

REPORT TO:

Date of Meeting:

Executive – 11 July 2017

Council – 25 July 2017

Report of:

Programme Manager - Communities

Title:

**Community Builders roles and Neighbourhood portion of CIL/ Grants
Roots Grants recommendations July 2017.**

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Is this an Executive or Council Function?

Council

1. What is the report about?

- 1.1 At the People Scrutiny Committee held on 2 June 2016, and Council on 26 July 2016 it was agreed that the Council would welcome recommendations from the Exeter Community Forum (ECF) Grass Roots Grants Panel as to how to spend the neighbourhood portion of the Community Infra-Structure Levy (CIL) (3.75 million over 10 years.)
The details of programme delivery provided in this report are part of the implementation of 'supporting community action' in the Exeter Community Strategy as supported by Council in July 2016.
- 1.2 This report recommends an award to be made to a community organisation in the second round of Grass Roots Grants funding.
- 1.3 This report also provides information on the recommendations for the introduction of new Community Builder (CB) roles across neighbourhoods in Exeter, supported by New Homes Bonus and the neighbourhood portion of Community Infra-Structure Levy funding. This is to complement and build on the existing community builder roles that are currently funded through Integrated Care Exeter (ICE)/Wellbeing Exeter programme.

2. Recommendations:

- 2.1 That Council approves the recommendation made by the Exeter Community Forum Grass Roots Grants Panel which met on the 7 June to review and support the following application:
- Alphington Community Association - refurbishment of Alphington Village Hall – Capital grant £30,000 – supported by Grass Roots Grants Panel in full.
- 2.2 That Council approves the recommendation made by the Exeter Community Forum Grass Roots Panel which met on the 25 May to review applications/ Expressions of Interest for Community Builders for the following areas (all roles will be part-time). Areas are based on community defined areas, not current ward boundaries:
- Newtown and St Leonards *
 - Pinhoe *
 - Wonford *
 - Alphington
 - Heavitree
 - Beacon Heath

- Whipton
- Digby
- St Thomas *
- Newcourt & Countess Wear *
- St David's
- Exwick *

The areas that are starred have an existing community builder role (1 day pw) funded through ICE. The total amount that will be invested in this work over the next five years is £610,000. This is made up of £300,000 New Homes Bonus and £310,000 Neighbourhood CIL.

- 2.3 That Council approves the recommendation made by the Grass Roots Grants panel that a Host Organisation should be appointed to manage the Community Builder roles for Exeter with reporting arrangements to the Exeter Community Forum steering group. This role includes the employment and management of all staff related to the roll out of community builders across Exeter.
- 2.4 That delegated powers be given to the Portfolio Holder for Health & Wellbeing, Communities and Sport, the Chair of the Exeter Community Forum and Programme Manager for Communities should there be a need for adjustment to:
- a) areas covered by the Community Builder roles and
 - b) awarding of the contract to a host organisation to employ and manage the Community Builder programme.

This is important due to timescales with delivering this work. We are looking for this programme of work to start in September 2017 with the appointment of the host organisation.

3. Reasons for the recommendations:

- 3.1 **Capital funding** - The Neighbourhood CIL funds will be spent as follows supporting capital projects in the city: Refurbishment of Alphington Village Hall – Capital £30,000. The Village Hall is a community facility which provides a valuable meeting space for the Alphington community, available for all groups and for individual hire. A rebuilding and renovation programme started in February 2017 to update and improve the facility. The refurbishment will help to create a safer more suitable facility that is fully accessible. The total refurbishment cost is £318,000. The Alphington Community Association have raised 90% of the funding from different sources including Viridor £200,000, £33,000 from local fundraising and Exeter City Council New Homes Bonus £50,000 awarded 2015/16. The application to Grass Roots Grants was for funding to complete the work. Demand for community facilities will increase with the development of 500 houses in Alphington, plus the provision of 1500 homes bordering Alphington. The building is expected to be completed by October 2017.
- 3.2 The Grass Roots Panel received an application from a Neighbourhood Partnership in the city for £7,000 to support the costs of a Community Warden. It was felt that it was inappropriate for a community fund to support a cost of a service delivered by a private contractor and necessitated by cut backs in policing budgets, therefore it is recommended that this application is turned down. It was suggested to the Partnership to look for funding from an alternative source that supports community safety issues. It was acknowledged that the partnership have real issues of concern that deserve to be heard and supported by the appropriate authorities.
- 3.3.1 **Community Builders** – locations for CB roles were prioritised according to the following criteria:

- new communities and communities preparing for significant housing development impacting on or near their area.
- areas experiencing relative high levels of social exclusion or inequality and poverty.

The ECF/Grass Roots Grants panel recommend that community builders should be recruited for additional areas where no Expression of Interest had been received from community groups. This may be due to poor awareness of the opportunity or little local capacity to make an application, if the area strongly meets the above criteria. Four of the areas fell into this category – St Thomas, Newcourt & Countess Wear, St David's and Exwick.

This recommendation is made after input and discussion with city councillors from the wards identified.

Exeter Community Forum members were asked to give feedback on the original proposals for community builders which was developed in response to Expressions of Interest received. Positive feedback was received from groups across the city. On reviewing the initial proposals and in light of additional areas that have now been included, there was a significant budget shortfall. Lead members and officers along with the ECF Chair recommend that each area with a community builder should start with minimum hours (equivalent to one day per week) which could then be built up according to need in negotiation with the host organisation and according to availability of match funding from elsewhere. Local councilors will be invited to join the local support groups for the community builder in their area.

- 3.3 **Host Organisation** - Exeter Community Forum (ECF) will invite applications for the Host Organisation according to procurement policy. The host would need to take on the employment of the community builder team and co-ordinate and manage the delivery of the programme. ECF are looking for organisations that have expertise and a track record of community development.

The host organisation will work closely with the local support groups to ensure they have a lead role in helping to recruit a community builder and offering support for their work. Local councillors will be invited to take part in the local support groups.

See Appendix 1 for information on Community Builders and Host Organisation role.

4. What are the resource implications including non financial resources:

- 4.1 It is estimated that the neighbourhood portion of the total Community Infrastructure Levy receipts over the next 10 years will be approximately £3.75 million. Executive approved the ring fencing of these funds for implementing the Exeter Community Strategy at its 10 February 2015 meeting. The CIL regulations do not provide for borrowing to be undertaken against CIL receipts, and so sufficient CIL receipts must have accumulated before projects can be funded. There will be administrative and accounting costs in relation to decision-making processes and the implementation of projects funded by the neighbourhood portion of the CIL, and it is anticipated that these staff-related costs will be borne in the main by the Council's Communities team.

£310,000 is allocated from Neighbourhood CIL funding to support the Community Builders work, plus a New Homes Bonus allocation of £150,000 per annum in 2016/17 and 2017/18. This equates to 15% of the Neighbourhood CIL funding plus the New Homes Bonus funding allocated to this work.

This funding will support the community builder roles to be delivered over the next five years. There will be regular (quarterly) review meetings with the host organisation to

assess progress of the projects, and a full review of progress by end of year two. Payment terms will be agreed with the Monitoring Officer.

The host organisation will have a target of securing an additional 20% or £122,000 to support the delivery of the programme over the next five years.

- 4.2 At 15% of total CIL receipts, the neighbourhood portion of CIL receipts, currently equates to approximately £427,877 (7 June 2017).

5. Section 151 Officer comments:

- 5.1 The Section 151 Officer notes the proposals and will work with the City Development Manager and the Programme Manager – Communities to ensure that the spend of the Neighbourhood portion of the CIL is appropriately administered and accounted for, bearing in mind the decision-making procedures to be put in place and the Council's ultimate retention of accountability.

6. What are the legal aspects?

- 6.1 The following issues need to be highlighted :

(a) The Council is prohibited from borrowing against future CIL receipts to forward fund infrastructure delivery. Hence, CIL receipts cannot be spent until they have accumulated sufficiently to fund projects. This will affect decisions on spending the neighbourhood portion of the CIL, as it does CIL spend decisions generally.

(b) The CIL regulations do not require the Council to set aside a proportion of CIL receipts for spend in neighbourhoods, given that there are no formal parishes in Exeter, but the Council's Executive resolved to set aside 15% of CIL receipts for this purpose on 10 February 2015.

(c) The CIL regulations specify that CIL charging authorities must spend CIL receipts on 'the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure', but where passed to local areas, CIL receipts can be used to fund 'anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on an area'.

7. Monitoring Officer Comments

The Program Manager will need to instruct Legal Services to prepare the contract referred to, setting out the contractual terms between the City Council and the Host Organisation to include matters such as contract duration, payment terms and scope of services to be provided. When awarding the contract, the Council must comply with its contract standing orders and the European Procurement Regulations.

8. Report Details:

- 8.1 **Grass Roots Grants** - This is the second round of the Exeter Community Forum Grass Roots Grants, and focuses on 'supporting community action'. This includes the setting up or running a project that runs over a period of time or towards buildings or equipment. Groups were advised that they would be able to apply for up to £30,000 to support building costs, or alternatively groups could apply for funding to support a project. Two applications were received in round 2. The panel met on the 7 June to assess and score the applications. After a considered process where the applications were assessed

against the evaluation criteria the panel recommended supporting one of the applications in full (see 2.1) and declining the second application. The second application was from a Neighbourhood Partnership that requested funding support towards a Community Warden service to address anti-social behaviour and drug dealing in the neighbourhood. This application is recommended to be turned down by the Grass Roots Panel as it was felt that funding was requested for a role that should be funded by a statutory authority.

8.2 **Community Builders** –

8.2.1 Community building is all about building relationships, mobilising people to take action and supporting projects which make a difference to people's lives. Their role is to listen to local people's aspirations for their communities and support people to network to take action to improve their social situation and environment. Community builders have no agenda and do not lead or do things on behalf of people - they help people to do things for themselves.

The work to build communities takes time hence there is a five year commitment to supporting this work as detailed in the Exeter Community Strategy

The commitment to funding community building is designed to support people to build stronger communities and plan for some of the changes we know are going to happen related to the expansion of the city and the building of new housing developments. Investing in community builders was supported as part of the adoption of the Exeter Community Strategy by the Council in March 2016.

Exeter City Council through the Housing revenue account and also New Homes Bonus have provided some funding for a Community Builder role over the past couple of years in Wonford and more recently in Exwick. Both local councillors and officers from the council will be able to confirm that this role has had a great impact in being able to build positive relationships with people and help residents to take action on local projects, both environmental and social that have helped to create a more inclusive community where people feel able to get involved to have a great benefits on both a personal and community level. Another area that has recently used a community building approach was in St Thomas where with the support of Active Devon the community builder was able to engage local residents to work together with council officers and local ward members to plan for the implementation of an active trail and community orchard in the Cowick Barton playing fields. The playing fields continue to have an active local community group who plan many activities for children and families that promote fitness and health & wellbeing. The group are now interested in working with the council to raise external funding to improve the tennis courts and other resources in the park.

Our experience in Exeter over a number of years is that the community builder roles can have a real impact on improving people's lives and supporting the local community to work together with the council and other partners in the city to achieve great outcomes for all.

8.2.2 **Wellbeing Exeter/Integrated Care Exeter (ICE)** ICE was established in 2014 as a 3 year learning site for designing and testing new ways of working. The community builder model was adopted in the early stages of the development of the Wellbeing Exeter /ICE programme.

The Wellbeing Exeter programme set out to divert demand from statutory service by building community resilience through models promoting social prescribing and community activity. Decisions were made to provide the funding for a team of Community Builders, (managed by Exeter Community Initiatives) to link with 'Community Connectors' based in or connecting with a number of GP surgeries in the city to help provide opportunities for people to address their social isolation and poor health by engaging in activities in their community.

There are currently nine community builders, mostly on a contract of one day each per week, working across different areas of the city. Community builders are currently funded through ICE in the following areas: Pinhoe, St Thomas, Countess Wear & Newcourt, Topsham, Mount Pleasant/Polsloe, Newtown /St Leonards, Exwick and Wonford.

Officers leading on this work from the city council along with leads from Exeter Community Forum are in discussion with ICE/Wellbeing Exeter regarding the introduction of Community Builders funded by Grass Roots Grants (Neighbourhood CIL) to ensure there is no duplication or double funding of these roles. Wellbeing Exeter funding for community builders and community connectors is only confirmed at the time of writing until September 2017. Areas that have ongoing commitment to a community builder as part of Wellbeing Exeter's funding will not be a priority for funding under the Exeter Community Forum programme. The areas for Grass Roots grants funded roles will need to be reviewed dependent on ICE funding for this work.

There is the potential that the existing CB roles may receive ongoing funding until March 2018, but we don't have confirmation at the time of writing this paper.

9. How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan

- 9.1 Adoption of the Exeter Community Strategy and allocation of Neighbourhood CIL funding helps us to achieve the Corporate Plan objective of Supporting Exeter's Communities – *Communities in Exeter know best what facilities are needed in their areas and where investment should be prioritised. We recognise that community and voluntary groups have an important role to play in helping us to shape and deliver services in new ways. We will continue to provide support to the community and voluntary sector to achieve a range of positive outcomes for our communities through co-design and co-delivery.*

10. What risks are there and how can they be reduced?

- 10.1 CIL receipts are dependent on development happening on the ground in that CIL Demand Notices can only be issued when development commences. CIL cannot be used to forward fund projects unless a party other than the Council is willing to borrow against those receipts to deliver the project. In this context, it will take some time for the neighbourhood portion of CIL to accumulate into a more sizeable pot with which to address some of the priorities identified by the ECF. A change for the worse in macro-economic circumstances has the potential to seriously affect the accumulation of CIL receipts in general. There are therefore some risks that community expectations may not be fulfilled because of lack of funding or funding which is slow to materialise.

11. What is the impact of the decision on equality and diversity; health and wellbeing; safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults, community safety and the environment?

- 1.1 Supporting the capacity of community organisations to take initiatives, including through identifying priorities for the use of CIL, has the potential to support a wide range of groups across the city and thereby address issues such as equality and diversity, health and wellbeing.

12. Are there any other options?

- 12.1 No.

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Background papers used in compiling this report:-

None

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