REPORT TO CABINET

Borough Council of
King's Lynn &
West Norfolk

DATE OF MEETING	17 November 2026
REPORT TITLE	Councillor Community Project Fund 2026/27: Award of Grants
LEAD MEMBER	Cllr Chris Morley – Finance Portfolio Holder
LEAD OFFICER	Michelle Drewery – Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer
CONSULTEES	Councillor Community Grants and Budget Setting Task Group
WARDS AFFECTED	All

KEY DECISION	NO
DECISION MAKER	Cabinet
IS THE REPORT OPEN OR EXEMPT	OPEN

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	YES
HR IMPLICATIONS	NO
POLICY IMPLICATIONS	NO
STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS	NO
RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS	YES
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS	YES
EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT COMPLETED	YES

SUMMARY OF REPORT

This report presents the recommendations of the Councillor Community Grants and Budget Setting Task Group following its assessment of applications to the 2026/27 Councillor Community Project Fund. Appendix A lists applications recommended for approval, totalling £412,676 towards projects with a stated total value of £1,111,865. Appendix B lists applications not recommended for funding.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet resolves to:

1) approve the grant awards set out in Appendix A, subject to the conditions and assurance requirements identified;
2) note the applications set out in Appendix B that are not recommended for funding;
3) delegate authority to the Assistant Director Finance, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, to finalise grant conditions and make any minor adjustments necessary to ensure that awards remain within the approved £500,000 budget; and
4) require that no grant payment is released until all relevant eligibility, due diligence and assurance requirements have been satisfactorily completed.

REASON FOR DECISION

To enable Cabinet to determine which bids should be approved under the 2026/2027 Councillor Community Project Fund scheme.

CORPORATE STRATEGY **How does this proposal support our Corporate Priorities** Our priorities | Corporate Strategy 2023 - 2027 | Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk	
Promote growth and prosperity to benefit West Norfolk	
Protect our Environment	
Efficient and effective delivery of our services	
Support our communities	The Community Projects Fund supports the Council's Corporate Priorities by investing in projects that strengthen communities, improve local facilities, enhance health and wellbeing, promote community resilience, support rural areas and deliver long-term social value.

REPORT DETAIL

1. Introduction

1.1 The Community Project Fund is designed to support councillors in delivering community-led projects that improve local facilities, enhance wellbeing and strengthen community resilience across the Borough. Projects should demonstrate a clear and measurable community benefit.

1.2 The Task Group Terms of Reference provide that the Group will:

- Receive applications from Borough Councillors on behalf of eligible applicants.
- Assess the applications against the agreed criteria.
- Make recommendations to Cabinet in relation to the awarding of grants from the Community Project Fund.

1.3 The Task Group considered 48 applications requesting total grant funding of £651,833 towards projects with a stated total value of £1,862,983. Following evaluation, the Task Group recommends applications totalling £412,676 for approval. These applications relate to projects with a stated total value of £1,111,865. The Task Group is advisory and has no delegated decision-making powers; the final decisions will be made by Cabinet on 17 November 2026.

2. Background

2.1 The published guidance for the Community Project Fund set out the eligibility requirements and parameters for the scheme. The key requirements are summarised below:

- The fund will support projects that can demonstrate a clear public benefit and address an identifiable community need.
- Projects must be completed by 31 March 2028.
- Examples of projects that may be supported include, but are not limited to:
  - improvements to community buildings, play areas or sports facilities;
  - projects enhancing local green spaces or environmental sustainability;
  - activities promoting health, wellbeing or social inclusion;
  - community safety initiatives; and
  - digital or infrastructure improvements where there is a direct community benefit.

2.2 A key feature of the scheme is providing councillors with the opportunity to support projects within their wards. All applications require councillor endorsement. Applications may seek:

- Revenue funding of up to £5,000
- Capital funding of up to £25,000.

2.3 A summary of the evaluation criteria used is shown in the following table.

Criterion	Points	What good looks like
Community Need & Evidence	15	Clear local need supported by evidence, consultation, demand data or community support.
Community Benefit & Impact	15	Meaningful, measurable benefits for local people, with good reach and impact.
Value for Money	15	Strong outcomes for the funding requested, including matched funding or in-kind support where available.
Deliverability & Readiness	15	Realistic plan, clear timetable, manageable risks and capacity to deliver by 31 March 2028.
Rural Balance & Fair Distribution	10	Fair geographic distribution, particularly supporting rural or underserved communities.
Eligibility & Financial Position	10	Meets fund rules and demonstrates an appropriate financial position and genuine need for grant support.

Sustainability & Longer-Term Benefit	20	Lasting outcomes, a strong legacy or self-sustaining community benefit beyond the funding period.
TOTAL	100	

3. Proposal

3.1 Cabinet is asked to consider the Task Group evaluation of the applications, together with the individual application summaries and the scoring and ranking set out in appendices to this report.

3.2 The applications were initially assessed by officers against the published eligibility requirements and scoring criteria to provide a consistent evidence-based assessment. The Councillor Community Grants and Budget Setting Task Group subsequently considered the officer evaluations alongside the application information and any further information available to the Task Group. The Task Group was able to exercise its judgement in forming its recommendations to Cabinet and, in a number of cases, its recommendation differed from the initial officer proposal. Cabinet is therefore asked to determine the applications having regard to both the evaluation information and the Task Group's recommendations. This reflects the Task Group's advisory role, with the final decision resting with Cabinet.

3.3 The applications where the Task Group's recommendation differed from the initial officer proposal are summarised below:

Ref	Applicant/Project	Amount Requested	Amount Proposed	Reason for Change
008	Clenchwarton Memorial Hall – air conditioning installation	£8,519	£8,519	Recommendation was to reject but the Task Group supported the project taking into account the wider benefits of other improvements to the facilities that would make this installation more efficient.
009	Dersingham Parish Council – replacement of street lighting columns	£14,105	£0	Recommendation was to approve. However, the project was rejected by the Task Group because it was felt to be a parish council responsibility.
030	Pandora – laptop and	£20,000	£15,000	Amount requested was a mix of capital and revenue spend. The revenue

	outreach provision			exceeded the permitted amount of £5,000. Amount amended accordingly.
035	Sandringham Bowls Club – Restore and maintain playing surface of bowling green	£22,000 for project cost of £21,244	£21,244	Applicant rounded figures up. Can only claim for maximum project cost. Amount amended accordingly.
037	St Margarets with St Nicholas – William Street Car Park resurfacing	£25,000	£25,000	Recommendation was to reject. However, the Task Group supported the wider benefits that the project would bring including the health and safety improvements to the locality.
043	Tilney St Lawrence – Community Winter Warm Hub Space	£6,692 for project cost of £3,762	£3,762	Requested 2 years funding. Criteria is for one year only. Requested amount amended accordingly.
045	St Margarets Church King's Lynn – Walsingham Way Pilgrim Guide	£3,069	£3,069	The application scored below the indicative approval threshold of 50 points. However, the Task Group considered that the wider benefits and value for money justified recommending the application for approval.

3.4 The Task Group's recommendations reflect its consideration of the applications as a whole and are not determined solely by the numerical evaluation score. Where the Task Group amended the officer proposal, the rationale is recorded above to provide a clear audit trail for Cabinet. The final recommendations are set out in Appendices A and B.

4. Options Considered

4.1 Option 1: Approve the Task Group's recommendations

Cabinet may approve the applications recommended for funding, subject to the total awards remaining within the approved £500,000 budget and the satisfactory completion of any specified due diligence or assurance requirements.

4.2 Option 2: Approve the Task Group's recommendations with amendments

Cabinet may approve the Task Group's recommendations subject to amendments, including adding or removing applications, varying the amount awarded to individual applicants or applying additional conditions to an award. Any amended allocation must remain within the approved budget of £500,000, and Cabinet should record the reasons for departing from the Task Group's recommendations.

4.3 Option 3: Refer applications back for further consideration

Cabinet may defer a decision on some or all applications and request that the Task Group or officers undertake further evaluation, seek additional information or provide further assurance before the applications are reconsidered.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 Full Council, at its meeting on 26 February 2026, approved the establishment of a Councillor Community Projects Fund of £500,000 within the 2026/27 budget.

5.2 A total of 48 applications were received, requesting grant funding of £651,833 towards projects with a stated total value of £1,862,983. The total funding requested therefore exceeds the available budget by £151,833.

5.3 Appendix A sets out the applications recommended for approval by the Task Group, with recommended funding totalling £412,676 towards projects with a stated total value of £1,111,865. Appendix B sets out those applications not recommended for funding.

5.4 If Cabinet approves the Task Group's recommendations in full, £87,324 of the £500,000 fund would remain unallocated. Cabinet may amend the recommendations provided that the total value of awards does not exceed the approved budget.

5.5 Any award approved by Cabinet will remain subject to the applicant satisfying the requirements of the scheme and providing any outstanding documentation, evidence, clarification or assurance requested by the Council. No payment will be released until the relevant requirements have been satisfactorily completed. This is consistent with the proposed approach to conditional awards and due diligence set out elsewhere in the report.

5.6 Where an applicant does not satisfactorily meet these requirements, the funding will not be released and will remain within the Community Project Fund. Any funding that remains unallocated following Cabinet's decision, together with any funding subsequently released in this way, will remain within the Fund. Any further use or allocation of these funds will be subject to a further decision in accordance with the Council's appropriate decision-making arrangements.

5.7 Successful applicants will be issued with a formal grant offer setting out the approved purpose, amount awarded, payment arrangements, delivery and

monitoring requirements and the circumstances in which funding may be withheld or recovered. Expenditure will be monitored against the approved Fund and in accordance with the conditions of award.

6. HR Implications

6.1 None.

7. Policy Implications

7.1 None

8. Climate Change and Environmental Implications and considerations

8.1 The fund itself does not give rise to a single direct environmental impact. Environmental effects will depend upon the nature of the individual projects supported. Some applications may deliver positive environmental outcomes, including improvements to green spaces, energy efficiency or local sustainability.

8.2 Applicants will remain responsible for securing all necessary planning permissions, environmental consents, licences and other regulatory approvals. Where relevant, environmental risks and benefits will be considered as part of the assessment and conditions of award.

9. Statutory and Legal Implications

9.1 None

10. Local Government Reorganisation Implications

10.1 None

11. Health and Safety Implications

11.1 None

12. Consultees

12.1 The establishment of the fund was approved as part of the Council's consideration of its 2026/27 budget. The scheme was subsequently promoted through Borough Councillors and published information.

12.2 Evidence of local engagement, consultation, demand or community support has been considered within the Community Need and Evidence criterion. The nature and extent of that evidence varies between applications and is reflected in the individual evaluation scores and application summaries.

13. Equality Impact Assessment

13.1 The fund is intended to support projects that deliver benefits for local communities, including projects promoting health, wellbeing, accessibility and social inclusion. Individual applications have been considered against the published criteria, including the nature and reach of the proposed community benefit.

13.2 Applicants are responsible for ensuring that funded activities and facilities comply with relevant equality and accessibility requirements. Where appropriate, specific equality or accessibility matters may be addressed through conditions attached to an award.

13.3 Information about the scheme was published on the Council's website and promoted through Borough Councillors within their wards. Support was available where assistance was required with the administration of an application.

14. Risk Management Implications

14.1 Applications have been evaluated by officers against the published eligibility requirements and evaluation criteria. The principal risks associated with the scheme are that a project is not delivered as proposed, costs increase, match funding is not secured, required permissions or legal interests are not in place, expenditure is not eligible, or the intended community benefits are not achieved.

14.2 Where an application is recommended subject to further clarification or assurance, this will be identified as a condition of the award. No payment will be made until the relevant requirements have been satisfied to the Council's satisfaction.

14.3 Each successful applicant will be required to enter into a grant agreement or accept a formal grant offer setting out the approved purpose, the amount awarded, the period for delivery, monitoring and evidence requirements, and the circumstances in which funding may be withheld or recovered. This will include provisions relating to unspent grant, expenditure outside the approved purpose, failure to complete the project and failure to comply with the terms of the award.

14.4 Applicants will remain responsible for securing all necessary permissions, consents, licences, funding and legal agreements required to deliver their projects. Approval of grant funding by the Council will not constitute approval under any separate regulatory or statutory process.

14.5 Appropriate due diligence and proportionate monitoring will be undertaken, having regard to the value, nature and risk of each award.

15. Conclusion

15.1 The fund has attracted significant interest, with 48 applications seeking £651,833 against an available budget of £500,000. The applications have been evaluated against the published criteria to support a consistent and evidence-based prioritisation process.

15.2 Cabinet is invited to consider the Task Group's recommendations and determine which applications should be approved. In doing so, Cabinet should have regard to the evaluation scores, the eligibility and deliverability of individual projects, any outstanding conditions or assurance requirements, the overall distribution of awards and the requirement to remain within the approved budget.

LIST OF APPENDICES
• Appendix A – Bids recommended for approval • Appendix B – Bids recommended for Rejection • Appendix C – Summary of Bid Supporting Information • Appendix D – Applicant Submission Guidance

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS
• The Budget, Financial Strategy and Council Tax Resolution – Council 26 February 2026 • Community Project Fund and Budget Setting Task group

PRE SCREENING EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

For equalities profile information please visit Norfolk Insight - Demographics and Statistics - Data Observatory				
Name of policy/service/function	Councillor Community Project Fund 2026/2027			
Is this a new or existing policy/ service/function? *(tick as appropriate)*	New	✓	Existing	
Brief summary/description of the main aims of the policy/service/function being screened. **Please state if this policy/service is rigidly constrained by statutory obligations, and identify relevant legislation.**	The fund is intended to support projects that deliver benefits for local communities, including projects promoting health, wellbeing, accessibility and social inclusion.			

Who has been consulted as part of the development of the policy/service/function? – new only *(identify stakeholders consulted with)*	Applicants are responsible for ensuring that funded activities and facilities comply with relevant equality and accessibility requirements. Where appropriate, specific equality or accessibility matters may be addressed through conditions attached to an award.

Question	**Answer**				
1. Is there any reason to believe that the policy/service/function could have a specific impact on people from one or more of the following groups, for example, because they have particular needs, experiences, issues or priorities or in terms of ability to access the service? **Please tick the relevant box for each group.** **NB. Equality neutral means no negative impact on any group.** ***If potential adverse impacts are identified, then a full Equality Impact Assessment (Stage 2) will be required.*** ****For more information on health inequalities please visit <u>The King's Fund</u>***		Positive	Negative	Neutral	Unsure
	Age			✓	
	Disability			✓	
	Sex			✓	
	Gender Re-assignment			✓	
	Marriage/civil partnership			✓	
	Pregnancy & maternity			✓	
	Race			✓	
	Religion or belief			✓	
	Sexual orientation			✓	
	Armed forces community			✓	
	Care leavers			✓	
	Health inequalities*			✓	
	Other (eg low income, caring responsibilities)			✓	

Please provide a brief explanation of the answers above:
Individual applications have been considered against the published criteria, including the nature and reach of the proposed community benefit.

Question	**Answer**	**Comments**
2. Is the proposed policy/service likely to affect relations between certain equality communities or to damage relations between the equality communities and the Council, for example because it is seen as favouring a particular community or denying opportunities to another?	~~Yes /~~ No	The scheme was widely publicised, with a long window for bid submission from 31 July 2026 to 2 October 2026.



3. Could this policy/service be perceived as impacting on communities differently?	~~Yes /~~ No	This grant fund is offered in addition to existing services and funding schemes and therefore broadens access to funding.	
If 'yes' to questions 2 - 3 a full impact assessment will be required unless comments are provided to explain why this is not felt necessary: **Decision agreed by EWG member: ……..**			
4. Are any impacts identified above minor and if so, can these be eliminated or reduced by minor actions?	Yes / No	**Actions:**	
If yes, please agree actions with a member of the Corporate Equalities Working Group and list agreed actions in the comments section		**Actions agreed by EWG member: ……**	
5. Is the policy/service specifically designed to tackle evidence of disadvantage or potential discrimination?	Yes / No	**Please provide brief summary:**	
Assessment completed by: Name	**Carl Holland**		
Job title	**Assistant Director Finance**		
Date completed	**22 October 2026**		
Reviewed by EWG member	Louise Gayton	**Date**	27/10/2026
✓ **Please tick to confirm completed EIA Pre-screening Form has been shared with Corporate Policy (corporate.policy@west-norfolk.gov.uk)**			