

		AGENDA ITEM 4
		CSC/30/18
Committee:	Corporate Policy and Scrutiny Committee	
Date:	26 June 2018	
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Grants Update and Criteria

Action required by members at this meeting:

To note the information provided on grants received by Essex County Council and to raise any questions

Current Position

In November 2017 we undertook a review of our Grants Programmes to look at what was spent and where across the organisation on supporting grant funding initiatives, which is outlined below:

- We currently spend a large amount of money on grant funding, in terms of programmes that reach across the organisation the approximate value of these programmes are £10,719,916.
- We have 13 formal grants programmes that fund around 262 organisations. Some of these programmes are managed directly by ECC and others by Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC) and The Essex Community Foundation ECF.
- Additionally we have a range of grant programmes that sit under each subject specific commissioning lead, furthermore as part of our procured activity, some of our contracts allow our providers to award a small amount of seed funding and small grants to drive community resilience and achieve the outcomes of the contract, for instance the Virgin/Barnardo's Pre-Birth to 19 Contract.
- We have undertaken a review of grants that currently sit in a range of directorates and under individual commissioners. The total value of grants made outside of the Economy, Localities and Public Health Directorate: £3,961,944. (Appendix 3)
- In addition to the above there is also a Transformation Challenge Award which is a partnership grant that ECC holds the funds for. Information for this was submitted by the PSRU and totals a value of £3.3m however there is no time limit on this spend (£2.6m has already been spent)

ECC Grants Approach

The development of the draft Community Strategy has set out that as well as aligning our grants programmes to the wicked issues in our strategy we want to enable an approach that sees people simply helping people and collaborate more with partners. In order to facilitate this we are looking at a different approach to micro grants that could see the following:

- Delivery of participatory budgeting programmes through traditional partners such as CVS
- The launch of a place based community chest to be delivered using a digital approach to micro grants – i.e. using Social Media to identify local needs. This will commence in pilot form from the 28th of June.
- Space Hive – the use of the Essex Crowd platform to enable access to crowd funding. Previously the Essex Crowd – launched in August has not achieved the reach needed to promote the concept of crowds funding in Essex to its citizens and organisations.

Areas of Particular Interest

Community Initiatives Fund (CIF)

In December 2017, a review of our approach to CIF commenced particularly relating to criteria, panel structure and prospective grantees organisational reserves. Some focus was given to Parish Councils and the need to ensure that they are utilising their precepts in the first instance to support both capital schemes and programmes. To address this we set up a working group which has completed its review of Criteria and has resulted in the creation of revised guidance to support the CIF and the CIF process. The revised CIF Criteria (Appendix 1) and CMA (Appendix 5) are attached were endorsed at May's Communities and Culture Board.

Key Thematic Changes

- Reflect the four key aims and associated priorities contained within the ECC Strategy
- To enable Faith Groups, in line with the signing of the Essex Faith Covenant to apply for funding to deliver community project based activities
- Include an approach to prospective grant recipients organisational reserves . For instance ECC may like to consider that where an applicant's unrestricted reserves are more than 6 months running costs, we expect applicants to make a significant contribution to the costs of the proposed activities.
- Deliver a package of support to future CIF Panel members that will include:
 - An overview of initiatives currently being undertaken in the area to mitigate against duplication of resource
 - Guidance on ECC's approach management fee and back office costs
 - Guidance on ECC's approach to co-production and the inclusion.

Please note Appendices 2 - 4 that provide Grant Criteria and Guidance for:

- Appendix 2: Essex Lottery
- Appendix 3: Local Services Fund
- Appendix 4: Essex Crowd

Challenges:

We still have further work to do to understand the below and we have established a working group with the University of Essex to look at how we can improve on:

- Understanding Impact: The impact monitoring arrangements for ECC grants programmes is variable. Aligned to this is our approach to support through the life course of our grant programmes. We are not so good at understanding impact and the longer-term effects of a project or organisation's work.
- Alignment to Organisational Strategy: We have been inconsistent in our understanding of how grants align to ECC's core commissioning and demand management challenges – and ECC's new strategic aims and priorities,

- **Organisational Awareness and Co-Production:** Internally awareness and knowledge of what we fund and how we fund is inconsistent and we therefore don't always embed and maximise usage of what we fund. This means that our Operational Teams, Practitioners and Commissioners don't always maximise the opportunity to link opportunities to people. To address this the Communities team has created quadrant based working groups to with Adult Social Care to ensure we are maximising the use of our existing resources and identifying gaps in community provision together. Additionally, whilst we have a central register of grants received by the organisation – we do not have an embedded grants register and process to record what we fund or how it aligns to the priorities in the Strategy and Vision. To address this at June's Communities and Culture Board, Cllr Lissimore has endorsed that a real time data base and process be adopted across the organisation to ensure transparency and efficacy of our grants programmes.