

Forward Plan reference number: Not applicable

Report title: Local Community Fund: Second round of funding proposals	
Report to: Councillor Louise McKinlay – Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Levelling Up and the Economy	
Report author: Paul Turner, Director, Legal and Assurance	
Date: 18 October 2023	For: Decision
Enquiries to: Paul Turner, Director, Legal and Assurance; Joanna Boaler, Head of Democracy and Transparency, Emma Hunter, Senior Democratic Services Officer – locality.fund@essex.gov.uk	
County Divisions affected: County Divisions affected: Brentwood Hutton, Brentwood North, Brentwood Rural, Brentwood South, Dunmow, Saffron Walden, Stansted and Thaxted.	

1. Everyone's Essex

- 1.1 The approval of these applications, received in response to the Councils' Local Community Fund (LCF), will directly support projects which are targeted at the following three areas:
 - Levelling Up
 - Tackling Climate Change
 - Youth Services
- 1.2 Levelling up and working with and empowering communities are key components of Everyone's Essex with specific commitments across all four of our strategic aims and as key operating principles for how we will work as an organisation.
- 1.3 This decision sets out the nominations received before the 13 October 2023 where we have received full information from nominated groups. Further decisions will be taken as more proposals are received. The final deadline for proposals is 2 February 2024.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Agree to make awards from the Local Community Fund (LCF) as set out in Appendix 1.
- 2.2 Agree that no payments may be made with respect to a particular award unless the recipient agrees to the terms and conditions of the award and provides sufficient evidence of the expenditure.

3. Background and Proposal

- 3.1 Following a decision made in May 2023 the Council established a £300,000 fund called the Local Community Fund. The Council has established criteria for making awards under this Fund.
- 3.2 The Local Community Fund operates as twelve separate funds each covering the area of a district council. The fund for each district will be £4,000 for each county councillor in that district. The fund must be spent on one of the following three areas:
- Levelling Up
 - Tackling Climate Change
 - Youth Services
- 3.3 The process for considering proposals is that:
- Members representing electoral divisions in the relevant district consider how best to spend the money and submit an application to the fund.
 - The proposal is considered by officers in the relevant service.
 - The proposed recipients are asked to provide information about the project.
 - The Cabinet Member decides on an award via this report.
- 3.4 Under this process we are now asking the Cabinet Member to consider the recommendations made by members and make a decision on the applications set out in the appendix to this report.
- 3.5 These proposals in this decision would see a total of **£18,504** being approved, meaning that a cumulative total of **£20,504** out of the **£300,000** fund committed to date, with the deadline for nominations being early February 2024.

4 Links to our Strategic Ambitions

- 4.1 This report links to the following aims in the Essex Vision:
- Strengthen communities through participation
 - Unite behind a sense of identity
- 4.2 This report links to the following strategic priorities of 'Everyone's Essex'
- Health, wellbeing and independence for all ages
 - A good place for children and families to grow.

5 Options

Accept the recommendations from members as set out in appendix 1.

- 5.1 This option is recommended, because the awards have been nominated by members in line with the scheme. The Cabinet Member is required to be happy with the decision and is free to accept or reject any recommendation as they think fit.

Do not make some or all of the awards

- 5.2 The Council could decide not to make any awards in this round. This would have a negative impact on the projects and they are unlikely to go ahead.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 A cabinet member action was agreed in May 2023 to approve transfer of £200,000 from the Youth Services policy line to the Locality Fund policy line, both within Communities, Partnerships and Performance portfolio, for 2023/24 only. In addition, the cabinet member action agreed the draw down of £450,000 from the Ambition reserve. This funding is split into two parts: £350,000 is for the Locality Fund and £300,000 is for the Local Community Fund.
- 6.2 Members make recommendations for their district areas on how the money is to be spend on projects.
- 6.3 The fund opened for nominations on 15 May 2023 and proposals will not be accepted after 2 February 2024.
- 6.4 The value applications recommended for approval to date are as follows:

Local Community Fund			
Awards Recommended by District	Previously approved	Approval now sought	Total award
Brentwood	-	£14,504	£14,504
Uttlesford	£2,000	£4,000	£6,000
Total Awards Recommended	£2,000	£18,504	£20,504

Remaining balance yet to be awarded in 2023/24 financial year: £279,496

7. Legal implications

- 7.1 All nominations made by members have been checked against the criteria, before recommendations are brought to the Cabinet Member for approval and no payments will be made without sufficient evidence and information regarding expenditure.

8. Equality and Diversity Considerations

- 8.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it makes decisions. The duty requires us to have regard to the need to:
- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc. on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful
 - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
- 8.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).
- 8.3 The Equalities Comprehensive Impact Assessment (ECIA) indicates that the proposal in this report will not have a disproportionately adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic.

9. List of Appendices

- 1.1. Appendix 1 - A summary of applications for approval.
- 1.2. Appendix 2 – ECIA

10. List of Background papers

- 10.1 [Local Community Funds and Locality Funds Arrangements 2023/24](#)

I make the following decision:	Date
LCF14 – Approve LCF15 – Approve LCF17 – Approve LCF18 – Approve Councillor Louise McKinlay – Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for Levelling Up, Communities and Business Engagement	26.10.2023

In consultation with:

Role	Date
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Michael Neumann on behalf of Nicole Wood, Executive Director, Corporate Services (S151 Officer)	19.10.2023
Paul Turner, Director, Legal and Assurance (Monitoring Officer)	18.10.2023

Appendix 1 - Applications for approval.

Application	LCF14
Date Nomination Received	02/10/2023
Member Agreement	All Brentwood members have agreed to the proposal.
Amount	£10,000
Name/Group	Essex County Council Digital Inclusion Team
Type of organisation	Local Authority
Location	Brentwood
Service Area	Levelling Up
Purpose of funding	<p>Creation of four community digital hubs to help close the digital divide and upskill young people in and around Brentwood. This includes investigating if the site has good gigabit capability, providing the sites with devices and offering Learn My Way – a free, online learning platform to develop digital skills. Additionally, working with local secondary schools to train Digital Champions.</p> <p>Costs will include: Project management (staffing costs), device management and marketing materials.</p>
Community Benefit	Increasing digital literacy whilst providing a community-based project for Duke of Edinburgh students to give back to their community through volunteering.

Application	LCF15
Date Nomination Received	02/10/2023
Member Agreement	All Brentwood members have agreed to the proposal.
Amount	£2,380
Name/Group	Let's Get Out
Type of organisation	Community Interest Company
Location	Brentwood
Service Area	Levelling Up

Purpose of funding	<p>To provide six forest school sessions, each lasting five hours.</p> <p>To ensure the programme reaches those who would benefit most, we will collaborate with local schools and request them to nominate potential candidates. By working closely with educational institutions, we can identify youngsters facing various challenges and provide them with a unique opportunity for growth.</p> <p>This will develop the following skills: outdoor survival, environmental awareness, teamwork, communication and resilience.</p> <p>Costs to include staffing, food, supplies and land rent.</p>
Community Benefit	<p>Forest School sessions provide a unique opportunity for personal growth, increased self-esteem, and the development of critical life skills. By engaging with nature and their peers, participants can gain a sense of accomplishment and empowerment, which can positively impact their future choices and prospects.</p>

Application	LCF17
Date Nomination Received	02/10/2023
Member Agreement	All Brentwood members have agreed to the proposal.
Amount	£2,124
Name/Group	N-Act Theatre in Schools CIC
Type of organisation	Community Interest Company
Location	Brentwood
Service Area	Youth Provision
Purpose of funding	For six schools to receive an educational play which focuses on consent. Costs include actor salaries, a handout for students and worksheets for schools to follow up with.
Community Benefit	This would educate young people on the issue of consent.

Application	LCF18
Date Nomination Received	03/10/2023
Member Agreement	All Uttlesford members have agreed to the proposal.
Amount	£4,000
Name/Group	Saffron Walden County High School
Type of organisation	School

Location	Uttlesford
Service Area	Youth Provision
Purpose of funding	Employment of additional counselling services for the students in the school.
Community Benefit	This will help to tackle children's mental health issues.

Appendix 2 – Equalities Comprehensive Impact Assessment