Agenda item 3

For decision – Match funding for Frome River Catchment Partnership Project
Authors: Hannah Stopford, Community Partnerships and Development Manager, Rob Holden, Environment Manager

Summary (incl. recommendation)

This paper sets out the background to the match funding capacity in this year's grants budget and recommends committing £5k to match fund the Somerset Frome River Partnership Project – a collaborative partnership that supports FTC's ambition to improve the ecological health and biodiversity of the River Frome.

Recommendation
1. Agree to commit £5k from the Grants budget to support the Somerset Frome River Catchment Partnership.

Match funding for Strategic Partnership Projects - Background

As part of our response to the recommendations contained within the Funding Needs Analysis that FTC commissioned last year, the 2025-2027 Council Plan specifies an objective to: "Shape a strategic approach to supporting local projects that fill identified gaps in provision and attract grant funding."

Within the current work programme and budget, £10k of the allocated grants budget was earmarked to match-fund collaborative and partner-led projects, aligned with our priorities, thus enabling those projects to attract further external funding.

Frome River Catchment Project

This is a partnership project between FTC, Friends of Frome River, Frome Families for the Future, Somerset Wildlife Trust, and other organisations.

By committing £5,000 of match funding from Frome Town Council, the partnership would be eligible to apply for a larger grant from the Bristol Avon Catchment Partnership Fund. This would support the re-establishment of the **Somerset Frome Catchment Partnership**, with the aim to enable future projects to improve water quality, restore biodiversity, strengthen climate resilience and secure larger external funding streams for nature recovery across the Somerset Frome catchment.

The funding would contribute towards a catchment coordinator to enable partnership meetings, stakeholder engagement, partnership planning and the development of key strategic documents including a Catchment Vision, Project Masterplan, Monitoring & Evaluation Plan and Funding Plan.

Other options considered	None
Key considerations for the Council	To commit grant funding to this project.
Consultation and feedback	Alongside partners – including the River Vision project's survey run by Frome Families for the Future, Friends of the River Frome River Strategy, etc.
Links to Council Plan and Medium-Term Financial Plan	"Shape a strategic approach to supporting local projects that fill identified gaps in provision and attract grant funding." "Campaign to improve the ecological health and biodiversity of the River Frome."
Financial and Risk Implications	The match funding is part of the allocated budget in this year's work programme (£5k of the £10k budgeted). Risk would be that the project isn't successful in the larger grant application, but in that case the match funding then wouldn't be taken up.
Legal / HR Implications	None.
Equalities Implications	None.
Community Safety Implications	None
Climate Change and Sustainability Implications	Positive – the project would enhance efforts of the 'Cultivate Environmental Sustainability' aim.
Health and Safety Implications	None
Constitutional Requirements	None
Background Papers	Funding Needs Analysis
Report Sign-Off	Peter Wheelhouse, Town Clerk 28/10/26

Recommendation

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