress has been slow or delayed over the first few months because of the impact of Covid-19. For some of the smaller community/voluntary organisations which rely on a few key volunteers, capacity has been reduced as volunteers have adhered to Covid distancing guidelines, needed to self-isolate or have had caring responsibilities which have impacted on the ability to deliver capital projects.
- 2.3 Other projects also report that again as a result of Covid, planning applications have been taking longer than usual as councils have also had to respond to increased demand for services with reduced staffing capacity. National lockdown restrictions have played their part with some contractors unable or unwilling to attend jobs, or where there are volunteers carrying out work, they can only do so where they can adhere to social distancing rules.
- 2.4 Nevertheless, despite the difficulties that Covid has presented, projects have progressed well, with many completed or close to completion. The project monitoring and updates have now been handed over to Think Communities Place Coordinators to complete, and this will also help to make sure links are sustained between the council and funded projects going forwards. A map showing the location of funded projects is attached at appendix 1, and an update of all projects and progress made to the end of June 2021 is attached at appendix 2.
- 2.5 In summary, project delivery is as follows:

Projects completed by June 2021

- Bartlow stable conversion
- Christchurch community centre improvement
- Hauxton village hall
- Hilton village hall improvements

- March Estover Park
- Over river front improvement
- Soham Mill [Theatre]
- Somersham play equipment
- Swaffham Prior village hall extension
- Winwick village hall

Projects expected to complete by July - September 2021

- Brampton Men's Shed
- Eversden outdoor play equipment
- Godmanchester community nursery
- Godmanchester football club house
- Gorefield community hall extension
- March West End Park improvements
- Melbourn village hub extension
- Ramsey pavilion
- Sawtry Mancave
- Sawtry skate park
- Soham Mill [roadworks]
- Stilton play park
- Woodhurst village hall

Projects expected to complete by March 2022

- Friday Bridge Tower Hall improvements
- Girton pavilion
- Great Shelford playscape
- Great Shelford youth centre
- March Sports Association club house
- Wisbech Market Place

Projects expected to complete by summer 2022

- Burwell Gardiner Hall refurbishment
- Kimbolton road crossing
- Littleport youth centre
- Stretham village hall
- Wisbech Park pavilion

Projects expected to complete by December 2022

- Cambourne youth centre
- Fenstanton village hall

3. Alignment with corporate priorities

3.1 Communities at the heart of everything we do

The Fund invited and approved applications that evidenced community need and that were community led and delivered.

3.2 A good quality of life for everyone

The Fund sought to improve the health, wellbeing, social and economic opportunities, and outcomes in our communities, thereby helping to create or enhance a good quality of life for everyone.

3.3 Helping our children learn, develop and live life to the full

A number of funded projects are specifically aimed at developing infrastructure, facilities and opportunities for children and young people, as set out in appendix 2 to this report.

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

A number of funded projects are specifically aimed at improving the local environment or enhancing green and open space, as set out in appendix 2 to this report.

3.5 Protecting and caring for those who need us

Most of the funded projects have been funded to increase opportunities for communities to come together in safe and trusted spaces, including people who are isolated or who need support or information.

4. Significant Implications

4.1 Resource Implications

The capital investment set out in this report was approved at Full Council in February 2020.

4.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

There are no significant implications for this category. However, any commercial opportunities will follow the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and contractual regulations as per existing policies.

4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

Successful funding awards have been made subject to the applicant accepting the council's grant agreement terms and conditions.

4.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

There are no significant implications for this category.

4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

There are no significant implications for this category.

4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

Members have been closely involved in both the development of expressions of interest and in making recommendations. Members will be kept up to date with progress of projects in their Division.

4.7 Public Health Implications

The Community Capital Fund provided an opportunity for communities to secure funding that, combined with their own assets, has enabled them to develop interventions that will improve the health and wellbeing of their community members. There has also been the opportunity for communities to, as part of the process, further strengthen their skills and assets.

4.8 Environment and Climate Change Implications on Priority Areas

4.8.1 Implication 1: Energy efficient, low carbon buildings.

Positive

Explanation: As buildings are being refurbished and modernised, energy efficient measures are being installed. Any new builds must comply with the latest energy efficient regulations.

4.8.2 Implication 2: Low carbon transport.

Positive

Explanation: Providing new and/or improved community facilities will reduce the need for people to travel to access services and facilities at other towns.

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

neutral:

Explanation: Some projects will develop or enhance open spaces as a result of the capital project

4.8.4 Implication 4: Waste Management and Tackling Plastic Pollution.

neutral

Explanation: not applicable

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

neutral

Explanation: not applicable

4.8.6 Implication 6: Air Pollution.

neutral

Explanation: not applicable

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

neutral

Explanation: not applicable

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 Swann

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: 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 or No
Name of Officer: Val Thomas

5. Source Documents

5.1 Source documents

None