

## BRECKLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Report of:** Mark Robinson, Executive Member for Community, Leisure & Culture

**To:** Cabinet, 14 October 2019

**Author:** Stefan Clifford, Locality Team Leader

**Subject:** Breckland Community Funding

**Purpose:** To consider the decision to offer a new Community Match Funding programme.

### **Recommendations:**

1. That approval is granted for new a Community Match Funding programme of £100,000 per year from council reserves, with a maximum grant award of £5,000 per applicant, per year.
2. That the proposed Community Match Funding programme be administrated by the Norfolk Community Foundation (NCF)
3. That determination of the funding criteria is delegated to the Executive Director of Place in consultation with the Executive Member for Community, Leisure and Culture.

### **1.0 BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 On the 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2015 the council took the decision to outsource the management and administration of its Community Match Funding programme to the Norfolk Community Foundation (NCF) for a period of 3 years from April 2016. The service level agreement (SLA) underpinning this arrangement came to an end on June 30<sup>th</sup> 2019.
- 1.2 This decision was taken in consideration of the following reasons for recommendation, all of which remain valid; i) that it would deliver a cost saving to the council (of £6,560 per annum through the deletion of the then Pride and Grants Officer Post); ii) that the NCF would provide a better service to the community and better value for money through the ability to signpost groups to a wider number of grant schemes; iii) that council resources would be better focused on more proactive and preventative work with local communities and partner agencies, in particular around the health and social care agenda, rather than administration of the grants scheme.
- 1.3 Throughout the arrangement, Breckland members retained decision making authority, whilst the NCF managed and administered the Community Match Funding programme on behalf of the council in return for a 5% commission fee for every grant awarded.
- 1.4 £537,000 of community funding (£200k in 2016/17, £150,000 2017/18 and 2018/19, and £37,500 in the first quarter of 2019) was granted to 115 community projects throughout the duration of the SLA, at an average of £4700 per grant. The grants available to groups over this period were; i) Large match funding grants up to £20,000 (ii) Small match funding grants up to £5,000.

- 1.5 In the 3 months since the Community Match Funding programme has been closed, Community Officers have received 20 enquiries regarding council community funding opportunities from groups looking to deliver new projects to address locally identified need, evidencing that demand for funding from Breckland community organisations remains high.
- 1.6 It is now being proposed that a new Community Match Funding programme of £100,000 per year be offered to fund community projects that meet both locally identified need, and which align with the councils' corporate priorities. It is also proposed that the maximum grant award be revised to £5,000 per applicant, per annum, in-line with the average grant size awarded over the past 3 years.
- 1.7 The NCF commission fee has risen to 10% (£10,000) since 2016, and therefore the charge for them administering this scheme would represent £10,000 per annum for every £100,000 granted to community projects.
- 1.8 A return to internal management and administration of the programme would require the recruitment of an additional council officer resource at a cost of £19,618 per year for a 0.5 Grade 8 post. Therefore, retaining NCF as administrators of the proposed Community Match Funding programme would represent the best value for money option to the council.
- 2.0 **OPTIONS**
- 2.1 Approve the recommended Community Match Funding programme outlined in the above proposal and commission the NCF to manage and administrate the scheme on behalf of the council.
- 2.2 Approve the recommended Community Match Funding programme outlined in the above proposal and recruit a 0.5 Communities Officer resource to manage and administrate the scheme internally at a cost of £19,618 per year for a 0.5 Grade 8 post.
- 2.3 Do nothing (discontinue the Community Match Funding Program)
- 3.0 **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)**
- 3.1 To continue to offer a Community Match Funding program that facilitates and empowers the community to address locally identified need.
- 3.2 The NCF are experts in grant management and administration and would provide a better service to the community, and better value for money through their ability to signpost groups to a wider number of available grant schemes.
- 3.3 The decision would allow current council resources to be better focused on more proactive and preventative work with local communities and partner agencies, in particular around the health and social care agenda, rather than administration of the grants scheme
- 4.0 **EXPECTED BENEFITS**
- 4.1 The continuation of this Community Match Funding program will provide Breckland based third sector voluntary and community organisations with invaluable support towards realising projects that facilitate increased community resilience and sustainability, district wide.

## 5.0 **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; Data Protection; Equality & Diversity/Human Rights; Financial; Health & Wellbeing; Reputation; Risk Management; Safeguarding; Staffing; Stakeholders/Consultation/Timescales; 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**

See Appendix A

### 5.2 **Health and Wellbeing**

The Community Match Funding Programme will contribute to the emerging vulnerability prevention agenda, and the corporate plan, by increasing resilience in Breckland third sector voluntary and community organisations and the services they provide.

### 5.3 **Staffing**

Should Option 2 be approved, a new 0.5 Communities Officer post would be required

### 5.4 **Timescales**

Option 1 - November 1<sup>st</sup> 2019 start

Option 2 - January 1<sup>st</sup> 2020 start (Allowing time for recruitment)

## 6 **WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED**

All Wards

## 7 **ACCRONYMS**

SLA – Service Level Agreement

NCF – Norfolk Community Foundation

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### Background papers:-

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**Key Decision:** No

**Exempt Decision:** No

**This report refers to a Discretionary Service**

**Appendices attached to this report:**

Appendix A

Proforma B