

Equalities Comprehensive Impact Assessment v3 - Head of service review

Reference: ECIA588141718

Submitted: 20 February 2024 09:32 AM

Executive summary

Title of policy / decision: Community Safety Initiatives Fund

Policy / decision type: Cabinet Member Action (CMA)

Overview of policy / decision: The proposal is that the Council runs a grants programme for the distribution of £100,000 via grants of £500 up to £2,000, with multiple rounds of applications accepted until the funding has been allocated.

The programme is delivered for the purposes of helping communities to reduce crime and support community safety initiatives with a particular focus on protecting people from harm and contributing towards crime prevention as well as inspiring public confidence, raising awareness and promoting cohesion and spirit.

The fund will also support our commitments around supporting local businesses and our town centres by encouraging community and partner led initiatives to improve safety in town centres, particularly after dark.

The fund will be launched with an initial round of applications from 4 March to the 22 April 2024. Depending on the number of successful applications after the first round, further rounds of funding will take place until all funding has been allocated to suitable projects.

This proposal is based on the impact of small-grant and micro-grant programmes delivered and evidenced elsewhere across the Council. These include the Community Challenge Fund for Levelling Up areas administered by Equality and Partnerships Team, the Community Initiative Fund (CIF) Micro-grants administered by the Strengthening Communities Team and similar funds administered by Active Essex in development of the Local Delivery Pilots.

Working with and empowering communities are key components of Everyone's Essex with specific commitment across all four of our strategic aims and as key operating principles for how we will work as an organisation. As such this fund will work to directly contribute to delivering our levelling up commitments as well as acting as a catalyst for closer working with specific communities in the future. Additionally, though crime is going down across Essex (with an overall -5.7% reduction on offences in 2023 compared to 2022), we are starting to see increases in some acquisitive crime types that impact on people the most including burglary (+9%) and vehicle offences (+10.5%).

Fear of crime also continues to be greater than the likelihood of becoming a victim itself. For example, a recent Community Safety Survey showed that whilst only 3% of respondents had been a victim of burglary, 83% said they were worried/fairly worried about becoming a victim.

Reports of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) to the Police reduced by 37.6% in 2023 compared to 2022. However, the Community Safety Survey showed that 92% of respondents had seen at least one type of ASB in the past 12 months, with only 18% reporting it to the Police and 16% to their local council. Such statistically evidenced issues can be effectively combatted by initiatives encouraged by this fund.

Successful applicants will be required to agree to a set of Terms and Conditions that include keeping receipts for

purchases and contributing to future case studies and good practice including sharing of ideas through feedback from the community and photographs.

The fund will be managed by the Equalities and Partnerships Team of Essex County Council from within existing staff resources.

What outcome(s) are you hoping to achieve?: The fund would seek to finance initiatives promoting the following outcomes:

Preventing crime, reducing anti-social behaviour and making people feel safer, with a particular focus on:

Improving home & personal safety.

Improving safety in the night-time economy.

Tackling crime in rural areas.

Physical improvements to areas known for criminal activities or anti-social behaviour.

Diversionary activities.

Supporting local communities, encouraging volunteers and community support, with a particular focus on:

Raising awareness and encouraging community involvement in initiatives to improve community safety and making people feel safer.

Promoting volunteering opportunities.

Supporting community events, at which over 250 people are attending, which promote community spirit and offer opportunities for local businesses.

Executive Director responsible for policy / decision: Tom Walker (Economy, Investment and Public Health)

Cabinet Member responsible for policy / decision: Cllr Louise McKinlay (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Levelling Up, Communities and Business Engagement)

Is this a new policy / decision or a change to an existing one?: New policy / decision

How will the impact of the policy / decision be monitored and evaluated?: Successful applicants will be required to agree to a set of Terms and Conditions that include keeping receipts for purchases and contributing to future case studies and good practice including sharing of ideas through feedback from the community and photographs. This will build narratives to evidence the potential of community safety initiatives to catalyse transformation at place and furnish examples for subsequent work.

Evaluation is by necessity relatively light touch owing to the capacity of the eligible beneficiaries: excessively onerous reporting requirements could plausibly deter otherwise valuable projects and initiatives.

Will this policy / decision impact on:

Service users: Yes

Employees: No

Wider community or groups of people: Yes

What strategic priorities will this policy / decision support?: Strong, Inclusive and Sustainable Economy, Health, Independence and Wellbeing for All Ages, A good place for Children and Families to Grow

Which strategic priorities does this support? - Economy?: Levelling up the economy

Which strategic priorities does this support? - Health: Healthy lifestyles, Levelling up health

Which strategic priorities does this support? - Families: Safety, Outcomes for vulnerable children

What geographical areas of Essex will the policy / decision affect?: All Essex

Digital accessibility

Is the new or revised policy linked to a digital service (website, system or application)?: Yes

What steps you have taken to meet the digital accessibility: Best efforts will be undertaken to design the form and application procedure in line with WCAG guidelines.

How have you tested accessibility?: Testing will be undertaken with ECC staff.

How will you monitor and maintain accessibility once it has gone live?: Responsibility for maintenance, administration and assistance will be absorbed by the Equalities and Partnerships Team and linked to periodic review: this kind of digital upkeep is comfortably within the Team's skillset.

Equalities - Groups with protected characteristics

Age

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Disability - learning disability

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Disability - mental health issues

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Disability - physical impairment

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Disability - sensory impairment

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Sex

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Gender reassignment

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Marriage / civil partnership

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Pregnancy / maternity

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Race

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Religion / belief

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Sexual orientation

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: Though the fund will plausibly encourage and achieve positive impacts contributing to the wellbeing of persons with protected characteristics, the fund itself does not actively target any specific protected characteristic. Monitoring of specific impacts – where appropriate - can be undertaken in a grant beneficiary's case study and other reporting requirements that will be mandated as part of a grant's Terms and Conditions.

Levelling up - Priority areas & cohorts

Children and adults with SEND, learning disabilities or mental health conditions (taking an all-age approach)

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Children on Free School Meals

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Working families

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Young adults (16-25 who have not been in education, training or employment for around 6-12 months)

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Residents of Harlow

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Residents of Jaywick and Clacton

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Residents of Harwich

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Residents of Basildon (Town) housing estates

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Residents of Canvey Island

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Residents of Colchester (Town) - Housing Estates

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Residents of Rural North of the Braintree District

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: Diversionary activities financed through the fund would primarily target the young adults cohort.

Additionally, the fund itself does not actively target any other specific levelling up cohort or area, but will be open to all areas of the Essex County Council area for applications and thus could plausibly achieve positive impacts for these other specific cohorts and areas. Monitoring of specific impacts – where appropriate - can be undertaken in a grant beneficiary's case study and other reporting requirements mandated as part of a grant's Terms and Conditions.

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?: None foreseen.

How could you strengthen any positive impact(s)?: Grant beneficiary case studies and best practice reports can contribute to a better understanding of how such a fund can actively and concretely use community safety initiatives to deliver positive impacts for LU areas and cohorts.

Equalities - Inclusion health groups and other priority groups

Refugees / asylum seekers

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Homeless / rough sleepers

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

People who experience drug and alcohol dependence

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Offenders / ex-offenders

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Victims of modern slavery

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Carers

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Looked after children / care leavers

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

The armed forces community (serving personnel and their families, veterans, reservists and cadets)

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

People who are unemployed / economically inactive

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

People on low income

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Sex workers

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Ethnic minorities

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

People with multiple complex needs or multi-morbidities

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: As noted previously the fund itself does not actively target any specific groups, but will be open to all areas of the Essex County Council area for applications and thus could plausibly achieve positive impacts for these specific groups. Monitoring of specific impacts – where appropriate - can be undertaken in a grant beneficiary's case study and best practice report mandated as part of a grant's Terms and Conditions.

Equalities - Geographical Groups

People living in areas of high deprivation

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

People living in rural or isolated areas

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

People living in coastal areas

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

People living in urban areas

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: The fund explicitly encourages applications aimed at tackling crime in rural areas and improving safety in the night-time economy, the latter having considerable overlap with 'urban areas'. As the nature and variety of applications cannot be foreseen in exact detail, the specific magnitude of positive impact cannot be predicted, though the evaluative commitment

asked of successful applicants can help determine the impact after successful initiatives are implemented.

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?: None foreseen.

How could you strengthen any positive impact(s)?: As noted previously, grant beneficiary case studies and best practice reports can contribute to a better understanding of how such a fund can actively and concretely use community safety initiatives to deliver positive impacts for geographical groups.

Families

Family formation (e.g. to become or live as a couple, the ability to live with or apart from children)

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Families going through key transitions e.g. becoming parents, getting married, fostering or adopting, bereavement, redundancy, new caring responsibilities, onset of a long-term health condition

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Family members' ability to play a full role in family life, including with respect to parenting and other caring responsibilities

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Families before, during and after couple separation

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Families most at risk of deterioration of relationship quality and breakdown

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: As noted previously the fund itself does not actively target any specific groups, but will be open to all areas of the Essex County Council area for applications and thus could plausibly achieve positive impacts for these specific groups. Monitoring of specific impacts – where appropriate - can be undertaken in a grant beneficiary's case study and best practice report mandated as part of a grant's Terms and Conditions.

Crime & Disorder

Crime and disorder

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

The misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Re-offending

Nature of impact: Too early for impact to be known

Serious violence

Nature of impact: Positive

Extent of impact: Low

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact:

The fund explicitly encourages applications that seek to address crime, disorder, and violence and issues subsequent to their occurrence. Furthermore, the remit of the fund plausibly extends to elements of recidivism and substance misuse. However, to repeat the exact nature of any proposed intervention or initiative proposed in an application for a grant cannot be determined in advance, thus the specific degree of impact cannot also be predicted. However, an evaluation of the various initiatives and their impacts can be undertaken through successful applicants having to contribute to future case studies and good practice, including sharing of ideas through feedback from the community and photographs.

(If negative impact assessed) What actions will be undertaken to mitigate negative impacts, including timescales:

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?:

None foreseen.

How could you strengthen any positive impact(s)?:

Successful applicants will provide material to inform and enrich subsequent work in combatting crime and disorder through community led intervention.

Climate

Does your decision / policy involve development or re-development of buildings or infrastructure?: No

Does your decision / policy take place in, or make use of, existing buildings or infrastructure?: Yes

The use of existing buildings will always have a climate impact because it requires energy consumption.

Please outline how you will mitigate against this impact: Successful applications may make use of existing buildings as part of the implementation of their initiative (for example, community events): the exact use of any such building is impossible to predict but it is very likely to have nominal impact on a building's energy or sustainability usage/profile. As the proposed fund does not relate to or finance retrofit activity or installing efficiency measures it will not be able to help in improving any buildings energy efficiency but, conversely, will have no significant negative impact on it.

Does your decision / policy involve elements connected to transport, travel or vehicles? This includes travel needs / requirements of both service users and staff (including staff you're planning to recruit): Yes

Where are staff or service users coming from and how are they travelling?: This is impossible to predict as the exact nature of any application cannot be determined in advance. This may have a very light impact on service users and staff involved in any successful initiative, but any associated emissions generated by travel are likely to be extremely modest.

If car travel is unavoidable, are you specifying electric cars and vehicles?: No

What is your transition plan to introduce electric vehicles?: Emissions generated by car use are likely to be very insignificant and infrequent owing to the place-based, community led nature of the fund. The scale of the grants and eligible initiatives make a transition plan to EVs impracticable.

Are you undertaking a procurement exercise?: No

Does your decision / policy involve the purchase of goods or materials?: No

Will any waste be generated by this decision? This includes waste from construction, waste generated by service users / staff, and waste generated by replacing existing products / materials with new: Yes

Most of our activities will generate waste so it is important that this waste is managed properly.

Generally, the more waste produced the greater the greenhouse gas impact. What approaches are in place to maximise reuse, recycling and composting of any waste generated by this decision? Please specify how you are:

Measuring the amount of waste being generated and setting targets to reduce, for example setting reuse requirements: As above, there may be nominal waste generation associated with some initiatives, but it is likely to be extremely modest and easily accommodated by existing provisions within the communities where each initiative would be undertaken.

Requiring recycling - such as setting targets for waste recycled, or providing facilities to recycle: As above, there may be nominal waste generation associated with some initiatives, but it is likely to be extremely modest and easily accommodated by existing provisions within the communities where each initiative would be undertaken.

Operating the service in a digital way to reduce use of material resources: As above, there may be nominal waste generation associated with some initiatives, but it is likely to be extremely modest and easily accommodated by existing provisions within the communities where each initiative would be undertaken.

Sharing goods and services with others to reduce resource use: As above, there may be nominal waste generation associated with some initiatives, but it is likely to be extremely modest and easily accommodated by existing provisions within the communities where each initiative would be undertaken.

Donating or selling materials and products that are no longer required to keep them in use elsewhere: As above, there may be nominal waste generation associated with some initiatives, but it is likely to be extremely modest and easily accommodated by existing provisions within the communities where each initiative would be undertaken.

Avoiding over-packaged or difficult to recycle goods: As above, there may be nominal waste generation associated with some initiatives, but it is likely to be extremely modest and easily accommodated by existing provisions within the communities where each initiative would be undertaken.

Avoid single-use items, in particular single use plastic: As above, there may be nominal waste generation associated with some initiatives, but it is likely to be extremely modest and easily accommodated by existing provisions within the communities where each initiative would be undertaken.

Recycling and composting waste where applicable: As above, there may be nominal waste generation associated with some initiatives, but it is likely to be extremely modest and easily accommodated by existing provisions within the communities where each initiative would be undertaken.

Where will waste be treated and disposed of? This includes general rubbish and recycling: As above, there may be nominal waste generation associated with some initiatives, but it is likely to be extremely modest and easily accommodated by existing provisions within the communities where each initiative would be undertaken.

Nature of impact

Built Environment / Energy: None

Sustainable Transport / Travel: None

Waste: None

Rationale for assessment, including data used to assess the impact: The fund has no direct relation to, or foreseeable impact upon, the above categories of climate, energy and sustainability. Any generation of waste or energy usage associated with the funded activities would barely deviate from expected standards.

What actions have already been taken to mitigate any negative impacts?: No substantial negative impacts are foreseen.

Action plan to address and monitor adverse impacts

Does your ECIA indicate that the policy or decision would have a medium or high adverse impact on one or more of the groups / areas identified?: No

Details of person completing the form

I confirm that this has been completed based on the best information available and in following ECC guidance: I confirm that this has been completed based on the best information available and in following ECC guidance

Date ECIA completed: 19/02/2024

Name of person completing the ECIA: Kyle Buckle-Hodgson

Email address of person completing the ECIA: kyle.buckle-hodgson@essex.gov.uk

Your function: Chief Executives Office

Your service area: Equalities and Partnerships

Your team: Equalities and Partnerships

Are you submitting this ECIA on behalf of another function, service area or team?: No

Email address of Head of Service: shammi.jalota@essex.gov.uk