

**NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**CABINET – 29 JULY 2014**

Title of report	<b>INVESTING IN OUR COMMUNITIES</b>
Key Decision	a) Financial Yes b) Community Yes
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Purpose of report	To seek approval from Members to invest £210,000 in community projects across North West Leicestershire.
Reason for Decision	To comply with the Council's financial regulations.
Council Priorities	Homes and Communities Value for Money
Implications:	If approved £210,000 from the under spending in 2013/14 will be reinvested in community projects across the district that will realise significant benefits to communities.
Financial/Staff	The 2013/14 provisional outturn report also on this Cabinet agenda asks Cabinet to approve £210,000 to fund this project.  The project will be managed by the Council's Community Focus Team with additional resource bought in if required from within existing budgets.
Link to relevant CAT	None.
Risk Management	Risks and mitigations are dealt with in the body of the report.
Equalities Impact Assessment	The Council's Public Sector Equalities Duty assessment has been undertaken. There are no impacts that require further consideration.

Human Rights	No Implications.
Transformational Government	This proposal supports the provisions within the Localism Act 2011 by enabling communities to deliver projects and services, based upon locally identified needs and aspirations.
Comments of Head of Paid Service	Report is satisfactory
Comments of Section 151 Officer	Report is satisfactory
Comments of Deputy Monitoring Officer	Report is satisfactory
Consultees	Community groups through informal consultation Parish Liaison Group 4 June 2014.
Background papers	None
Recommendations	<b>THAT CABINET AGREES TO INVEST £210,000 IN THE 'INVESTING IN OUR COMMUNITIES' PROJECT AS PART OF THE 2013/14 PROVISIONAL OUTTURN REPORT</b>

## 1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 North West Leicestershire benefits from an active and engaged 'grass roots' voluntary and community sector, delivering projects in their communities that bring real benefits to their residents. These can include youth activities, community clean ups, orchards and community activities.
- 1.2 The provisions within the Localism Act 2011 provide Parish Councils and community groups with new 'community rights' enabling residents to deliver larger infrastructure projects and services.
- 1.3 The Council has an opportunity to invest savings achieved in 2013/14 in community projects during the current financial year to help communities to realise their aspirations.

## 2.0 INVESTING IN OUR COMMUNITIES

- 2.1 It is recommended £210,000 from savings made in 2013/2014 is made available to community based organisations such as Parish Councils and constituted community groups. This will help deliver larger scale community projects that will bring significant benefits from identified needs and aspirations within the community.

- 2.2 It is proposed that the fund will initially be divided into 7 geographical area amounts of £20,000 awards (£140,000) to enable a spread of projects across the district. A further 7 district wide awards of £10,000 (£70,000) will be made available to ensure that projects from any location within the district have access to funding.
- 2.3 The geographical areas are illustrated in Appendix One. These areas have been calculated by using population figures from the 2011 census data and by district ward boundaries:
- Castle Donington and Kegworth - 11,979 population
  - Thringstone, Whitwick and Snibston – 16,377
  - Greenhill, Coalville and Bardon – 16,268
  - Breedon and Valley – 6,859 (large rural area)
  - Ashby Castle, Ashby Holywell, Ashby Ivanhoe – 12,530
  - Appleby Magna, Measham, Moira, Oakthorpe and Donisthorpe – 15,020
  - Hugglescote, Ibstock, Heather, Ravenstone and Packington – 14,435
- 2.4 The aim of 'Investing in our Communities' is to encompass the spirit of the Localism Act 2011, by enabling communities to meet their needs and aspirations. Therefore eligible projects will be those that are already under consideration or in development in a locality, to ensure sustainability of successful projects. These projects will improve facilities or services available to communities such as youth, sports or community provision and projects that retain local services that bring people together, providing added value to their communities and/or are at risk of closure.
- 2.5 Eligible projects will require the Council's financial contribution to either pump prime a project or further its development. For example, a group may already have raised some money towards a larger project. A successful grant application from this project could be the final amount they need to realise this project.
- 2.6 Therefore to be eligible to apply, the Council's contribution cannot cover the entire costs of the project, but will add value to the group's existing resources. Applicants will be asked to indicate which amount they are bidding for, i.e. £20,000 or £10,000.

### **3.0 PROCESS**

- 3.1 If the Investing in our Communities project is approved, the Council's Communications, ICT and Community Focus teams have designed branding, application criteria, on-line application forms and press releases ready for a launch in early August.
- 3.2 It is anticipated that applications will be received up until the deadline on 29 September 2014.
- 3.3 Applications will then be reviewed and checked for eligibility by the Community Focus Team. From 12 October eligible applications will be uploaded to the website to enable residents to vote on-line for their preferred project, this will run for a four week period until 9 November.

- 3.4 The on-line voting process will also support the Council's intention to showcase to residents its services via the internet as each 'voter' will create an on-line account, enabling them to vote, as well as access other Council services and future consultations.
- 3.5 This voting process has been designed to encourage community groups to promote their projects district wide. Not only will this increase the number of potential votes but it will also raise awareness of what community groups can achieve, inspiring others to do more in their communities and learn from each other's experience.
- 3.6 Successful grant recipients will be announced mid December. As well as financial support, successful applicants will be assisted by the Council's Community Focus Team to assist delivery and the Council's Communications Team to ensure maximum publicity through press releases and coverage. Successful groups will be required to spend the award within twelve months of receipt.
- 3.7 Unsuccessful applicants will still receive the same level of support, signposting to assistance, training and access to funding opportunities that are already promoted by the Council's Community Focus Team.

<b>Key dates</b>	
Early August	Project launch
29 September 2014	Deadline for applications
12 October	On line voting commences
9 November	On line voting closes
Mid December	Successful applicants announced

#### **4.0 RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 4.1 Tight timescales to develop and deliver the project – an additional staffing resource will be brought into the Community Focus Team as and when required, paid for from existing budgets to ensure key milestones are met.
- 4.2 Preparedness for communities to submit an application within the required timescales – at the Parish Liaison Group on 4 June 2014, attendees were advised of grants that are or may be available over the summer to enable them to begin preparing. This opportunity will be widely advertised through our existing community networks, including Parish Councils, as well as on the Council's website to ensure availability is widely communicated.
- 4.3 Not enough applications to claim the whole fund allowance – The Council's Community Focus Team conducted 'soft' market testing by asking Parish Council's and community groups that we are already aware of what projects they were hoping to deliver to ensure there are projects that would benefit from and could apply for this funding opportunity. Results demonstrated that there are a number of projects that would benefit from this award and they will be advised of this opportunity.
- 4.4 The majority of money gets awarded in one area, not evenly across the district – we are aware that some communities are more active than others and may therefore have more existing or planned projects that could be submitted for funding. To ensure that the fund is

spread across the district, the £20,000 award allocations will be made one per area as stated at 2.2.