

17 December 2014

Community Committee

Community Resilience Fund

Report of: *Ashley Culverwell, Head of Borough Health, Safety and Localism*

Wards Affected: *All*

This report is: *Public*

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Members requested that some further clarification be provided in relation to the Community Resilience Fund report that went before them at Community Committee on 21 October 2014 (min. ref. 200). In particular Members wanted some clarification around the administration of the fund regarding the process for application; the criteria for bid applications; how the bids are processed and scored; and reassurances that Brentwood would still benefit from funding, as it is often perceived that other areas in Essex have a greater need.
- 1.2 The Community Resilience Fund (CRF) has been set up as an endowment fund to provide a sustainable income stream to the Voluntary and Community sector (VCS) in Essex. The Fund will support the VCS to develop the abilities of communities, families and individuals to help themselves and each other. The Essex Community Foundation who will be managing the Community Resilience Fund (CRF) are asking all City, District, Borough and Unitary Authorities to each commit to £20,000 annually for the next five years (Appendix A).

2. Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 **That members agree in principle to the financial commitment of £20,000 per annum over the next five years (2015/16-2019/20) subject to final approval through the budget setting process.**

3. Introduction and Background

- 3.1 The Community Resilience Fund (CRF) has been set up as an endowment fund to provide a sustainable income stream to the Voluntary and Community sector (VCS) to support more collaborative work with this sector on prevention and early intervention programmes.
- 3.2 Local government is looking to the VCS as a strategic partner to help support stronger, more cohesive communities, which will lead to improved

health and well-being, and contribute to a decrease on the demand on public services.

- 3.3 Prevention and early intervention are recognized as instrumental steps in addressing health, social or public safety issues before they become so significant that they require input from public agencies. At the same time, all public agencies are looking at innovative ways in which to work in a climate of reducing resources and a challenging financial environment that will continue for some time.
- 3.4 In times of decreasing resources, a focus on acute need and statutory duty is naturally emphasised, thus resulting in a call for more collaboration with the voluntary and community sector on prevention and early intervention programmes. The CRF is there to support the VCS to develop the ability of communities, families and individuals to help themselves and each other. In this way, people in communities will increasingly turn to each other for the initial support or a helping hand that they need.
- 3.5 The CRF is different from other grant making programmes because it is based on building a substantial endowment fund over time. This will provide a sustainable level of grant making for the county that in principle will remain in perpetuity.
- 3.6 This is a marked difference from the local grant making programmes currently in operation in the districts which allocate funding on an annual basis, which then require further annual allocations in subsequent years. By building an endowment fund over the short-term, a level of grant making will be provided each and every year, without any further need for annual allocations. This sustainable revenue stream benefits the city, districts and unitaries, the local voluntary and community sector, and critically, the residents of Essex.
- 3.7 Donations made to the CRF are invested in an established investment portfolio which is managed to provide long-term growth. Each year an approved amount is released for grant making, normally around 5% of the fund value.
- 3.8 The donations are pooled with other endowment funds managed by Essex Community Foundation, thus providing the benefits of a much larger fund than would be the case for the CRF by itself.
- 3.9 Local Government in Essex, Southend and Thurrock are, of course aware of the importance of grant making to the voluntary and community sector through their own support in relations with the sector. The strategic opportunity and benefit the CRF provides is through county-wide collaboration by all public agencies, to help make this valuable grant making programme last for generations to come.

- 3.10 The larger the CRF becomes, the greater the benefits and the value of grant making will deliver.

4. Issue, Options and Analysis of Options

- 4.1 It is proposed that each of the 14 City, Districts, Borough and Unitary Authorities donates £20,000 to the CFR, this providing a combined donation of £280,000. This would be an annual contribution over the next five years.
- 4.2 Essex County Council, the Police and Crime Commissioner of Essex and Essex County Fire and Rescue have already donated £1m, £150,000 and £50,000 respectively, and all have indicated that with the continued support of other members of the public sector partnership, they would consider further contributions.
- 4.3 A similar proposal is being submitted to the seven Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) in Essex, Southend and Thurrock.
- 4.4 With approval of this proposal, the fund would receive donations in its first year totalling £1,480,000. If the seven CCGs were to donate a similar amount this would increase by £140,000 to £1,620,000. Assuming a 5% grant distribution rate, this would result in grant making of £81,000 in its first annual cycle.
- 4.5 If all partners in the CRF were to continue to provide the same level of donation over a five year period, the fund would exceed £8m, cumulative grant making would have surpassed £800,000 and the annual value of grant making would have risen from £81,000 to £325,000.
- 4.6 Essex Community Fund (ECF) operates a two-stage grant application process, available on line and/or paper based. All voluntary and community organisations (VCS) interested in applying for a grant to ECF submit one application. ECF then take on the responsibility of matching their request to the over 100 funds that they manage. So, VCS organisation in Brentwood could either simply apply for a grant or they could specifically apply for a grant from the Community Resilience Fund (CRF). In either case, the ECF grants team looks at what the purpose of the grant is, and then matches this to the objects of the CRF (irrespective of whether or not the VCS organisation specifies that they are seeking funding from the CRF). This is advantageous for the VCS organisations – because ECF take on the role of matching their needs to the multiple funds that ECF manage – the VCS organisation doesn't have to worry about specifying a particular fund – and ECF would match their needs to the entire set of funds under ECF management.
- 4.7 In the assessment of the grant applications, Essex Community Fund would look at the following criteria: Does the application provide value for money?; Has the application evidenced the need; Is there good management and governance of the VCS organisation in place; What is

the public benefit – and evidence of community use/ involvement; What difference the grant will make; and what lasting benefit/sustainability are there for the project.

- 4.8 Each application is assessed by three people, who then score and validates it.
- 4.9 In respect of the decision making process for the CRF, a list of grant applications already assessed goes to cross-sector panel to determine which applications will be funded and for what amount of funding. This panel consists of ECC Cllr Roger Hirst, Essex Police Chief Supt. Luke Collison, Eddie Carden from Renew Counselling, Chris Evans from the Essex Association of CVSs, Andrew Gardner from Age UK Essex, Michelle Kench from Essex Wildlife Trust, Dr Tom Nutt from Healthwatch Essex, Nick Shuttleworth from the Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE), and Jackie Sully, Trustee of ECF and from Rainbow Services. Cllr Hirst represents the partner agencies, which would include Brentwood Council, that have donated to the Community Resilience Fund and this post is nominated by the Essex Partnership Board on an annual basis. This has proven to be a very effective panel, who provide an objective and county-wide perspective on the range of applications received, and who understand that the fund is designed to support all district and unitary authorities in Essex
- 4.10 Members also raised concerns that Brentwood may not benefit as much as other areas as it could be perceived that the need is greater in other areas. Areas of affluence and great need exist in all areas across the county, which the panel is very mindful of. Because the CRF is both an endowment based fund and should receive multiple donations from public agencies and local government over several years, ECF expect the fund to grow, thus providing more grantmaking each year. The intention is that the grantmaking will be distributed across all areas of the county. Some years more will be awarded to Brentwood than other districts and some years other districts will receive more grantmaking than Brentwood. Each and every district will, over time, receive more in grants than they will have donated themselves.
- 4.11 This will be for two reasons. The first is one of the main benefits of grantmaking from endowed funds. As the grantmaking only utilises approximately 5% of the fund value, the remaining 95% of capital base will continue to grow, as a result of continuous donations and assuming long-term positive market movements. ECF have cases already where some of our funds have awarded grants that approach the total value of their donation, and they still have their original donation value remaining in the endowment fund (for example, a fund with £100,000 in donations, will have distributed close to £100,000 in grants over a period of time, with the fund value still remaining at approximately £100,000). And, of course, the grantmaking will continue year after year.

- 4.12 The second is because the districts will be donating only a portion of the total value of the Community Resilience Fund. This past year, ECC provided a £1million donation, the Office of the Essex Police and Crime Commissioner a £150,000 donation and Essex County Fire & Rescue Service a £50,000 donation, or £1.2million in total. With a 5% distribution rate, this should result in £60,000 awarded in grants each year. As the fund grows, for example with Brentwood Council's donation of £20,000, this figure will increase and grantmaking to VCS organisations in Brentwood has the potential to significantly surpass the value of £20,000 in a short period of time. With further donations from Brentwood Council and other partner agencies, this trend will continue and expand the benefits to each district.
- 4.13 The total grantmaking by ECF during 2013/14, the borough of Brentwood received grants valued at £75,371. This represents the ninth highest value of grants awarded by district last year (of the 14 district and unitary authorities). This simply reflects one year's grantmaking, and will change year on year, but hopefully assures the Committee members that ECF already take very seriously the need to distribute grants across the county.
- 4.14 If Members approve the proposal (subject to final approval through the budget setting process), this support will be confirmed at a future Leaders and Chief Executive's meeting.

5. Reasons for Recommendation

- 5.1 The proposal supports the Councils priorities for enabling communities to do more for themselves and rely less on public services. The CRF will provide a sustainable endowment fund to support VCS to develop the ability of communities, families and individuals to help themselves and each other.
- 5.2 Local organisations have successfully been awarded funding through the Essex Community Foundation's, Community Initiatives Fund (CIF). For example Brentwood Community Print received a grant of £9,700 to establish a peer mentoring scheme to help people in recovery from mental illness build their confidence and learn work skills, so they can compete on the job market.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 The CRF was presented and discussed at the Chief Executive's meeting on 13 March 2014 and the Leaders and Chief Executive's meeting on 3 April 2014 and discussed at the Essex Chief Executives' Association meeting on 17 July 2014 (Appendix B).
- 6.2 In subsequent discussions with Nicola Beach, Chief Executive of Braintree Council, Ian Davidson, Chief Executive of Tendring Council, John Mitchell, Chief Executive of Uttlesford Council and Rob Tinlin, Chief

Executive of Southend-on-Sea Council it was recommended that the proposal be presented to all 14 City, District and Unitary Authorities as an appropriate way forward in the promotion of the Community Resilience Fund.

- 6.3 This proposal is submitted with the endorsements in principle of Braintree, Southend-on-Sea, Tendring and Uttlesford Councils.

7. References to Council Priorities

- 7.1 The proposal supports the Council's Localism priority by supporting the voluntary and community sector and enabling communities to do more for themselves and rely less on public services.

8. Implications

Financial Implications

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- 8.1 The Financial implications to Brentwood Borough Council are set out in the table below and will be subject to final approval through the budget setting process.

Organisation	Commitment					Cumulative total
	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	
Essex County Council	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	5,000,000
Police and Crime Commissioner	150,000	150,000	150,000	150,000	150,000	750,000
Essex Fire and Rescue	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	250,000
City, Borough, District and Unitaries	280,000	280,000	280,000	280,000	280,000	1,400,000
Clinical Commissioning Group	140,000	140,000	140,000	140,000	140,000	700,000
TOTAL	1,620,000	1,620,000	1,620,000	1,620,000	1,620,000	8,100,000
Brentwood Borough Council	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	100,000

Legal Implications

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Other Implications (where significant)

Equality and Diversity implications

- 8.3 The Essex Resilience Fund is to support voluntary and charitable organisations in Essex, Southend and Thurrock.

9. Appendices

Appendix A – Community Resilience Fund Proposal and Agreement between Essex Community Foundation (registered charity no 105061) and Essex County Council (the “Council”) on behalf of the members of the Essex Partnership Board

Appendix B – Essex Chief Executives Association meeting 17 July 2014

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