

Title: Additional Grant to Community Village Shop, Norton Lindsey
Lead Officer: Chris Elliott/Jon Dawson
Portfolio Holder: Councillor Hales/Falp
Wards of the District directly affected: Budbrooke

Summary

The Council agreed a grant toward a Community Village Shop in Norton Lindsey forming part of a wider community hub including a pub, in 2017. At that time a legal agreement was sought which took a long time to resolve and then the pandemic hit which has prevented the proposal from progressing. The local community want, and are ready, to implement the proposal but costs have risen since the original quote and they are now in need of a further £36,794 in addition to the £38,500 (excl VAT) previously granted, totalling £75,294. It is proposed that the grant award be made subject to the usual pre-conditions about sign off associated with RUCIS grants. It is proposed that this be funded from the 2021 RUCIS Scheme budget.

Recommendation(s)

- (1) That an additional grant of £36,794 be awarded to Norton Lindsey Community Pub (NLCP), in addition to the previously awarded £38,500, to be funded as an exception from the existing 2021/22 RUCIS scheme budget subject to the usual conditions and processes for RUCIS grants also applying.
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1 Background/Information

- 1.1.1 In March 2017, the then Executive agreed to award £38,500 as grant for the establishment of a community village shop in Norton Lindsey as part of the wider proposal for a community pub/community hub. The grant was subject to a legal agreement which took till November 2018 to be signed off. The legal agreement was in effect an attempt at a clawback on the property should the project fold.
- 1.1.2 Precedence was given to establishing the pub element before putting the shop element into operation. Then the pandemic hit, and the Council stopped its grants for 2020/21 to focus upon the emergency needs of the community but which have now been restored for 2021/22. The NLCP has re-approached the Council with an updated Business Plan and has set out that since the original request, costs have escalated and as the local community has given a lot already to local initiatives and so is unable to make much additional contribution.

1.2 Updated Grant Application

- 1.2.1 A revised grant application has been made and was accompanied by a Business Plan as is usually required. This has been assessed by Jon Dawson who manages these applications, and an updated plan has been given following the feedback given (see Appendix 1). This Business Plan illustrates a proposal that

carries a small risk as the shop will be run by a retailer based in Snitterfield. Although this is an exception the processes and conditions as usually apply to RUCIS applications should also apply in this case.

- 1.2.2 The rationale for supporting this scheme is to help the sustainability of community in community development and environmental terms as it would provide an additional service to villagers without them having to travel and this is especially relevant to those who don't have access to cars.

1.3 Funding

- 1.3.1 It is proposed that the additional £36,794 be funded from the existing RUCIS budget for 2021/22 which has £76,567 remaining after the other grants on this agenda are considered. The sum falls outside of the usual terms of the RUCIS scheme but the Council does as an exception grant larger awards where merited. This is one such case. The scheme is being reviewed in any case and will be reported upon separately.

2 Alternative Options available to Cabinet

- 2.1 The Cabinet could decide not to award the grant. Clearly given what has been said by the applicants then the proposal would not be able to go ahead.
- 2.2 The Cabinet could also withdraw the existing grant award and return the sum to its reserves. The proposal would not continue.

3 Consultation and Member's comments

- 3.1 The Local Ward members support the proposal. LCG has been consulted and no objections were raised.

4 Implications of the proposal

4.1 Legal/Human Rights Implications

- 4.1.1 There are no human rights implications, but the previous grant award was subject to an attempted clawback agreement. Officers are of the view that much larger grants have been awarded without any such clawback arrangement and that the time that will be taken to put a revised agreement in place on past performance be such as to lead to a long delay and another lift in costs. Whilst not having an agreement carries a risk it is felt that the requirement for another agreement is disproportionate.

4.2 Financial

- 4.2.1 It is proposed that the additional sum of £36,794 is funded from the existing RUCIS budget which has £76,567 available. The original grant award has been held in reserve so is already provided for. This proposal is a one-off cost so there are no ongoing implications for this Council.

4.3 Council Plan

4.3.1 Fit for the Future (FFF)

- 4.3.2 Warwick District Council's FFF Strategy is designed to deliver the Vision for the District of making it a Great Place to Live, Work and Visit. To that end amongst other things the FFF Strategy contains several Key projects. This report shows the way forward for implementing a significant part of one of the Council's Key objectives

- 4.3.3 The FFF Strategy has 3 strands, People, Services and Money, and each has an external and internal element to it, the details of which can be found [on the](#)

[Council's website](#). The table below illustrates the impact of this proposal if any in relation to the Council's FFF Strategy.

4.4 **FFF Strands**

4.4.1 **External Impacts of Proposal**

People - Health, Homes, Communities – This proposal will make a direct contribution to supporting community development as it has engaged and is led by the local community and will result in a local community asset.

Services - Green, Clean, Safe - The proposal will assist the community of Norton Lindsey to be more sustainable.

Money- Infrastructure, Enterprise, Employment – The proposal will support the very local community and will help to ensure that local people benefit from that improvement.

4.4.2 **Internal impact of the Proposal**

People - Effective Staff – not applicable.

Services - Maintain or Improve Services – not applicable.

Money - Firm Financial Footing over the Longer Term – not applicable.

4.4.3 **Supporting Strategies**

Not applicable.

4.5 **Environmental/Climate Change Implications**

4.5.1 The proposal for the community shop should meet the building requirements for energy efficiency. By providing a village shop it will assist local people especially those without cars to access a very local service and will encourage some existing car journeys out of the village not to be made.

4.6 **Analysis of the effects on Equality**

4.6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not required. However, the end proposal will assist equality issues especially for those with a lack of access to private transport to local shopping facilities.

4.7 **Data Protection**

4.7.1 Not applicable.

4.8 **Health and Wellbeing**

4.8.1 The proposal will encourage an active lifestyle as it will enable the provision of local service accessible without the need to use a car.

5 **Risk Assessment**

5.1 The risk in this proposal lies with the NLCP in that if the shop is unable to cover its costs then it will inevitably close, and a small rental income stream will be lost to the NLCP. However, this is a small risk and as far as a risk to the Council is concerned the risk is reputational in having supported a proposal that ultimately fails. Thus far, the Council has not had that experience with the other community shop it supported in Barford, which is now well established.

6 Conclusion/Reasons for the Recommendation

- 6.1 It is proposed that the additional award be granted to enable the original concept of a community hub in Norton Lindsey to be completed by adding a community village shop. The additional award is small by way of comparison to other awards made so although there is a risk that the community shop will not work it is judged to be an acceptable risk.

Background papers:

Not applicable.

Report Information Sheet

Please complete and submit to Democratic Services with draft report

Committee/Date	Cabinet 4 th November 2021	
Title of report	Additional Grant to Community Village Shop, Norton Lindsey	
Consultations undertaken		
Consultee *required	Date	Details of consultation /comments received
Ward Member(s)	18.10.21	Cllr Matecki and Rhead – support
Portfolio Holder WDC & SDC *	18.10.21	Cllr Falp/Hales – support
Financial Services *	18.10.21	Jon Dawson - support
Legal Services *	18.10.21	Phil Grafton – support
Other Services		-
Chief Executive(s)	18.10.21	Chris Elliott – support
Head of Service(s)	18.10.21	Mike Snow – support subject to budget availability
Section 151 Officer	18.10.21	Mike Snow – as above
Monitoring Officer	18.10.21	Phil Grafton - support
CMT (WDC)	18.10.21	Chris Elliott, Andy Jones, Dave Barber, Tony Perks – support
Leadership Co-ordination Group (WDC)	18.10.21	Support
Other organisations		Not applicable
Final decision by this Committee or rec to another Ctte/Council?		Recommendation to Cabinet Committee
Contrary to Policy/Budget framework		No
Does this report contain exempt info/Confidential? If so, which paragraph(s)?		No
Does this report relate to a key decision (referred to in the Cabinet Forward Plan)?		No
Accessibility Checked?		File/Info/Inspect Document/Check Accessibility