

**Forward Plan reference:** Not applicable

<b>Report title:</b> Locality Fund Arrangements	
<b>Report to:</b> Cllr David Finch, Leader of the Council	
<b>Report author:</b> Paul Turner, Director, Legal and Assurance	
<b>Date:</b> 3 March 2020	<b>For:</b> Decision
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<b>County Divisions affected:</b> 'All Essex'	

## **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To request approval for the arrangements of the Essex County Council Locality Fund for the financial year 2020/2021.

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 That the proposed arrangements for the management of the Essex County Council Locality Fund for the financial year 2020/2021 are agreed.
- 2.2 That the guidance for the operation of the scheme, as set out in Appendix 1, is agreed.

## **3. Summary of issue**

- 3.1 The Leader announced the creation of the Essex County Council Locality Fund at Full Council on 11 February 2020. A budget of £750,000 has been established for the 2020/21 financial year.
- 3.2 A draft scheme has been written which is attached at appendix 1. Under the proposed scheme, the Council will make available the sum of £10,000 for each single member division, and £20,000 for divisions served by two councillors. Members are able to make recommendations as to how the money is to be spent. The final decision will be taken by officers under delegated powers.
- 3.2 The scheme has been designed to ensure that the Fund is managed properly and efficiently and that money is spent in a way which benefits the division whilst giving the widest remit for spending, consistent with safe use of public funds.
- 3.3 It is proposed to require that money must be spent in a way which benefits the member's division. There are three main ways of spending it:

- making a grant to a registered charity, a parish council or a properly constituted community or voluntary association for the purposes of a specific service or project in the Division(s);
  - buying goods or services; or
  - commissioning services from ECC.
- 3.4 It is recommended that the Fund is administered by the Essex County Council Democracy Team, using the processes identified in the guidance.

#### **4. Equality and Diversity implications**

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 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).
- 4.3 The fund has been set up in a way which enables Councillors to benefit their communities in an inclusive way. Where necessary an equality impact assessment will be undertaken.

#### **5. Financial Implications**

- 5.1 This scheme will be funded from the agreed 2020/21 budget. The Money must be spent during the 2020/21 financial year.
- 5.2 The total amount of funding available is £750,000. This is to be divided and allocated as £10,000 for each single member division and £20,000 for divisions served by two councillors.
- 5.3 Members are able to make recommendations as to how the money is to be spent with the final decision taken by officers of Essex County Council under delegated powers.
- 5.4 Any award of funding by way of a grant will be accompanied with a grant letter for signature by the beneficiary. This will include conditions to ensure that it is

unlawful for the funding not to be spent in the way agreed within the grant award letter.

- 5.5 Grant funding will normally be paid after the expenditure is incurred unless this will prejudice the delivery of the proposal in which case ECC may agree to pay in advance.
- 5.6 Grant recipients will be required to complete a monitoring form within one month of payment of grant; or within six months of payment if the funding is paid in advance.

## **6. Legal Implications**


- 6.1 The guidance which has been recommended and set out in Appendix 1 will put processes in place to ensure that the money is spent effectively and with probity.

## **7. Appendices**

- 7.1 Locality Budgets Scheme Guidance

## **8. List of Background Papers**

None

<b>I approve the above recommendations set out above for the reasons set out in the report.</b>  <b>Councillor David Finch, Leader of the Council</b>	<b>Date</b>  17/3/20
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In consultation with:

<b>Executive Director for Finance and Technology (S151 Officer)</b>  <b>Stephanie Mitchener for Nicole Wood</b>	  03/03/20
<b>Director, Legal and Assurance (Monitoring Officer)</b>  <b>Paul Turner</b>	  3 March 2020