

# Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee

25 September 2024

## Social Impact Fund Outcomes

### Recommendation

That the Committee notes and comments on the outcomes of the Social Impact Fund and the projects supported by the Fund.

### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 As part of the 2021/22 Budget and 2021-26 Medium Term Financial Strategy, Council resolved in February 2021 to bring forward proposals for a Social/Community Endowment Fund to act as a catalyst for building stronger communities and linked to the Council's Community Powered Warwickshire approach.
- 1.2 In October 2021, having regard to the impact of COVID on communities across Warwickshire, Cabinet approved a recommendation to proceed with the Social Impact Fund (the Fund), total value £1 million, using source funding from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF).
- 1.3 The Fund is embedded in the Council Plan 2022-27, reflecting the priorities of:
  - thriving economy and places;
  - people can live their best lives; and
  - sustainable futures and climate change.
- 1.4 The Fund was prioritised towards areas and groups that had experienced higher levels of COVID (aligned to COMF requirements), as well as projects:
  - with a focus on financial, digital, health, social, or cultural inclusion;
  - aligned to at least one of the Council Plan outcomes;
  - aligned to at least one of the 6 core themes of the Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy 2020-25;
  - relating to the Community Powered Warwickshire approach; and
  - responding to and helping to reduce climate change and support biodiversity.
- 1.5 The Fund provided both revenue and capital funding on a 60/40 split, the capital element being added to the Council's Capital Programme.

- 1.6 The operation of the Fund was commissioned to Heart of England Community Foundation, with awards being determined by a member and officer panel.
- 1.7 21 projects were awarded funding in February 2022, 16 revenue projects and 5 capital projects.
- 1.8 Appendix 1 to this report describes the progress of 20 of the 21 projects and their outcomes. The remaining project (making up the 21 awards in total) has experienced delays to an extent that we cannot report on it at this time. The projects have all had significant impact on the communities and organisations concerned, building community capacity, and helping to contribute to Creating Opportunities' outcomes around tackling deprivation and inequality, and increasing social mobility.

## **2. Financial Implications**

- 2.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.
- 2.2 The capital element of the Fund was added to the Council's Capital Programme in 2021 following Cabinet authorisation in October 2021.

## **3. Environmental Implications**

- 3.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from this report.
- 3.2 As part of the application and determination process, organisations were asked how their projects responded to and helped to reduce climate change and increase biodiversity, and latterly projects were scored around their environmental implications to ensure projects aligned with the Council's climate change and biodiversity targets. The monitoring of projects has ensured that projects/organisations have adhered to their commitments around climate change and biodiversity.

## **4. Supporting Information**

- 4.1 In scoping the Fund, analysis indicated that higher value revenue awards, and capital awards, both focusing on promoting inclusion, would meet a hitherto unmet need.
- 4.2 The Fund was split 60% revenue and 40% capital based on analysis of existing funding streams. Further analysis revealed that revenue awards of between £25,000 and £50,000, and capital awards of between £50,000 and £100,000, would meet unmet needs.
- 4.3 A single funding round took place, starting in October 2021 with an 8-week application window and then a 6-week determination window.

- 4.4 Heart of England Community Foundation was commissioned to operate the Fund at an additional cost of £60,000 drawn from the COMF. The operation of the Fund involved managing the application and determination process, ensuring all due diligence and grant paperwork was completed, making payments, monitoring, and outcome reporting.
- 4.5 Revenue awards were intended to be spent within 15-months: 3-months' set-up; and 12-months' duration. Capital awards were intended to be spent within 18-months, with flexibility to allow for the confirmation of other funding sources, contractor delays, and increased labour and materials' costs requiring other funding to be levered-in.
- 4.6 An awarding panel comprising the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Climate and Culture, senior officers, and external sector specialists, met to discuss each application and to make the final awards.
- 4.7 All awards were signed-off by the Executive Director for Resources.
- 4.8 The following monitoring and reporting arrangements applied to all awards:
- interim reports at 6 months;
  - end of project reports for revenue projects at 15-months; and
  - end of project reports for capital projects at 18- to 24-months.
- 4.9 A marketing and communications plan is in place for the Fund, including social media promotion. As a grant condition, all award recipients are required to acknowledge the Social Impact Fund and the County Council in all promotion around the projects.
- 4.10 21 awards were made in February 2022, with all projects aligning to the areas and groups that experienced higher levels of COVID (aligned to COMF requirements).

#### *Revenue awards*

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Borough/District</b>	<b>Amount £</b>
Alcester Town Council	Stratford-on-Avon	40000
Brunswick Healthy Living Centre (Known as Brunswick HUB)	Warwick	36000
Home-Start South Warwickshire	Warwick	28140
Hope 4 The Community CIC	Across Warwickshire	49590
INSIGHT Counselling, Coaching & Support Services	Nuneaton and Bedworth	36776
Sky Blues in the Community	Nuneaton and Bedworth, Warwick	26832
South Warwickshire and Worcestershire Mind	Warwick	45000

The Parenting Project	Nuneaton and Bedworth, Stratford-on-Avon	39438
Together for Change Coventry and Warwickshire	Nuneaton and Bedworth	49793
Warwickshire Counselling Centre T/A Sycamore Counselling Service	North Warwickshire, Nuneaton and Bedworth	46009
Warwickshire Independent Advocacy Alliance	Nuneaton and Bedworth	27000
Warwickshire Welfare Rights Advice Service	North Warwickshire, Nuneaton and Bedworth	44444
Warwickshire Wildlife Trust	Rugby	29800
White Hart Community Groups	North Warwickshire	29847
You Can Flourish (known as "Flourish")	Warwick	30331
Young People First (Midlands)	Warwick	41000

**600000**

#### *Capital awards*

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Borough/District</b>	<b>Amount £</b>
Barford Youth & Community Centre	Warwick	65000
Escape Community Art in Action	Stratford-on-Avon	65000
St Peter & St John's church	Rugby	80000
The Boxing Clever Academy Ltd	Nuneaton and Bedworth	97000
Warwickshire Community & Voluntary Action - Nuneaton & Bedworth Branch	Nuneaton and Bedworth	93000

**400000**

- 4.11 Appendix 1 provides a report from Heart of England Community Foundation on the outcomes of 20 of the projects. 17 of these 20 projects are completed and 3 projects are ongoing (although almost completed). The remaining project (making up the 21 awards in total) has experienced delays and alongside Heart of England Community Foundation we continue to work with the organisation to ensure its delivery. As a final resort the Council would and will take action to reclaim the funding, but the preference continues to be to focus on delivery of the project, especially as it relates to an area that is high on the Indices of Multiple Deprivation and therefore linked to the Council's Creating Opportunities programme.
- 4.12 There has been a high level of adherence to the original scope(s) of the 20 projects reported on. Notable outputs include:

- 38% of the total funding has been directed towards projects in or covering Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough, reflecting the increased prevalence of COVID among communities and groups in the Borough. Similarly, 26% of the funding has been directed towards projects in or covering Warwick District, reflecting higher prevalences of COVID in this area.
- There were close to 4,500 beneficiaries of the revenue projects, and over 50,000 beneficiaries of the capital projects (capital projects being able to incorporate all users of buildings and therefore proportionately much higher).

4.13 The report in Appendix 1 largely comprises content from the funded organisations. Spelling and formatting errors have been corrected, any case studies that could identify individuals have been changed or redacted, and any photographs of children or younger people have been removed. Otherwise, the content has been left as it was provided by the organisations to ensure it remains written from the perspective of projects and beneficiaries.

All necessary permissions are in place for the use of case studies and photographs.

4.14 The commissioning of Heart of England Community Foundation has proved successful as it has enabled the Fund to be set up and mobilised with money being allocated more quickly than otherwise would be the case. In addition, it has realised additional benefits including increased efficiency and the leveraging-in of extra funding for some projects.

## **5. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps**

5.1 Regular contact is maintained by Heart of England Community Foundation and the Council's Community Partnerships Service with all the organisations funded. This will continue pending the completion of the three projects which remain underway and the one project which has been the subject of delay and challenges in progressing delivery.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1, Heart of England Community Foundation Outcomes Report.

## **Background Papers**

None

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The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Local Member(s): None

Other members: None