

## Eastern Area Committee

### Agenda Item 10

<b>Meeting Date</b>	Thursday 17 December 2020
<b>Report Title</b>	Funding and work planning
<b>Lead Members</b>	Cllrs Denise Knights and Julian Saunders

### Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

1. That the Committee consider how to allocate funding for the 2020/21 financial year, how to approach this process in future years, and develop a plan of work for the 2021/22 financial year.

### Background

#### Funding

2. The twelve councillors who make up the Eastern Area Committee have funding of £48,000 annually to award to projects or activities in their area. This is calculated on the basis of £4k for each councillor. The funding is not like members grants, any portion of the funding can only be allocated with the agreement of the committee on a majority vote. The funding has to be allocated, but not spent by the end of the financial year.
3. The initial view of the Chair and Vice-Chair is that in future years it will be desirable to try and allocate all or a large part of the funding to projects that benefit the whole of the area. But that for this financial year a more contingent approach might be more appropriate because of time constraints.
4. We are therefore proposing that in the lead up to meeting on 23 March 2021, members of the committee liaise with their colleagues and come forward with projects for which they will allocate their funding. The members for Teynham and Lynsted and East Downs wards have already made some suggestions and we think it likely that other groups of committee members will be able to identify projects that they would like to see funded.
5. To avoid the risk of the committee rejecting project ideas at their March meeting and therefore not spending its funding allocation, we would propose that project proposals are submitted well in advance using a standard form and then reviewed by the Chair, the Vice-Chair and officers in order to identify whether it is likely to be supported by a majority of other members of the committee. If it feels there is a risk that it won't be, the submitters will be encouraged to revise their proposal and reminded that if it doesn't gain the support of other members they are likely to find the funding allocated to other projects for this year, as decided by a majority of the

committee. We would want to encourage spending on one off projects, rather than ideas that will require ongoing revenue spending.

## **Work planning**

6. The Chair and Vice Chair are keen to ensure that the committee keeps a good focus on issues that are of strategic importance to the eastern area, most appropriately dealt with at an area level and supportive of the corporate objectives of the administration rather than getting diverted onto issues which are better dealt with by individual members, parish councils or the administration as a whole or spending all its time responding to consultative items from the Cabinet.
7. In order to facilitate this we would propose to develop a plan of work for 2021-22 – a set of topics we will address through the committee agenda during the year. Where a topic has been agreed into the work plan we would ask the original proposer to prepare a short paper for the meeting identifying why the issue needs to be discussed and what outcomes they would expect to come out of the discussion. We will also need to be responsive to items that come forward in the public forum and from parish councils.
8. Topics that have been proposed by members so far are:
  - better coordination of youth activities and support;
  - relationships with Network Rail;
  - benefits to be gained from the Cleeve Hill Solar Farm development; and
  - review of boundaries of Faversham Town Council area to reflect growth of town.
9. If members or parish councils identify other items that need to come forward during the year for discussion it is proposed that they mail the chair, including the vice chair and the relevant officer in the correspondence. Prior to the committee meeting the chair, the vice chair and the officers servicing the meeting will finalise agenda items at an agenda setting meeting.

## **Points for consideration**

10. Are the Committee:
  - a. happy with the suggested process for allocating funding proposed for the 2020/21 and 2021/22 financial years?
  - b. content with the proposal to develop a work plan for 2021/22? If so, what provisional list of items should be considered for inclusion at the meeting scheduled for 23 March 2021 and what process should be agreed for items to go on the agenda?