

BRECKLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report of: Executive Member for Place, Paul Claussen

To: Cabinet, Tuesday 5th September 2017

Author: Clive Rayner, Grant Officer, Norfolk Community Foundation

Subject: Match Funding (large) application

Purpose: To consider the decision to award funding to The Wayland Partnership Development Trust

Recommendation:

- 1) That the Executive Member for Place approves the following grant award:
 - £19,972.60 (or 20.8% of the project costs, whichever is the lower amount) to The Wayland Partnership Development Trust for a new project called Wayland Community of Culture.

BACKGROUND – The Wayland Partnership Development Trust

- 1.1 The Wayland Partnership aims to promote the economic, social, cultural and environmental well-being of the Wayland area (the market town of Watton and 13 village parishes). It is seeking funding for a new project called 'Wayland Community of Culture' which aims to develop quality new activities and products exploring the local heritage, food, environment and culture of Wayland. The overall aim is to generate new visitors to the area, extend the tourism season and encourage visitors to stay longer whilst supporting existing activities to grow and flourish thus strengthening the local community as well as the cultural/tourism sector and the wider economy.
- 1.2 The application presents a clear plan for the development of the project. Key steps include the establishment of a steering group linking key local businesses and organisations with an interest in tourism and the local economy; developing a strong brand identity for Wayland; co-ordinating a year of activity to put the spotlight on Wayland and show what it offers; setting up two new festivals to extend the tourist season - one linked to heritage/culture/food (October), the other a Walking & Cycling festival (March); supporting existing events (the Wayland Show, Wayland Festival, Watton Carnival, Christmas Market, and Fireworks as well as smaller parish events) to maximise opportunities through training, recruiting volunteers, co-ordinated advertising, networking and offering new activities; improving online marketing presence with an e-newsletter, online booking system and a video; setting up a Food & Drink competition to establish new Wayland products; designing a Wayland marque highlighting quality of service, local distinctiveness or community commitment. These activities will address a number of problems and opportunities for the Wayland area by using tourism as a tool to regenerate a deprived rural area and declining market town. The project will explore under-developed local unique selling points such as local history, the Babes in the Wood legend, and the special local environment within the Brecks, to boost tourism and foster a new sense of pride in the community.
- 1.3 The project was identified during a five month consultation phase in 2016 with 18 partner organisations as part of a process to develop a 10 year Wayland action

plan. Out of a portfolio of projects put forward, the need to develop a project focusing on tourism was considered to be the top priority due to its cross-cutting ability to have an impact on the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the Wayland community. Consultation has also taken place with a number of additional key stakeholders to gauge need and support. This included a Tourism Conference in October 2016. The Conference was attended by 17 businesses as well as a number of support agencies who spent the day discussing the needs of the local area and co-producing project ideas which have been built into this bid. Community consultation has also established residents' views of Wayland as a place to live, work and visit. This consultation identified that 38% of respondents felt that the Wayland area had got worse in the last 3 years. The application comments that "there is a general feeling of decline in the town, a corresponding lack of pride and the sense that Watton and Wayland is forgotten".

- 1.4 The project has potential to directly benefit businesses working in sectors such as marketing, catering or event management. It has potential to have an indirect benefit on a number of other business types such as accommodation providers, retailers and food outlets through increased footfall. New opportunities will be provided to undertake training to improve marketing and customer service - areas that are very important for small businesses. Opportunities will be provided to develop new products, i.e. local food and to recognise existing quality of product or service. Residents and visitors will benefit from new social activities, cultural events and enhanced existing events. It is hoped that this will increase community spirit and integration leading to increased pride in the community. Residents will also have opportunities to get active in the local environment improving mental and physical health and wellbeing. The project will provide opportunities for people to volunteer and access training to increase skills and confidence to enable career and personal development. The Wayland Partnership will also benefit from increased income through the introduction of an online booking system for events and workshops; the development of new products which can be sold through its Tourist Information Centre/Community Gallery and by increased awareness of the organisation in the community.
- 1.5 The project will initially run over two years with total costs of £96,189 (year 1 £44,646 and year 2 £51,543). It is hoped that the largest element of the funding package (£65,552) will come from the LEADER programme. As part of the application process for LEADER the applicant needs to be able to demonstrate that at least 20% match funding is in place. Consequently the Breckland Council Match funding application would need to be agreed before the other funding can be secured. Any grant awarded by Breckland Council would be conditional on the success of the LEADER application. A grant from Breckland Council at the requested level would provide 20.76% of the project cost over the whole life of the project. The Partnership additionally has confirmed funding of £1,000 from Wayland Chamber of Commerce and £1,234 from its own reserves. It is anticipating funding of £3,000 from Watton Town Council and expects to generate income of £4,430 during the course of the project. It therefore aims to demonstrate to LEADER that it can secure a 32% contribution. The Breckland grant would be fully spent during the first year of the project.
- 1.6 The project would be overseen by a Steering Group of interested organisations, and day to day management would be by the Partnership's Development Manager. A new part time (18 hours per week) Project Officer post would be created to work on the project and a freelance Communication Officer post would also be appointed.
- 1.7 The project is developing a sound methodology for assessing its impact including

collecting baseline data regarding High Street footfall, the number of visitors to the Tourist Information Centre and a survey of tourism businesses that offer accommodation.

2) **OPTIONS**

- 2.1 Fully fund the application set out in the report
- 2.2 Part fund the application set out in the report
- 2.3 Do nothing

3) **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- 3.1 The grant application meets the criteria of the scheme.

4) **EXPECTED BENEFITS**

- 4.1
 - Improved sustainability of the Wayland Partnership.
 - 20 businesses will benefit directly through the supply chain.
 - 20 businesses will benefit from training provision in marketing and customer service.
 - 50 businesses will benefit indirectly through increased number of visitors and shoppers.
 - Increase in the number of day visitors and overnight stays in the area.
 - 20 volunteers will benefit from training provision in customer service.
 - 20 volunteers will gain increased skills and/or confidence.

5) **IMPLICATIONS**

In preparing this report, the report author has considered the likely implications of the decision - particularly in terms of Carbon Footprint / Environmental Issues; Constitutional & Legal; Contracts; Corporate Priorities; Crime & Disorder; Equality & Diversity/Human Rights; Financial; Health & Wellbeing; Reputation; Risk Management; Safeguarding; Staffing; Stakeholders/Consultation/Timescales; Transformation Programme; Other. Where the report author considers that there may be implications under one or more of these headings, these are identified below.

5.1 **Financial**

- 5.1.1 The Match Funding reserves held by Norfolk Community Foundation have a current balance of £93,990. With two applications recommended for a total of £8,177 from an earlier round of funding awaiting decisions (Gressenhall Parish Council and Thetford Rugby Football Club). In addition there are five small match funding applications requesting £14,679 being considered at the July Informal Executive Briefing plus a further large match funding application from Carbrooke Village Hall requesting £14,400. There are therefore sufficient funds to meet the grant expenditure of £14,679 proposed in this report.

5.2 **Corporate Priorities**

- 5.2.1 The project aligns closely with the following Breckland objectives: 1) Support market towns to be attractive to new businesses and visitors to the area, whilst meeting the

needs of rural communities and businesses; and 2) Grow and encourage local opportunities and activities for business in the district.

The application states that Watton has seen a steady decline in recent years, with an increase in empty shop units, a decline in footfall, low business confidence and engagement, a poor standard of premises and mixture of retail offer, and an increase in litter and anti-social behaviour. The project aims to encourage greater awareness of and enthusiasm for, what the area has to offer for residents, day visitors, tourists and businesses. Businesses will be involved in the delivery of the project in areas such as marketing, catering or event management. There will also be opportunities for local creative businesses to get involved in delivering arts, crafts or music activities. Businesses will also benefit from the provision of Welcome Host training to ensure that new visitors to the area receive a great welcome increasing the likelihood of them returning. The project will have an indirect benefit on business types such as accommodation providers, retailers, food outlets. It is also felt that a vibrant, active community can be a positive factor in encouraging new businesses to locate to the area. The business plan accompanying the application includes some specific outputs including a target of 20 businesses benefiting directly through the supply chain and through training provision and 50 businesses benefiting indirectly through increased footfall. Overall this appears to be a project attempting a strategic response to identified issues in the Watton and Wayland area.

5.3 **Stakeholders / Consultation / Timescales**

5.3.1 Breckland member Claire Bowes has commented that: "The Wayland Partnership is at the hub of the community in Watton and the Wayland villages and has the expertise, local knowledge and communication facilities needed to deliver/facilitate this project. The project will benefit the local community by providing a programme of festival and events across the Wayland area leading to increased engagement and education of residents around the historic, cultural, and environmental characteristics of the area. By promoting these aspects and working with local businesses the project will reach out to tourists and the tourism industry to raise the profile of the Wayland area."

6.0 **WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED**

6.1 Watton and surrounding villages.

7.0 **ACRONYMS**

7.1 NCF – Norfolk Community Foundation

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Key Decision: No

Exempt Decision: No

This report refers to a Discretionary Service

Appendices attached to this report:

Appendix A – Grant Application