

Report to: Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change

Date of meeting: 14 June 2022

By: Assistant Chief Executive

Title: Partnerships for People and Place project: award of grant

Purpose: To seek the agreement of the Lead Member to enter into a grant agreement with CA1066 in relation to the delivery of the Partnerships for People and Place project

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change is recommended to:

- 1) Approve the entering into of a grant between East Sussex County Council and Citizens Advice 1066 (CA1066) for delivery of stage one of the East Sussex County Partnerships for People and Place project; and
 - 2) Delegate authority to the Assistant Chief Executive in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer to agree the amount of the grant, the terms of the agreement and whether to extend the agreement to include stages two, three and four of the programme and the level of grant awarded to CA1066 for those stages.
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1 Background

- 1.1 In July 2021, East Sussex County Council was one of 34 local authorities invited by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) to fund a place-based project in their area, which would benefit from joined-up working between the local community and local and central government departments as part of the Partnerships for People and Place (PfPP) programme.
- 1.2 The overarching aim of the PfPP programme is to test a new collaborative approach to policy design and delivery through better co-ordination within and between central government and local places and to determine whether this approach improves efficiency and outcomes of place-based policy.
- 1.3 East Sussex County Council was one of 13 local authorities shortlisted for the programme in November 2021. Our selected proposal was to undertake a project with partners from Hastings Borough Council and the voluntary and community sector focusing on tackling fuel poverty and energy efficiency within the private rented sector in Hastings and St Leonards. This proposal was co-designed by officers from our environment and Public Health teams and officers from Hastings Borough Council's climate change and housing renewal teams, in association with partners from the voluntary and community sector. The interventions identified through this process should secure both improvements to health and environmental outcomes and generate and retain value locally.
- 1.4 Shortlisted authorities were invited to submit a delivery plan to DLUHC. Our submitted plan (Appendix 1) has been approved in principle by DLUHC. They have confirmed that we will receive the full amount of funding of £335,000 that we requested as part of our delivery plan.
- 1.5 The next stage for us and our partners is to begin delivery of the project, which will be overseen by a partnership governance arrangement in line with the PfPP criteria.

2 Supporting information

Project focus

- 2.1 The focus on improving energy efficiency and fuel poverty in the private rented sector was selected as it meets the key criteria for PfPP and supports our corporate work on climate

change. The project can build on existing interventions, has links to central government priorities, and provides opportunities to overcome some of the barriers caused by a lack of joined up working. These barriers include siloed working, the stop-go nature of many programmes, including those funded by central government, and that levers to drive change are held by different organisations at different levels (national vs local). Unblocking these barriers could lead to a more sustained programme of activity which achieves long-term benefits to households living in fuel poverty and for the environment.

- 2.2 The PfPP project requires a focus on a 'hyper-local' area, such as a small number of wards. Castle, Central St. Leonards, and Gensing wards were selected as the target areas for our proposal because data shows that these wards have a large proportion of privately rented accommodation compared to national and local averages, high levels of households living in fuel poverty, a high proportion of homes with poor energy efficiency (with an Energy Performance Certificate score of either F or G), and a higher than average proportion of residents who have a limiting long-term illness or disability. It is anticipated that learning from this project will be applicable to other areas across East Sussex.

Proposed project delivery

- 2.3 The project runs from April 2022 to March 2023 and will be delivered in four stages:

Stage One: Engagement with landlords and tenants to better understand the current barriers to making energy efficiency improvements in properties and the impact of housing standards on tenants' health and wellbeing;

Stage Two: Working collaboratively with central government partners, analyse responses gathered during stage one and co-design changes and flexibilities to the implementation of current programmes and funding eligibility requirements for energy efficiency improvements in target households;

Stage Three: Pilot the delivery of the flexible approach with tenants and landlords to increase the number of energy efficiency improvements, reduce fuel poverty and improve tenant health;

Stage Four: Evaluate and capture learning to inform a more sustained programme of activity in the local area and elsewhere.

- 2.4 As this is an experimental pilot it is possible that we will need to amend the planned activities with tenants and landlords following the engagement activities and discussions with central government partners during the early stages of the project. A degree of flexibility will be built into our project plan to accommodate these possible changes, and there will be robust oversight of the project through our planned governance arrangements to mitigate any associated risks. As the aim of the project is to test what is possible, DLUHC have confirmed such changes will not negatively affect their evaluation of the project.
- 2.5 As the lead authority, East Sussex County Council will be responsible for the project including all project activity, engagement with central government, and the evaluation process. However, working with partners with experience of local issues and networks will be key to ensuring the project successfully engages with local landlords and tenants.
- 2.6 To ensure effective delivery within the timescales available for the project, it is proposed that East Sussex County Council provide funding to a local organisation, Citizens Advice 1066 (CA1066), to lead on stage one of the project. Stage one will cover the initial engagement activities with tenants and landlords. CA1066 are uniquely placed to engage with Hastings residents for several reasons: they provide an established community service and have a strong reputation for effective liaison with residents, including those who have additional needs; they have knowledge of current government policy and interventions relating to fuel poverty, and they have experience of providing advice and guidance to residents living in a cold home via the Warm Home Check service. In addition, CA1066 recently supported a similar, smaller project focused on energy efficiency improvements in the local area, the learning from which can be used to inform the engagement activities as part of PfPP.
- 2.7 CA1066 have indicated a cost of £44,544 to deliver stage one of the project, which covers all staffing and resource costs. We consider that CA1066's proposals represent value for money and that their plan covers all work required for stage one of the project. A consultant with experience in delivering place-based projects who worked with us on the initial bid and

project setup, and will continue to work with us throughout PfPP, has reviewed CA1066's proposed bid and confirmed that it is well-planned and appropriately costed. The nature and amount of the support required for stages two to four of the project is dependent on the initial outcomes of stage one, and therefore will be reviewed at that time. Approval is sought to award a discretionary grant to and enter into a grant agreement with CA1066, initially this will be for the delivery of stage one, following which their involvement will be reviewed. It is recommended that authority be given to the Assistant Chief Executive in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer to decide at that time whether to extend the involvement of CA1066 to stages two, three and four and, if so, to determine the level of grant to be awarded for those stages.

- 2.9 The governance arrangements for the project include a Local Place Working Group who will be responsible for the delivery of project activity, a Local Place Board who will monitor project activity and take key strategic decisions in relation to actions and expenditure, and a PfPP Board who will be responsible for considering how to sustain the central-local partnership beyond the lifetime of the PfPP project (see Appendix 2 for a diagram of the governance arrangements). If the grant funding is approved CA1066 will be part of the Local Place Working Group, with work on stage one of the project overseen by the Local Place Board.
- 2.10 The Local Place Board, who have reviewed and approved CA1066's proposals, comprises the following members:
- Philip Baker, Assistant Chief Executive and PfPP Senior Responsible Officer, ESCC
 - Victoria Beard - Head of Performance, Research and Intelligence and PfPP Data and Evaluation Lead, ESCC
 - David Bishop - Health Improvement Principal (Communities and Settings), ESCC
 - Kate Hall-Wright, PfPP Policy Lead, DLUHC
 - Lizzy Hawkins – Assistant Director, People, Places and Communities, DLUHC
 - Rachel Jarvis – Head of Finance (Planning and Reporting) and PfPP Finance Lead, ESCC
 - Harriet Judson, Executive Support Manager and PfPP Project Lead, ESCC.

3 Conclusion and recommendations

- 3.1 DLUHC have approved our delivery plan for the Partnerships for People and Place project, which focuses on improving energy efficiency and fuel poverty in the private rented sector in Hastings.
- 3.3 The Lead Member is asked to note the project summary and approve the entering into a grant agreement with Citizens Advice 1066 to enable the delivery of stage one of the Partnerships for People and Place project. It is also recommended that the Lead Member delegate authority to the Assistant Chief Executive to agree the terms of the grant agreement, and to agree to extend the agreement if considered appropriate after delivery of stage one, including the amount of funding to be allocated to each of the phases.

PHILIP BAKER

Assistant Chief Executive

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LOCAL MEMBERS:

Councillor Godfrey Daniel - Braybrooke and Castle

Councillor Trevor Webb – Central St Leonards and Gensing

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Partnerships for People and Place delivery plan

Appendix 2 – Governance arrangements diagram