

<b>North Norfolk Sustainable Communities Fund</b>	
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<p>The current focus of the North Norfolk Sustainable Communities Fund (NNSCF) is to support priorities in the Corporate Plan 2019 – 2023 in relation to Quality of Life, Climate, Coast and the Environment</p> <p>This report provides an overview of the NNSCF in the last financial year 2022/23.</p> <p>The new Corporate Plan 2023 – 2027 identifies Developing Our Communities as a priority. There is a stated commitment within this priority to continue to deliver the Sustainable Communities Fund focussing on community activities for all.</p> <p>In order to ensure that the NNSCF is aligned to the priorities and commitment in the new Corporate Plan a review of the focus and funding of the NNSCF is required.</p>
<b>Options considered</b>	<p>The overview of the NNSCF for the financial period 2022 – 2023 is for information only.</p> <p>The Corporate Plan 2023 – 2027 commits to continue to deliver the NNSCF. A review of the NNSCF is needed to ensure it achieves this commitment. This will include the identification of finance to support the fund.</p> <p>A commitment has been made to continue the NNSCF. To ensure the fund is appropriately financed and is focussed on meeting the current and emerging needs of communities a review of the NNSCF is essential.</p> <p>Following a review of the NNSCF a further report will be submitted to Cabinet. This will identify a range of options which could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not continuing with the NNSCF</li> <li>• Changing the focus of the NNSCF</li> <li>• Reducing total NNSCF budget</li> <li>• Reducing maximum grant</li> </ul>
<b>Consultation(s)</b>	Initial discussion with Assistant Directors Karen Hill and Rob Young.
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p>Cabinet to receive the report and note the contribution that the NNSCF makes on Council priorities in respect of Quality of Life and Climate, Coast and Environment.</p> <p>To approve a review of the NNSCF to ensure the achievement of the focus identified in the Corporate Plan 2023 – 2027.</p>
<b>Reasons for recommendations</b>	<p>To ensure the NNSCF reflects the Developing Communities priorities in the Corporate Plan 2023 – 2027.</p> <p>To ensure the fund is appropriately financed and is focussed on meeting the current and emerging needs of communities</p>
<b>Background papers</b>	N/A

<b>Wards affected</b>	All wards
<b>Cabinet member(s)</b>	Cllr. Tim Adams
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Sonia Shuter Early Help & Prevention Manager

<b>Links to key documents:</b>	
Corporate Plan:	Developing Communities
Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)	Unknown until review is carried out.
Council Policies & Strategies	Corporate Plan 2023 - 2027

<b>Corporate Governance:</b>	
Is this a key decision	No
Has the public interest test been applied	Exempt
Details of any previous decision(s) on this matter	Cabinet Report 2020 – Recommended renaming the fund from the Big Society Fund to the North Norfolk Sustainable Communities Fund. Refocussed to align with Corporate Plan Priorities 2019 – 2023.

## 1. Purpose of the report

To provide an overview of the North Norfolk Sustainable Communities Fund (NNSCF) during the financial year 2022/23.

The report includes pie charts with the following information:

- Total number of organisations applying to the NNSCF
- Number of grants awarded by amount, organisational type and Corporate Plan 2019-2023 priority.

The Corporate Plan 2023 – 2027 confirms the Council's intention to continue to deliver the NNSCF with a focus on community activities for all.

The rationale for a review of the fund including future finance is to align the NNSCF, its structure and focus to achieve Corporate Priorities and ensure the fund meets community need, delivers community benefit and is an effective and efficient use of Council resources.

## 2. Introduction & Background

- 2.1 The North Norfolk Sustainable Communities Fund (NNSCF) was launched in June 2020. Sustainable Communities are places in which people want to live and work, now and in the future. They should meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, are sensitive to the environment, and contribute to a high quality of life.

- 2.2 The aim of the NNSCF fund, which had environmental and community sustainability at its heart, is to help build strong and sustainable communities and ensure the long-term future and wellbeing of communities in North Norfolk.

The fund helps communities to develop new and innovative projects which will improve the environment as well as the health and social wellbeing.

- 2.3 Funding to support the NNSCF is taken from accrued community reserves. In the last financial year funding of £77,960 from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSP) was used to fund eligible NNSCF thus reducing the amount taken from community reserves. Total funding available for the financial period 2022/23 was £302,960, being £225,000 planned use of the reserves plus the UK Shared Prosperity funding of £77,960. Any unspent budget during the year will be carried forward.

### **3. North Norfolk Sustainable Communities Fund (NNSCF) 2022/2023**

- 3.1 The NNSCF Panel is politically balanced and consists of seven members of NNDC appointed by NNDC's Cabinet

The Panel meets quarterly in June, September, December and March to consider grant applications over £1,000 and up to a maximum limit of £15,000. The Panel recommends that grant applications are either approved, not approved or deferred. Decisions on grants recommended for approval will identify the amount of funding to be awarded and any conditions that should be applied to the grant award. Recommendations made by the Panel will be submitted to the Leader of the Council, as the Senior Executive Member for approval and authorisation within one week of the Panel meeting.

The Chair, Vice Chair of the Panel or a substitute Panel Member meet monthly to consider any received grant applications under £1,000. The Chair and or Vice Chair of the Panel recommends that grant applications under £1,000 are approved, not approved or deferred. Decisions on grants recommended for approval will identify the amount of funding to be awarded and any conditions that should be applied to the grant award. Recommendations are submitted to the Leader of the Council as the Senior Executive Member for approval and authorisation within one week of the recommendation being made.

- 3.2 NNSCF Applications

During the last financial year twenty-nine organisations in total submitted grant applications to the NNSCF requesting funding of £248,128.42

Of the twenty-nine applications, one was subsequently withdrawn by the applicant. Twenty-three applications were awarded a grant and five applications were not approved.

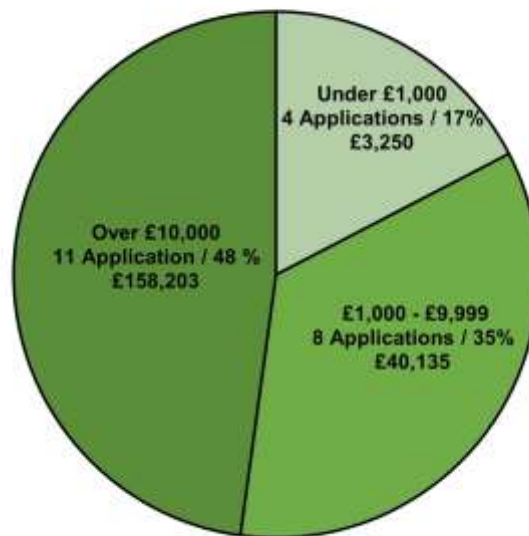
Applications are only submitted to the Panel for consideration if they are eligible and meet the purpose of the NNSCF. The Panel recommend whether a grant is approved and the amount of funding to be awarded.

The main reason grants are not approved includes the applying body having sufficient reserves to deliver the project without a grant from the NNSCF,

insufficient evidence of need, and lack of community engagement or the demonstration of sustainable community benefit.

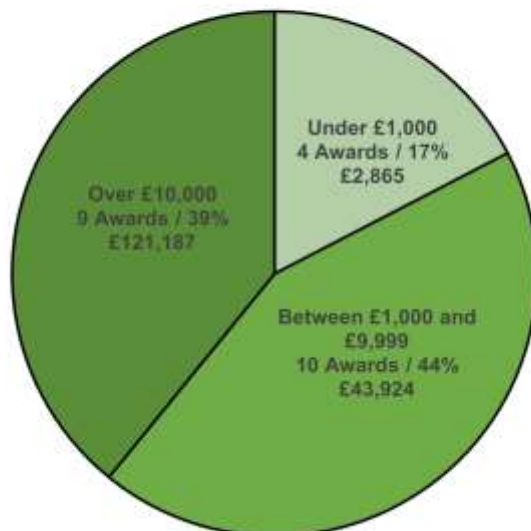
3.3 Successful applicants are not always awarded all of the funding they request due to e.g. level of reserves the applicants have available to them. The total amount requested by the twenty-three organisations awarded a grant was £201,588, but not all of this was awarded.

**North Norfolk Sustainable Communities Fund  
Breakdown of Grants Requested  
2022-2023**



3.4 The total amount awarded to the twenty-three organisations was £167,976.

**North Norfolk Sustainable Communities Fund  
Breakdown of Awards Made  
2022-2023**



3.5 The projects for which the twenty-three grants were awarded included:

- Environmental improvements to outside community areas
- Installation of energy efficient heating, lighting and insulation in community buildings
- New and improved sports and play facilities
- Projects to increase accessibility including toilet facilities
- Community equipment such as Defibrillators

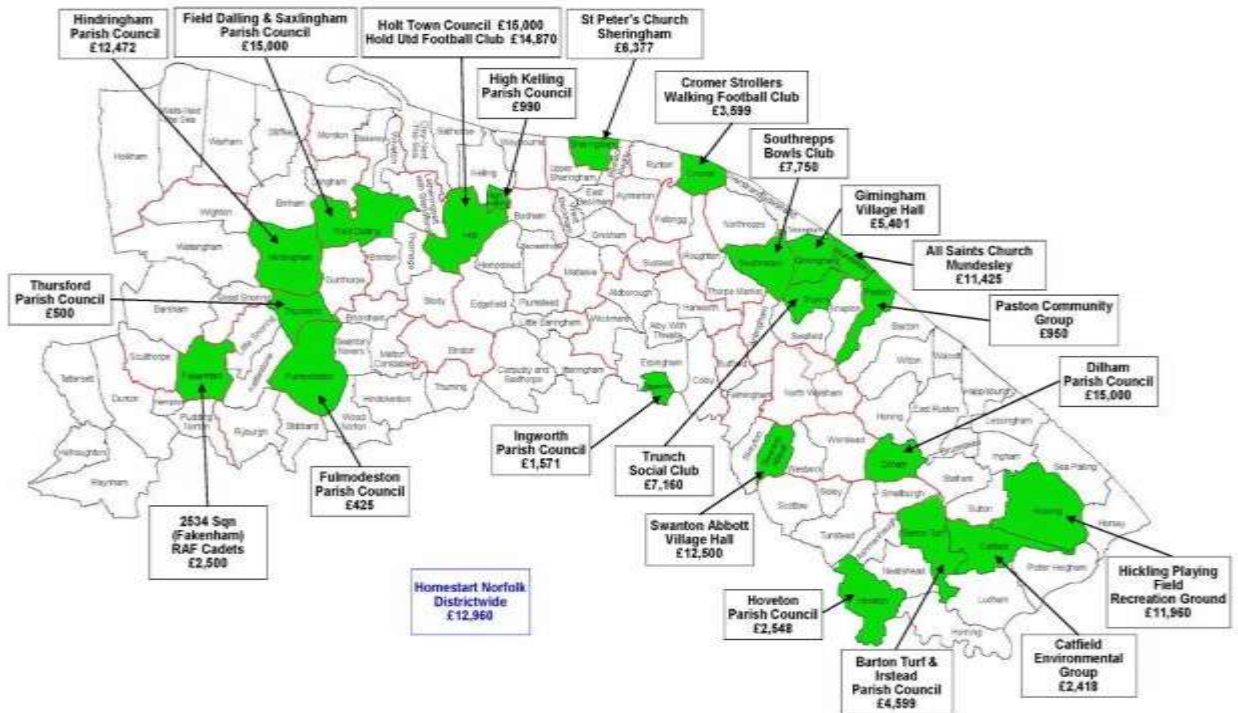
3.6 The majority of the projects awarded funding are for improvement works to assets. There is however, an increasing number of enquiries for revenue projects, predominantly those that deliver a service to vulnerable groups.

3.7 The application form requires applicant organisations to evidence the need and demonstrate community support for the project. Whilst a community may support e.g. improvements to a community building to make it more accessible or energy efficient, the request for support for the project is from the organisation requiring the funding.

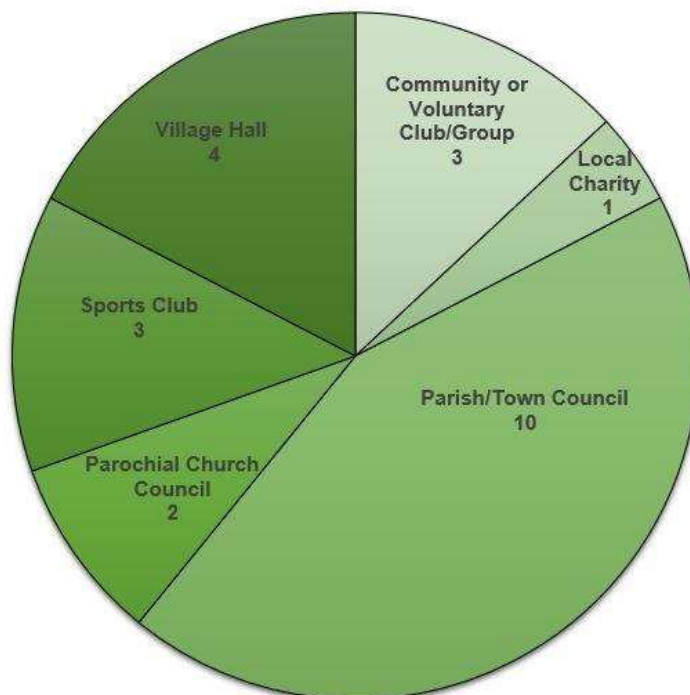
3.8 If communities were asked about the priorities, changes and improvements they would like to see in their local area, the response may be different. Therefore, it is suggested that currently applications for funding from the NNSCF are predominantly led and influenced by the organisations applying to the fund rather than by the community itself.

## Parishes awarded a North Norfolk Sustainable Communities Fund grant

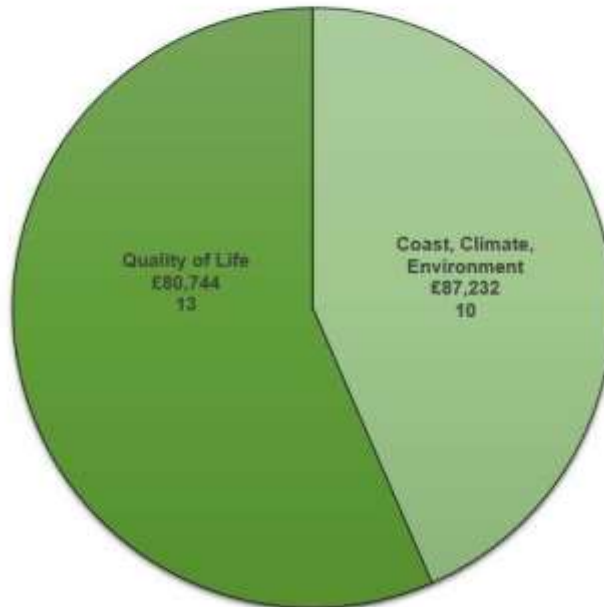
North Norfolk Sustainable Communities Fund  
Grant Awards 2022-2023



Organisations Applying to the North Norfolk Sustainable Communities Fund  
2022-2023



North Norfolk Sustainable Communities Fund  
Grants Awarded By Corporate Plan Area  
2022-23



#### 4 Corporate Priorities

The proposal to review the existing NNSCF is predominantly in response to the priorities in relation to the NNSCF identified in the Corporate Plan 2023 – 2027.

Clarification is required as to what is meant in the Corporate Plan in relation to the NNSCF focusing on Community Activities for All.

A review is also considered appropriate to ensure the fund responds to community need and supports projects that make a real difference to communities particularly in response to the challenges of the past three years, e.g. increased enquiries for ongoing revenue funding which in its current format the NNSCF can't support.

The NNSCF budget for 2023/24 is £225,000 plus any contribution from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. There is currently no planned allocation to the fund after 2023/24.

The current community reserve for the NNSCF and Community Transport grants are taken as of 1/4/2023 is £406,550, subject to any adjustment if required as final accounts for previous years are audited and signed off.

Once the full allocated budget for the NNSCF and Community Transport is fully used the NNSCF will cease to operate. A review will need to identify options for funding of the NNSCF for it to continue.

It is suggested that the review of the purpose of the NNSCF could form part of the Workshops taking place in September 2023 to consider the Corporate Plans second year Action Plan in relation to Developing Our Communities.

## **5 Financial and Resource Implications**

The NNSCF is currently administered as part of the role of the Early Help & Prevention Business Support Officer and the Early Help & Prevention Manger. No additional resources are required to administer the fund in its current format.

The non-recurring funding in the Community Reserves which supports the NNSCF based on current budget allocation will be spent by within the next one to two years.

A view will need to be taken as to how much, if any, funding can be set aside to continue funding this scheme. This will depend on the financial position of the Council going forwards. Members will need to decide where to allocate funding if resources are limited.

## **6 Legal Implications**

There are not considered to be any legal implications.

## **7 Risks**

The review of the NNSCF for the period 2022/23 is for information only.

The recommendation that a review of the NNSCF is carried out will ensure it contributes to the Developing Communities priority in the Corporate Plan 2023 – 2027.

There is a need to identify future funding for the NNSCF. The identified grant budget for the current and next financial year if fully allocated will utilise all of the remaining community reserves.

There is a reputational risk to the Council in terms of its stated intention in the Corporate Plan for the NNSCF to continue if ongoing funding is not identified.

## **8 Net ZeroTarget**

Eligibility criteria to the NNSCF includes projects that support the environment and biodiversity as well as those that reduce carbon footprint. The NNSCF contributes towards Net Zero targets.

## **9 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion**

Considered but no issues identified

## **10 Community Safety issues**

Considered but no issues identified

## **11 Conclusion and Recommendations**

The North Norfolk Sustainable Communities Fund and its predecessor the Big Society Fund have awarded grants to support sustainable community projects since 2012.

The overview of the last year financial year of the NNSCF is for information only.



The recommendation to review the NNSCF is to ensure that its remit enables funding to be directed to projects that respond to current and emerging community need and on achieving commitments in relation to the NNSCF identified in the Corporate Plan 2023 – 2027.

The review of the purpose of the NNSCF could form part of the Workshops taking place in September 2023 to consider the Corporate Plans second year Action Plan in relation to Developing Our Communities.

Following the review of the NNSCF, a further report will be presented to Cabinet, which will identify a range of options and recommendations for the future of the NNSCF.