

TITLE OF REPORT: **Gateshead Innovation and Development Fund**

REPORT OF: **Tony Alder, Acting Strategic Director, Communities and Environment**

Purpose of the Report

1. This report outlines recommendations to Cabinet from the Gateshead Innovation and Development Fund Panel, concerning applications made by organisations seeking support from the Fund.

Background

2. At its meeting in June 2018, Cabinet approved the establishment of the Innovation and Development Fund, its operation framework and criteria, as the mechanism by which the Council would help allocate the £500,000 Voluntary Sector Reserve established by the MTFS in 2017 (Minute C17 refers).
3. The approach and criteria for the Fund, which acts as a complementary offer alongside the Gateshead Thrive Fund, was based upon surveys and research carried out by the Council, Newcastle CVS and the Community Foundation for Tyne & Wear and Northumberland. It aims to support organisations to take a 'step change' and think differently about how they operate, generate income and deliver services or activities which meet the needs of residents and neighbourhoods in greatest need, and therefore supporting the Council's Thrive agenda. It also represented a new way of delivering financial support to community organisations in Gateshead, both in terms of the application process, the potential funding available, and the type of project ideas the Fund is looking to invest in.
4. The Fund was opened for the submission of Expressions of Interest in September 2018, and by the end of the application submission window in November 2018 over 20 submissions had been received, with a total funding request representing an oversubscription against the available funding of nearly 100%. Following an assessment process involving officers from across the Council, partner colleagues from social investor North Star Ventures and the Community Foundation, a shortlist of 11 organisations was created and invited to present to one of two Fund Advisory Panel sessions on 1st and 6th March 2019. The invited organisations were as follows:
 - The Comfrey Project
 - Oasis Community Housing
 - North East Young Lads and Dads

- The Millin Charity
 - The Recovery Collective Ltd.
 - Citizens Advice Gateshead
 - Gateshead District Scouts
 - Jewish Community Council of Gateshead
 - Best of Bensham Partnership
 - Gateshead Older People's Assembly
 - The Teams Life Centre (Dunston Family Church)
5. The Panel sessions were chaired by the Deputy Leader, supported by representatives drawn from the Commissioning and Neighbourhoods Service, the Gateshead branch of Handelsbanken Bank, and the Community Foundation. Organisations were provided with up to 20 minutes to present their project idea to the Panel, followed by a question and answer session.
 6. Set out at Appendix 2 to this report is a summary of the projects as presented and considered by the Panel, and the advice of the Panel regarding the funding to be offered to the recommended organisations. This represents 8 organisations receiving support totalling £272,303.
 7. The first round of the Innovation and Development has proved to be of great interest to the voluntary sector, given the level of oversubscription, whilst at the same time enabling the Council to support some exciting and potentially impactful approaches to delivering Thrive in Gateshead.
 8. As part of the approved approach to the Fund, there is a ring-fenced allocation of £50,000 to support delivery of a leadership programme to support organisations receiving support from the Fund with some additional training and development to aid delivery of the projects. The learning from administering the first round of the Fund will now be used by the Advisory Group to inform the approach to the use and implementation of the learning programme, which together with the remaining balance of the voluntary sector reserve will be used to support the next round of the Fund.

Recommendations

9. Cabinet is requested to consider the recommendations of the Gateshead Innovation and Development Fund Advisory Group from its 1st and 6th March 2019 sessions and to:
 - (i) Approve the recommendations for the Gateshead Innovation and Development Fund, as set out in Appendix 2
 - (ii) Authorise the Acting Strategic Director, Communities and Environment, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Volunteering and the Chair of Gateshead Innovation and Development Fund Advisory Panel, to determine the deferred funding applications.
 - (iii) Agree to implement a further round of the Innovation and Development Fund as outlined in paragraph 8, on a date to be agreed at a future meeting of Cabinet.

For the following reasons:

- (i) To help establish stronger, impactful organisations at the heart of Gateshead communities that are better placed to help deliver the Council's Thrive programme
- (ii) To enable appropriate due diligence to take place with successful applicants ahead of formal funding offers being made

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Policy Context

1. The Innovation and Development Fund supports the Thrive agenda.

Background

2. The Fund's main principles are.
 - *Support VCS organisations in Gateshead to take a 'Step Change' and think differently about:*
 - How they operate
 - How they generate income
 - Their activity in communities - delivering creative, impactful, innovative services which meet the changing demands and needs of residents and neighbourhoods in greatest need.
 - *Support the development and delivery of services tailored to the needs of individual communities aligned to the Thrive Pledges, particularly "Support our communities to support themselves and each other".*
3. Applicants were required to demonstrate, through an evidence-based approach:
 - The issue the application was seeking to address, and its underlying evidence base
 - Detail of the proposed approach and activities, including the rationale supporting this
 - The anticipated associated outcomes, and how progress towards the outcomes will be monitored
4. In summary, the key criteria for the Fund is as follows:
 - Open to submissions from Gateshead based voluntary and community organisations, and those delivering/seeking to deliver activities into Gateshead, with charitable status or objectives.
 - Priority consideration was given to organisations with an annual income of under £250,000
 - Funding to be made available for a maximum of two years, with subject to 6 monthly reviews and payments linked to satisfactory progress.
 - No minimum or maximum grant level was indicated, but it was indicated that a request for £30,000 would not be an unreasonable one. Both revenue and capital will be supported.

Consultation

5. In preparing this report consultation has taken place with the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Volunteering.

Alternative Options

6. The alternative options include a different focus for the Fund criteria, and a more structured application process. However, the approach agreed by Cabinet in June 2018 for the Fund was based around an intelligence-led approach informed by survey findings from the VCS, and the agreed application process and approach was welcomed by representatives of the VCS that attended the Fund's launch event in July 2018.

Implications of Recommended Option

7. **Resources:**
 - a) **Financial Implications** – The Strategic Director, Corporate Resources confirms the resources will be met from the Voluntary Sector Reserve over the financial years 20108/19 and 2019/20.
 - b) **Human Resources Implications** – The Fund administration and onward project monitoring over the lifetime of the funded activity will require the involvement of the Neighbourhood Management and Volunteering Team and Corporate Finance. Capacity exists to provide this from within existing resources.
 - c) **Property Implications** – There are no property implications arising as a result of this report.
8. **Risk Management Implication** – Given the level of ambition and innovation likely to be associated with the Programme, it is quite possible that alongside examples of successful projects and activities, there may well be some projects that fail to achieve their ambitions in whole or in part. Nevertheless, the learning from both successful and unsuccessful projects is equally valuable in helping to identify what doesn't work and why, as well as the identification of new ways of working that have the potential to deliver evidenced based change, as well as approaches that can be replicated and potentially scaled up across the Borough.
9. **Equality and Diversity** – There are no implications arising from this recommendation.
10. **Crime and Disorder Implications** – There are no implications arising from this recommendation
11. **Health Implications** – There are no implications arising from this recommendation.
12. **Sustainability Implications** – It is anticipated that support from the fund will help support a more sustainable and innovative voluntary and community sector that will be less reliant or dependent on support from the Council in the future.

13. **Human Rights Implications** - There are no implications arising from this recommendation.
14. **Ward Implications** – all wards

APPENDIX 2

Gateshead Innovation and Development Fund Advisory Panel

Advice to Cabinet

19th March 2019

Organisation	The Best of Bensham Partnership (a collaboration of 9 charitable organisations – Parish of Bensham and Teams, St. Chad's Community Project, Bensham & Saltwell Alive, Bensham Food Coop, Comfrey Project, Creative Youth Opportunities CIC, 22 Sheds CIC, Monkfish Productions CIC, 3 Steps CIC)
Outline of Proposal	Development of a pioneering collaborative asset-based model, aiming to establish coproduction of a neighbourhood services offer for the Bensham and Saltwell neighbourhood area that will put the active participation of residents at its heart.
Requested funding	£68,274 over 24 months
Comment of Advisory Panel	The leadership of the initiative inspired confidence, given the involvement of nationally recognised experts on assets-based community development. The proposal will help further expand an established model, with some innovation around micro-grant-making, and offers the possibility of building community resilience to the decline in public service resources in a challenged neighbourhood, and link into the Council's public services reform agenda. It is suggested that the organisation identify an alternative to interns to undertake evaluation, as the allocated funds should enable the engagement of a more experienced consultant. The style and approach to the planned micro grants programme should also be considered further.
Panel advice to Cabinet	To support the proposal
Funding offer	Year 1 £29,388 Year 2 £38,886 total £68,274

Councillor Donovan declared an interest in the Best of Bensham Partnership as chair of Bensham & Saltwell Alive CIO, played no part in the assessment and subsequent shortlisting of the submission, was entirely absent from the Panel session when the Partnership made its presentation, and was not involved in the Panel's final advice to Cabinet on the application.

Organisation	The Comfrey Project
Outline of Proposal	A 2-year feasibility project including employment of an enterprise coordinator to develop and deliver an enterprise project, and simultaneous capacity development for community entrepreneurship in

	Bensham
Requested funding	£30,834
Comment of Advisory Panel	A project idea that has potential as an enterprising activity for the charity and local residents, but in its present guise is lacking some key aspects of business planning to support the project in the requested manner.
Panel advice to Cabinet	Support the charity to identify professional support to further develop the business plan and enterprise model to support further applications for funding its development.
Funding offer	£5,000

Organisation	Citizens Advice Gateshead
Outline of Proposal	To address the current inequality of access to social welfare advice and information for Gateshead residents in key localities and communities of interest, by piloting a hub and spoke locality advice approach
Requested funding	£65,097 over 24 months
Comment of Advisory Panel	The organisation did not present a compelling and innovative model, given the issue identified. The project costings are high, particularly when compared to the current model being delivered by the charity in Blaydon.
Panel advice to Cabinet	Not to support the proposal

Organisation	Gateshead Older Peoples Assembly
Outline of Proposal	Augment the charity's staff team with a new part time project support assistant (20 hours per week) to support growth and development of the charity's services and create capacity within the organisation to better evidence the impact and outcomes of its activities associated with the wellbeing of people over 50.
Requested funding	£28,142 over 24 months
Comment of Advisory Panel	The charity built upon its submitted expression of interest and outlined a case for potential future savings on social care and build sustainability for the organisation and maximise the potential of other funding by supporting a full-time post. The Panel felt the SMART objectives and anticipated income projection provided required a little further refinement.
Panel recommendation	Support, subject to receipt of satisfactory project objections and income projections.
Funding offer	Year 1 £14,071 Year 2 £14,071 total £28,142

Organisation	Gateshead District Scout Council
Outline of Proposal	To recruit a Centre Manager, and the associated employer costs for a 12-month period, including setup costs to create a new 7-day activity programme, exploration of funding opportunities, online marketing info and booking system for the Whickham Thorns Outdoor Activity Centre
Requested funding	£30,887 over 12 months
Comment of Advisory Panel	<p>The presentation demonstrated that the organisation had a good grasp of detail, but also an ambitious but realistic vision for the site, and there was good awareness of equality issues, built on direct experience.</p> <p>Whilst an appropriate salary was indicated for the post, this project would be better served by an offer of £45,000 funding over two years. This will enable security over the funded period, allowing the new Centre Manager to focus on delivery while freeing up the committee to fundraise. This should enable the organisation to raise funds to employ a development manager at a point later in the plan.</p>
Panel advice to Cabinet	To support the proposal
Funding offer	Year 1 £30,887 Year 2 £15,000 total £45,887

Organisation	Jewish Community Council of Gateshead
Outline of Proposal	To carry out and evaluate a mental wellbeing needs survey and map existing service patronage, develop a peer network, deliver training and cultural awareness programmes to improve availability and patronage of services
Funding requested	£35,000 over 24 months
Comment of Advisory Panel	The organisation presented a compelling case for the research and associated activity, illustrating how it would build upon previous research carried out by the Council, and how it will act as a catalyst to break down the stigma of mental health issues and engage the community.
Panel Advice to Cabinet	To support the project
Funding offer	Year 1 £17,500 Year 2 £17,500 total £35,000

Organisation	The Millin Charity
Outline of Proposal	to work with women living in the most disadvantaged parts of Gateshead to run, develop and gain enterprise experience through its social business <i>the B Collective</i> . which offers ethically produced, environmentally friendly, design-led products while

	providing accredited volunteer placements and opportunities for women to gain enterprise experience & skills through participating in the running of the business.
Comment of Advisory Panel	A strong presentation was made, but focussed too much upon the creative enterprise work and products rather than the more important enterprise support work. The approach has been developed in the West End of Newcastle, and the case outlining clear transferability to Gateshead was not compelling. A more modest scheme would have been preferable to minimise the level of risk. The Gateshead Thrive Fund is already supporting enterprise work by Millin in Gateshead, and the Panel felt that whilst the approach demonstrated potential impacts and outcomes for Gateshead women, this would be better evidenced once they have evaluated learning from their Gateshead Thrive grant for enterprise delivery in Gateshead.
Panel advice to Cabinet	Not to support the proposal

Organisation	NE Young Dads and Lads
Outline of Proposal	To deliver bee keeping training to 20 NEET men, manage 15 new bee colonies in Gateshead, and sell "Staithes Honey"
Requested funding	£30,000
Comment of Advisory Panel	This project, based upon scaling up their existing success with their Staithes Honey project, outlines an impactful way of engaging young men, many from challenging backgrounds, on an enterprising pathway that would otherwise struggle to fulfil their potential. The project was presented in a clear and structured manner with the potential to generate both direct and indirect employment opportunities for young men, and to deliver key biodiversity outcomes too.
Panel advice to Cabinet	To support the proposal
Funding offer	£30,000 over 12 months

Organisation	Oasis Community Housing
Outline of Proposal	establishment of a multi-agency service hub for vulnerable / homeless people leading chaotic lifestyles where people can access advice and support regarding housing and homelessness, physical and mental health
Requested funding	£30,000
Comment of Advisory Panel	The development of a homelessness hub for

	Gateshead, with the involvement of multiple services wrapping around the client, was presented with a set of clear outcomes and project milestones and has the potential to provide a complementary model acting as an exemplar approach supporting the Council's exploration of service hubs.
Panel advice to Cabinet	To support the project
Funding offer	Year 1 £15,000 Year 2 £15,000 total £30,000

Organisation	The Recovery College Collective Ltd
Outline of Proposal	Establish a nationally significant centre of excellence for wellbeing with a community of empowered peers who will be supported to use their lived trauma and experience to help others
Funding requested	£30,000
Comment of Advisory Panel	The organisation is aiming to extend and enhance its peer led mental wellbeing services, currently based in Newcastle, for Gateshead residents by developing a hub within the Borough. It will provide a mix of indoor and outdoor activities and include opportunities for new volunteering, peer support activities as well as a drop-in for local residents. With the efficacy of its approach to wellbeing supported by academic research, the project will provide a useful addition to community based and delivered mental wellbeing services.
Panel advice to Cabinet	To support the proposal
Funding offer	Year 1 £15,000 Year 2 £15,000 total £30,000

Subsequent to the presentation the Panel consulted with the Director of Public Health, who confirmed that the presence of ReCoCo Ltd. as part of Gateshead's range of community based mental wellbeing services would be a welcome addition.

Organisation	Teams Life Centre (Dunston Family Church)
Outline of Proposal	extend the existing centre manager role to deliver an expanded activity plan, to network with key organisations and to develop a long-term funding strategy for the projects that are created. Creation of a part time post and 14hrs of sessional work each week. Develop the building to meet the needs of the plan through the production of a feasibility study.
Funding requested	£53,795 over 24 months
Comment of Advisory Panel	This is a good local project, demonstrating passion and a strong understanding of the challenges faced in Teams, but ultimately the case made by the charity was not a strong one against the fund criteria. The uplift in the manager's salary is clearly needed to ensure future sustainability. This component is not

	within the remit of this fund, but the organisation should be supported to seek this funding elsewhere.
Panel advice to Cabinet	Not to support the proposal