

## REPORT OF GROWTH AND INFRASTRUCTURE FUND SCORING PANEL

The Growth and Infrastructure Fund Scoring Panel was established by Finance & Assets Committee on 23 June 2022 to score applications for the £2M Growth and Infrastructure Fund against the criteria approved by the parent Committee and to make recommendations for approval of grant funding back to the meeting of the Committee on 24 November 2022.

The Panel met via Zoom on two occasions on 27 October and 1 November 2022, when there were:

### **PRESENT**

Cllr Anna Bailey (Chairman)  
Cllr Sue Austen  
Cllr Lorna Dupré (27 October only)  
Councillor Lis Every (1 November only)  
Cllr Alec Jones (27 October only)  
Cllr Daniel Schumann  
Cllr John Trapp (1 November only)  
Cllr Jo Webber

### **OFFICERS**

Sally Bonnett – Director Community (Lead Officer)  
Tracy Couper – Democratic Services Manager

### **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

27 October 2022 – Councillor D Schumann declared an interest as a Trustee of Viva, an organisation which had submitted an application for funding. He stated that he would contribute to the Panel with an open mind and in the best interests of the Council and would not take part in any discussions or decision relating to the Viva application.

1 November 2022 – Councillors Every and D Schumann declared an interest as Trustees of Viva, an organisation which had submitted an application for funding, and were moved to the 'waiting room' for consideration of these applications. Councillor Schumann was Ward Member for the applications in respect of National Trust and Soham TC and was in the 'waiting room' for consideration of these applications. Councillor Trapp was Ward Member for the application for Bottisham PC and not take part in the discussion and scoring for this application.

### **1. Growth & Infrastructure Fund Terms of Reference and Scoring Criteria**

At the first meeting of the Panel, Members noted the Terms of Reference, Eligibility and Scoring Criteria.

The Director Community reminded Members that the criteria met the Cambridgeshire Horizons objectives for use of the funding and had been approved by F&A Committee as follows:

- Evidence that the project is necessary to support local growth
- The benefits provided by the project
- Evidence of local resident and stakeholder involvement in and support for the project
- Alignment with the Council's infrastructure priorities
- The level of match funding that the project has secured
- Commitment to Net Zero Carbon and a green approach, demonstrating the highest possible quality standards in terms of design, materials, workmanship
- and environment in its delivery in order to achieve sustainability

Members raised a number of questions on the criteria and how the scoring would take place at the next meeting of the Panel. The Director Community explained that the process had been modelled upon the Local Highways Improvement (LHI) funding process used by the County Council.

Scoring of the applications would take place using the scoring spreadsheet circulated to Members of the Panel, which listed all of the criteria. Individual Members would list their scores for each application and then the Director Community would add the scores together to produce a total score and ranking for each application.

In that connection, Members requested that a blank copy of the application form be sent to them with the completed applications to assist in their understanding.

In the light of discussions on the declaration of interest made at the meeting by Councillor Schumann as a Trustee of an organisation submitting an application for funding, the Director Communities and Democratic Services Manager explained that Ward Members would not score applications relating to their Ward and any Members declaring other interests would be excluded from discussions and scoring on those particular applications. Adjustments would be made to the total scoring to reflect any excluded Members.

Members agreed to consider what to do in the event that the funding was over-subscribed at the second meeting, when they had access to all of the applications.

## **2. Scoring of Applications**

At the second meeting of the Panel, Members considered 9 eligible applications for funding as follows:

- Bottisham Parish Council – New Cemetery
- Isleham Community Association – provision of commercial community kitchen at The Beeches Community Centre

- Little Thetford Village Hall – conversion to all-electric Village Hall using renewable energy from solar panels
- Soham Town Rangers Football Club – Community Club refurbishment comprising sound-proofing and refurbishment of main hall, refurbishment of lounge area
- Stretham Parish Council – Stretham Community Hub, including GP facilities
- Witchford Playing Fields Association – Village Hall expansion project comprising new sports club changing facilities, creation of flexible space for indoor activities and installation of solar panels
- National Trust – adaptation of footbridge to cycle/bridleway, Wicken Fen Burwell Lode Crossing
- Soham Town Council - cycle/bridleway, between Soham and Wicken Fen
- Viva Arts & Community Group – Trainee & Learning Hub, solar lighting and apprenticeship scheme

The Director Community stated that a further 4 applications had failed to meet the gateway criteria.

She then explained how the scoring would operate and how it would be adjusted for individual applications where Members of the Panel had declared an interest. With regard to the criterion in the final column relating to the level of match-funding, the Director Community reported that this was an absolute based upon the percentage of match-funding, and she advised and the Panel agreed the points score for each application for all Members to include in this column.

Once a summary had been given by the Director Community and discussions had taken place on each application at this meeting, Members would be requested to put their scores onto the spreadsheet provided and E-mail them to the Director Community, who would then calculate an overall score per application and a priority ranking. An adjournment would take place to enable her to do this. Members then would reconvene to make a final recommendation to F&A Committee based upon the outcome from the spreadsheet.

The Director Community reported that Councillor Dupré, who now was unable to be present at this meeting, had scored the individual applications and requested that these scores be included in the overall calculation. However, the Chairman and Members of the Panel agreed that this would not be appropriate, as a Member needed to be present at the meeting to hear the information and discussions on the individual applications to be able to make an informed choice on the scoring.

The Director Community then gave a summary of all of the applications and how they met the scoring criteria and questions/comments were raised by Members of the Panel. Members commented that there was ambiguity about the amount of grant being requested by Isleham Community Association and

the Director Community agreed to clarify this prior to submission of any recommendation to F&A Committee.

Members also asked about conditions relating to the payment of any funding awarded and the Director Community proposed that these should be as follows:

Evidence was provided that:

- All necessary permissions were in place
- Match-funding was secured
- Funding was only utilised for Capital elements
- Payment was made on receipt of invoices

Following detailed discussion on the individual applications, Members adjourned at 19.38pm to submit their scoring spreadsheets to the Director Community to enable her to undertake the total scoring and priority ranking for the 9 projects.

On reconvening at 20:27pm, The Director Community displayed the final scoring/ranking spreadsheet for the 9 applications.

The Panel commented on the high quality and community 'worthiness' of all of the projects and the fact that, if the £2M funding threshold was adhered to, potentially 3 projects might not receive a funding allocation. Therefore,

**IT WAS RECOMMENDED:**

**That Finance and Assets Committee be requested to increase the Growth and Infrastructure Fund Budget to up to £2.3M, to enable all of the 9 eligible applications to be funded, subject to confirmation of the sum requested by Isleham Community Association, and the following conditions for the payment of any funding awarded:**

**Evidence being provided that:**

- **All necessary permissions are in place**
- **Match-funding is secured**
- **Funding is only utilised for Capital elements**
- **Payment be made on receipt of invoices**

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<b><u>Background Documents</u></b>	<b><u>Location</u></b>	<b><u>Contact Officer</u></b>
Grant applications [contain Exempt Information]	Room 105 The Grange, Ely	Sally Bonnett Director Community (01353) 616451 sally.bonnett@eastcambs.gov.uk