

Cabinet



Forest Heath
District Council

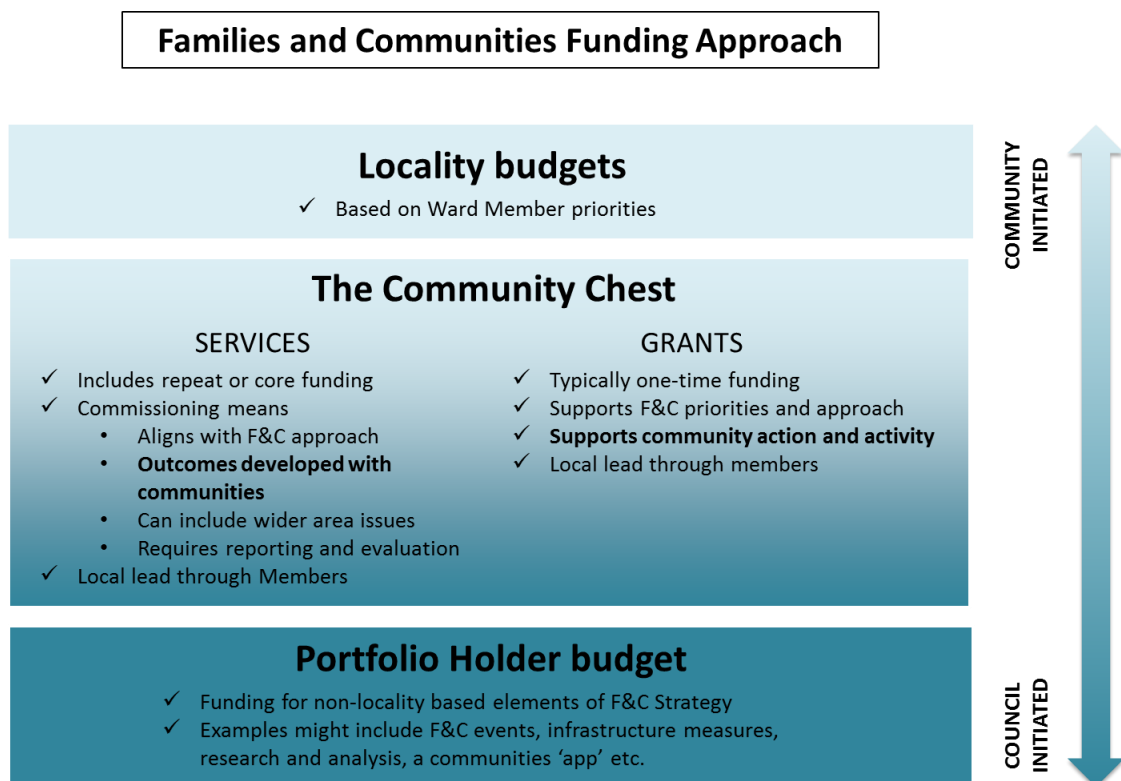
Title of Report:	Approval of Community Chest Funding – Transitional Year (2015 – 2016)	
Report No:	CAB/FH/15/053	
Report to and date:	Cabinet	27 October 2015
Portfolio holder:	Robin Millar Portfolio Holder for Families and Communities Tel: 07939 100937 Email: robin.millar@forest-heath.gov.uk	
Lead officer:	Davina Howes Head of Families and Communities Tel: 01284 757070 Email: davina.howes@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Purpose of report:	To update Councillors following the review of applications for Community Chest funding in the transitional year (2015 – 2016) and to recommend approval of funding allocations.	
Recommendation:	<p>It is <u>RECOMMENDED</u> that Cabinet approve the allocation of funding from the Community Chest as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Unit Twenty Three - £5,000 (ii) Suffolk West Citizens Advice Bureau - £23,286 (in two phases) (iii) Sharing Parenting -£23,214 (in two phases) (iv) Suffolk Digital Cinema Network - £5,500 	
Key Decision: (Check the appropriate box and delete all those that do not apply.)	<p><i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i></p> <p>Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p><i>The decisions made as a result of this report will usually be published within 48 hours and cannot be actioned until five clear working days of the publication of the decision have elapsed. This item is included on the Decisions Plan.</i></p>		

Consultation:			
Alternative option(s):		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council could choose not to provide any grant funding however it is recognised that some support to the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector is required. The Community Chest also enables the council to commission services to support the delivery of its priorities, specifically those set out in its Families and Communities Strategy. 	
Implications:			
Are there any financial implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding for grants is contained within existing budgets. 	
Are there any staffing implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any ICT implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any legal and/or policy implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any equality implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council's approach to grants has been the subject of an Equality Impact Assessment and no negative consequences have been identified. 	
Risk/opportunity assessment:		<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>	
Risk area	Inherent level of risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual risk (after controls)
Organisations are not aware of our approach to grants	Medium	Implement a wide ranging communications plan	Low
Requests for funding exceed the amount of money available	Medium	Eligibility criteria and an evaluation scoring matrix to be used to identify best fit and value for money	Low
Organisations do not have the capacity to respond to the council's approach to commissioning	Medium	Support provided to organisations and a phased approach to be taken to enable organisations to become familiar with the new approach	Low
Ward(s) affected:		All Ward/s	
Background papers:		None	
Documents attached:		None	

1. New approach to grant funding arrangements –Background

- 1.1 A key part of delivering West Suffolk’s second Strategic Plan priority (for 2014-16) of “*resilient families and communities that are healthy and active*” is to support a “*thriving voluntary sector and active communities who take the initiative to help the most vulnerable*”. This support takes many forms across the various areas of the council’s business. An important element is the financial support that the council gives to the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector (VCSE) in the form of grant funding and commissioning.
- 1.2 Councillors approved the revised approach to grant funding from 2015 / 2016, with the establishment of a Community Chest.
- 1.3 The following diagram illustrates how grant funding now works. The funds may be given as grants (one off) or commissioned against agreed outcomes. The intention is to ensure that the (i) principle of grass roots and, community led action is supported and encouraged where possible; and (ii) the councillor’s role as a community leader is emphasised, which can only strengthen democratic engagement within the community.

It represents a simplified mix of funding types, with differing degrees of devolution to local communities.



1.4 In summary the three levels work as follows:

- (i) **Locality budgets:** Specific local priorities can be supported, especially where led by the Ward Councillor in their capacity as a community leader. These are awarded against set criteria. They are typically one-off grants.
- (ii) **Community Chest:** Other community and Councillor led initiatives that exceed Locality Budgets can be bid for from a Community Chest. These will be subject to criteria and process and signed off by the Portfolio Holder in conjunction with staff up to the value of the delegation powers, thereafter through the cabinet process. Requests over the Portfolio Holder delegation responsibility will also be considered by the Grant Working Party. Request for funding may be one-off grants, or revenue funds for services.
- (iii) **Portfolio Holder budget:** Offers a mechanism for addressing priorities that emerge, or to address issues that impact on a wider geographical scale than can be identified by a single community or Councillor. It also offers a potentially quicker decision which may benefit the applicant.

1.5 The funding for the existing Service Level Agreements (SLA) has been moved into the Community Chest. However it is important to note that previous agreements have been honoured, all of which finish at the end of March 2016. As such, the remaining Community Chest funds available for allocation in 2015/2016 is £57,000.

1.6 On the 22 June 2015, the Council launched its Community Chest fund and invited organisations to apply for this transitional year of funding. Closing date for applications was 31 July 2015. Five applications were received which requested £58,874.50 in total (out of the £57,000 available). Each application was assessed by the Portfolio Holder against the agreed Community Chest criteria.

1.7 The five applications are summarised below along with the Portfolio Holder recommendation for consideration by Cabinet:

- (i) **Unit Twenty Three** applied for £5,000 to support a tour of a powerful play developed by Young Carers and professional artists. The project intends to train Young Carers to facilitate post-show TalkOut workshops where young caring can be explored. Identified young carers will educate communities and develop skills, and unidentified young carers will be encouraged and enabled to access support.

It was felt that the application scored well on engaging with local people and building resilience, as well as peer to peer support amongst local young carers. It is recommended that an offer of **£5,000** be made available on condition of a confirmed programme of activities and that a clear methodology is in place to monitor the number of young carers identified as a result of this programme.

- (ii) **Suffolk West Citizens Advice Bureau (SWCAB)** applied for £20,494 to deliver outreach services to Lakenheath specifically aimed at supporting residents through a period of change with the closure of RAF Mildenhall and the expansion of RAF Lakenheath in the coming years.

It was felt that the project has great potential to support the community of Lakenheath. There are some concerns that work directly relating to the closure of RAF Mildenhall may be a little premature before a confirmed closure programme has been detailed. As such a request to SWCAB for a breakdown of costs between outreach work and direct work on the closure of RAF Mildenhall was made. This approach will allow for the infrastructure to be in place and ready for the work directly with those residents affected by the closure of RAF Mildenhall to be undertaken when necessary. It is recommended that a grant of **£16,521** be allocated to start this work.

It is further recommended that , a stage two allocation of £6,765 be retained in the Community Chest budget for allocation once further details of the base closure is available.

- (iii) **Sharing Parenting** applied for £20,658 to provide a parenting map for Forest Heath which will include training for parent support volunteers, a roadshow of parenting workshops and seminars, training programmes as well as a parenting conference for Forest Heath.

It was felt that this project has great potential in supporting parents and families across the district, although it is important to be clear on the precise needs from parents and families. As such it is proposed that a two phase approach to funding this project be adopted with stage one widening the parenting questionnaire, delivering a Dads' Parenting Course and delivering a Parenting Conference. It is therefore recommended that an initial **£9,483** be allocated to this project. The Parenting Map of support would follow as a stage two.

A stage two for this project would be likely to take place in the early Spring 2016 and has still to be costed but it is felt that the remaining funds be retained in the Community Chest budget for allocation once the foundation work has been undertaken and a second stage of delivery agreed. This could be up to a total of £13,731.

- (iv) **Suffolk Digital Cinema Network** applied for £5,500 to develop the Network across Forest Heath by attracting new members, developing and managing family screenings, intergenerational screenings and specialist screenings as well as developing a commercial arm of the organisation to assist with future sustainability.

It was felt that this project has the potential to create community assets, bring people together and be a platform for engagement and community action. It is recommended that **£5,500** be awarded to this project.

- (v) **Catch 22, Suffolk Positives Futures** sought £7,822.50 to support the delivery of a programme of sports sessions in Newmarket and Red Lodge. The sessions are designed to be an early intervention project, diverting young people into a worthwhile and constructive activity and not allowing boredom to set in and perhaps lead on into less desirable activities.

It is recommended that this application not be supported. Whilst there is little doubt that this project has value in terms of diversionary activity it could be seen as a step backwards in terms of direct delivery with limited community empowerment. It is recommended that this application is refused but that officers in the Families and Communities team work with Catch 22 to seek alternative, external funding sources.

- 1.8 Subject to Cabinet approval of the above, £36,504 of the £57,000 Community Chest Funding will be allocated. The remaining £20,496 will be set aside for phase two funding as follows: Shared Parenting (£13,731) and Suffolk West CAB (£6,765) on condition of the terms set out in paragraph 1.7 (ii) and (iii) above. Should these conditions not be met, any underspend in this budget will be retained and used to commission services to support the delivery of the Families and Communities Strategy.

Applications for 2016/17 community chest funding

- 1.9 The Community Chest budget for 2016 / 2017 is £185,240. The closing date for applications was 30 September 2015. The Portfolio Holder will make recommendations relating to this funding at the Cabinet meeting on 22 December 2015. This will ensure that organisations will be aware of funding arrangements well in advance of the next financial year.