

REPORT TO:

Date of Meeting:

Executive – 10 October 2017

Council – 17 October 2017

Report of:

Programme Manager - Communities

Title:

Neighbourhood portion of CIL/ Grants Roots Grants recommendations September 2017

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Is this an Executive or Council Function?

Council

1. What is the report about?

- 1.2 This report recommends awards to be made to five community organisations in this third round of the Neighbourhood CIL/Grass Roots Grants funding.

2. Recommendations:

- 2.1 That Council approves the recommendation made by the Grass Roots Grants Panel which met on the 6 September 2017, to support the following applications:
- Wonford Community Learning Centre – Exeter Parent Carer project – Community Collaboration £6,913.07
 - Digby Community Association – Community Action Project £11,000
 - Exeter St James Community Trust – Community Action £42,500 Capital and £7,500 revenue
 - Exeter Community Centre Trust Ltd – Community Action/Capital £50,000
 - Estuary League of Friends – Community Action/Capital £50,000
- Total funding for the five organisations from Grass Roots Grants for this round is **£167,913**.

3. Reasons for the recommendations:

- 3.1 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.)

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

- 4.1 It is estimated that the neighbourhood portion of the total CIL 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.

- 4.2 At 15% of total CIL receipts, the neighbourhood portion of CIL receipts, currently equates to approximately **£1,044,812** (6 September 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 put in place and the Council's ultimate retention of accountability.

6. What are the legal aspects?

6.1

(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

Nothing to add.

8. Report Details:

- 8.1 **Grass Roots Grants** - This is the third round of the Neighbourhood CIL/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 £50,000 to support building costs, or alternatively groups could apply for funding to support a project.

See Appendix 1. For guidance for applicants and eligibility criteria

Eight applications were received in the latest round, which is the third and final round for this calendar year. The panel met on the 6 September 2017 to assess the applications against the evaluation criteria, the panel recommended supporting five of the applications in full. Two arts based applications were rejected as they did not fit the eligibility criteria, and one application for a capital project was deferred with a request for more information.

	Applications supported by panel	Project/Initiative	Funding
1.	Wonford Community Learning Centre	Exeter Parent Carer Support group – Community Collaboration. Aim - to support the Parent Carer group to become a Community Interest Company (CIC) and to extend their work to be able to reach and support families struggling with children with Special Educational Needs. This is an existing group that meets in the Wonford Community Centre's Phoenix Community Café. Over 50 parents are accessing the group, the majority are Wonford based, but parents are now attending from all over Exeter. The grant will support hire of space to meet, training for attendees and purchase of specialist play equipment.	Revenue £6,913
2.	Digby Community Association Community Action	Artist in residence - to contribute to the costs of a year-long programme of public art in St Loyes, aiming to nurture community and a sense of place among residents and workers. The artist in residence will work in partnership with the Digby community builder and local organisations to produce events, ongoing activities and artworks. The total project costs are £49,000, with the remaining funds being raised from other sources.	Revenue £11,000
3.	Exeter St James Community Trust	The project aims to regenerate Queen's Crescent Garden for the benefit of the entire community of Exeter and to help Exeter St James Forum (ESJF) realise its aim of a vibrant and balanced community in line with the aspirations of Exeter St James Neighbourhood Plan. Grass Roots funding will allow the Trust to bring forward another phase of works and complete the renewal of some of the major infrastructure including walls, railings and paths.	Capital - £42500 and £7500 revenue
4.	Exeter Community Centre Trust Ltd	Community Action/Capital £50,000. To refurbish the top floor of the Exeter Community Centre heritage building to create a modern community enterprise space, increasing income and creating new job opportunities. The £50,000 is a contribution to total project cost of £553,701. The recommendation is for the grant to be made in principle subject to other funding being confirmed.	Capital £50,000
5.	Estuary League of Friends	To support the costs of Estuary Community Hub , a new community space in Topsham where people from the surrounding areas will come together to develop, deliver and benefit from local services, groups and activities that strengthen the community. Total project cost - £1,845,708. All other funding contributions have been confirmed. The Grass Roots grant will enable ELF to complete the building works and fit out the new centre with furniture and	Community Action/Capital £50,000.

	equipment.	
Total awarded		£ 167,913

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 Exeter Community Forum. 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.

Dawn Rivers
Programme Manager - Communities

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended)
 Background papers used in compiling this report:-

None

Contact for enquires:
 Democratic Services (Committees)
 Room 2.3
 01392 265275