

Report to: Community Grant Panel



Date of Meeting 28 November 2022

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release n/a

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## Community Buildings Fund

### Report summary:

East Devon District Council has an Action on Poverty Fund. This gives out grants of up to £5,000 to projects that help work towards the aims outlined in our Poverty Reduction Strategy.

The first closing date for this financial year has now passed, decisions need to be made on the applications received. The Community Grants Panel has the authority to make decisions on those applications and on the guidance for the fund.

### Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes  No

Policy Framework Yes  No

### Recommendation:

- (1) That the Community Grant Panel consider the applications to the Action on Poverty Fund and make decisions on whether to give them the grant they are requesting.
- (2) That the Community Grant Panel consider whether they wish to amend the percentage of match funding that must be gained and / or the percentage of that match funding that must be in place for applications to the Action on Poverty Fund to be eligible.
- (3) That the Community Grant Panel consider moving the second closing date for this fund from 30 January 2023 to 15 February 2023.
- (4) That the Community Grant panel consider whether they give permission for the Community Engagement and Funding Officer, in discussion with the Chair of the Panel, to amend the guidance / application form for the fund following this first round of applications. This will not change the rules of the fund, just give further clarification and examples where needed.

### Reason for recommendation:

The Community Grant Panel has the authority to make decisions on the Action on Poverty Fund applications.

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Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Climate Action and Emergency Response
- Coast, Country and Environment
- Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- Democracy, Transparency and Communications
- Economy and Assets

- Finance
- Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities
- Tourism, Sports, Leisure and Culture

**Equalities impact** Low Impact

**Climate change** Medium Impact

**Risk:** Low Risk;

**Links to background information**

[East Devon Action on Poverty Fund - Overview - East Devon](#)

[Poverty Reduction Strategy - East Devon](#)

**Link to [Council Plan](#)**

Priorities (check which apply)

- Better homes and communities for all
  - A greener East Devon
  - A resilient economy
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**Report in full**

**1. Background**

For the financial year 2022/2023, East Devon District Council has an Action on Poverty Fund. There are two closing dates each year, to allow for more timely decisions on grants. Currently the fund will only be open to applications in 2022/2023, with the second closing date on 30 January 2023.

**2. Applications**

2.1 Contained within this report are the first applications to that fund. I have done an initial eligibility check and have made sure that each of those applications is complete.

2.2 The applications within this report for this panel to decide on are:

- A. Seachange Devon are applying for £2,065 for a project to run Let's Cook for Health family / community sessions in Littleham in Exmouth. They have all the remaining funding in place.
- B. Open Door Exmouth are applying for £3,010.80 for a project to expand their community café to Saturdays, and to equip staff and volunteers to better support people with financial worries. They have all the remaining match funding in place.
- C. Project Food are applying for £4,276 for a project to encourage people in financial need with mental health issues to take part in farm activities and healthy eating. They have all the remaining match funding in place.
- D. Exmouth Stroke Survivors are asking for £1,750 for a project to set up a community café in Littleham in Exmouth. They have all the remaining match funding in place.

- E. EX5 Alive in Cranbrook are asking for £4,950 to allow them to set up a community hub at the Younghayes Centre in the town. They have a shortfall of £120 which they have plans in place to raise.
- F. Re:Store Axe Valley CIC are asking for £5,000 to help them deliver Christmas hampers to families in need in the Axe Valley. They have over 70% of their match funding in place and have plans in place for raising the rest.
- G. Sidmouth Rotary are applying for £5,000 to help them deliver Christmas hampers to families in need in the Sid Valley. They have 72% of their match funding in place and have plans in place for raising the rest.
- H. Exeter Community Energy (ECoE) are applying for £5,000 to help them deliver an energy, debt and money advice project to East Devon residents. They have 70% of the rest of the money they need for the project in place, and have applied for a separate grant to provide the remaining 30%.

If all these applications were successful we would be giving out a total of £31,051.80.

2.3 There is enough money available in the fund to fund all these applications if Councillors wish to do so, with a significant amount still available for applications received by the second closing date. We currently have over £76,000 in the fund. Unfortunately as I was seconded full time to work on the council's Homes for Ukraine response and then was off work due to Coronavirus I did not have the time to publicise the fund or encourage applications as extensively as I normally would.

2.4 Three applications were received that are not being brought forward to Councillors for decision, the main reasons for this for those three applications were:

- The project wasn't eligible, as it was to give out cash to beneficiaries.
- The project didn't have the required match funding.
- The application form was incomplete and despite working with the organisation, their application continued to lack a lot of the required information.

### **3. Further matters for decision**

3.1 One thing Councillors wished to re-consider following the first tranche of applications included in this report were the requirements for:

- Each project to gain a minimum of 50% of the funding for the project from sources other than our Action on Poverty Fund. This was to help make sure that our limited funding could help more projects to happen.
- Of that minimum of 50% match funding, the requirement for the organisation to already have a minimum of 70% of that funding in their bank or promised to them. The main reasons for this were:
  - to make sure the money was actually given to projects that would happen, and we didn't allocate £5,000 to a project that was never able to happen. If we were to allocate £5,000 to a project that never happened this could mean other projects that would happen could lose out – as funding is limited and we are currently only running this fund for a year.
  - to make sure that the project is completed within the required 12 month timescale.

3.2 Councillors to consider whether to move the second closing date for this fund from 30 January 2023 to 15 February 2023. This would be to allow applicants a couple more weeks after Christmas to fill in and submit their applications.

3.3 Councillors to decide whether they give permission for the Community Engagement and Funding Officer, in discussion with the Chair of the Panel, to amend the guidance / application form for the fund following this first round of applications. This will not change the rules of the fund, just give further clarification and examples where needed. In particular this would be giving guidance on how and when to submit evidence of costs.

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**Financial implications:**

The financial implications are as contained within the report.

**Legal implications:**

There is no direct comment to be made in relation to this report, each and any individual issue will need to be considered as it arises. Consideration does need to be given to whether a grant is a true grant or a contract for services as this has implications with regard to VAT and procurement, advice has been provided in this regard previously.