

 Executive – 6 March 2019		Agenda Item No. <h1 style="text-align: center;">6</h1>
Title	Funding for Chase Meadow Community Centre 2019 – 2022	
For further information about this report please contact	Liz Young, Community Partnership Team Health & Community Protection liz.young@warwickdc.gov.uk 01926 456019	
Wards of the District directly affected	Aylesford	
Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006?	No	
Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number	Executive 28 November 2018 Minute number 9.7 (3)	
Background Papers	Executive Report – 12 February 2014 Agenda Item 18F	
Contrary to the policy framework:	No	
Contrary to the budgetary framework:	No	
Key Decision?	Yes	
Included within the Forward Plan? (If yes include reference number)	Yes Ref 984	
Equality Impact Assessment Undertaken	Yes	
Officer/ Councillor Approval	Date	Name
/Deputy Chief Executive	12/2/2019	Andrew Jones
Head of Service		Marianne Rolfe
CMT	12/2/2019	Chris Elliott, Bill Hunt, Andrew Jones
Section 151 Officer	12/2/2019	Mike Snow
Monitoring Officer	12/2/2019	Andrew Jones
Portfolio Holder(s)		Councillor Andrew Thompson
Consultation & Community Engagement		
Asset Management (Chris Makasis) CMCC – Trustees, Centre Manager and Community Development Manager, Mike Woolacott – Consultant and author of Business Plan		
Resident survey being conducted currently		
Final Decision?	Yes	
Suggested next steps (if not final decision please set out below)		

1. **Summary**

- 1.1 Chase Meadow Community Centre (CMCC) – a partnership between CMCC Ltd., St Michael’s Church and Warwick District Council – has been operating successfully since its opening in September 2013 serving the residents of West Warwick (Chase Meadow and Forbes Estates). However, since 2017 the centre has been operating in deficit for a number of reasons and this is forecast to increase giving cause for concern to its board as to the viability and sustainability of CMCC.
- 1.2 CMCC’s new Business Plan 2018 – 2021, attached as Appendix 1 to this report, describes a comprehensive approach to putting the Centre on a sustainable footing.
- 1.3 This report outlines the reasons why the Council should support CMCC financially for the next three years and what operational costs this contribution will cover.

2. **Recommendation**

- 2.2 That Executive endorses the Business Plan at Appendix 1 and agrees to make a contribution to CMCC of £11,500 per annum for the next three years with the funding being allocated from the Community Projects Reserve (CPR).

3. **Reasons for the Recommendation**

- 3.1 The Council prioritised the initial development of CMCC in 2012 through the allocation of staff resource and Council funding. As the owner of the land and the building, the Council has a vested interest in maintaining a supportive role in the on-going operation of the Centre, enabling it to become sustainable and also protecting a valuable Council and community asset.
- 3.2 The appointment of the Community Development Manager in March 2017 has extended the community development programme and also attracted external community revenue funding. Securing this post is critical to CMCC’s future.
- 3.3 This focus on community support activities ensures that the important needs of often ‘hard to reach’ groups such as low income families, disengaged young people and those facing loneliness and isolation in their own homes are being met.
- 3.4 CMCC provides an increasingly important social service for the West Warwick area but needs ‘unrestricted funding’ to sustain this element of the centre’s service provision.
- 3.5 Other than the Community Development Manager, the only other two paid members of staff are the Centre Manager and Maintenance Manager, both also part time, with there being a heavy reliance on a cohort of volunteers including the directors and trustees.
- 3.6 The Centre has faced increasing utility and building maintenance costs in the last two years. This committee (November 2018) approved a recommendation to make an emergency payment to CMCC to cover service charges for 2017/18

and the Community Development Manager's salary up to 31 March 2019 pending receipt and consideration of the Business Plan.

- 3.7 Members are now asked to consider the Business Plan and agree funding of £11,500 per year for the next three years to cover the deficit between income and expenditure whilst all the initiatives proposed in the Business Plan are put in place.

4. Policy Framework

4.1 Fit for the Future (FFF)

The 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.

The FFF Strategy has 3 strands – People, Services and Money and each has an external and internal element to it. The table below illustrates the impact of this proposal if any in relation to the Council's FFF Strategy.

FFF Strands		
People	Services	Money
External		
Health, Homes, Communities	Green, Clean, Safe	Infrastructure, Enterprise, Employment
<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Improved health for all Housing needs for all met Impressive cultural and sports activities Cohesive and active communities	<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Area has well looked after public spaces All communities have access to decent open space Improved air quality Low levels of crime and ASB	<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Dynamic and diverse local economy Vibrant town centres Improved performance/productivity of local economy Increased employment and income levels
Impacts of Proposal		
Continued provision of services to the local community enhancing community spirit and promoting health and wellbeing	Enhanced community cohesion and activities to prevent boredom are deterrents for ASB	Volunteering opportunities provided by centre as pathways to employment. Development of community café to provide income for centre and increase vibrancy as a community hub
Internal		
Effective Staff	Maintain or Improve Services	Firm Financial Footing over the Longer Term
<u>Intended outcomes:</u> All staff are properly trained All staff have the appropriate tools	<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Focusing on our customers' needs Continuously improve our processes	<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Better return/use of our assets Full Cost accounting Continued cost

All staff are engaged, empowered and supported The right people are in the right job with the right skills and right behaviours	Increase the digital provision of services	management Maximise income earning opportunities Seek best value for money
Impacts of Proposal		
N/A	N/A	This investment to enable CMCC Ltd to continue running the centre is significantly less than if the Council had to take back the management in-house

4.2 **Supporting Strategies:** The provision of a Community Centre in Chase Meadow is consistent with the delivery of this Council's Vision for Warwick District to be a great place to live, work and visit. This community facility specifically supports delivery of the outcomes relating to the Council's FFF strand of Health Homes Communities as it assists in building community cohesion as well as enhancing the health and well being of the residents in West Warwick.

4.3 **Changes to Existing Policies:** There are no changes to existing policies.

4.4 **Impact Assessments:** There are no new or significant policy changes proposed in respect of Equalities.

5. Budgetary Framework

5.1 The recommended additional funding to Chase Meadow Community Centre totals £34,500, which would be paid annually at £11,500 per annum, 2019/20 to 2021/22. This can be funded from the Community Projects Reserve which currently has an unallocated balance of £362,000.

6. Risks

6.1 That despite investment the centre fails to increase income and deficit continues to grow. However a full risk analysis was conducted as part of the development of the new Business Plan with actions in place to mitigate against the likelihood of future financial instability. Appendix 2 lists other external funding sources and the Centre has already been successful in securing grants from National Grid and Tesco which they hope to match with RUCIS funding to upgrade the kitchen facilities to further expand the community café service which will be a ongoing income generator for the Centre.

6.2 If the Council doesn't provide financial support then there is a high likelihood that the Community Development role will cease resulting in increased reliance on volunteers and therefore further instability. The capacity to seek other external funding which is a key role of the Community Development Manager will also be reduced which will impact on other areas of operation.

- 6.3 Without external funding support the centre will struggle to maintain current service delivery thus having a negative impact on those in the local community who rely on the centre for key support services or simply a place to go to and engage with other people.

7. Alternative Options considered

- 7.1 CMCC seeks funding from other sources (which it is on an ongoing basis in line with their Business Plan) however the majority of grants are restricted and won't cover staffing and running costs.
- 7.2 If, due to lack of funding, the trustees decide CMCC is no longer viable and they pull out of the lease agreement then the Council would have to decide whether to take on the management in-house or go out to tender. Both options would have resource implications and inevitably there would be an impact on service continuity whilst alternative management options were being considered. The preferred option would be to enable the CMCC Board to implement their business plan by providing them with the financial support they need.
- 7.3 CMCC is a centre run by the community for the community. To take the management back in-house or bring in external operators would have a negative impact in terms of feelings of engagement, empowerment and a sense of ownership by the local community.

8. Background

- 8.1 In 2008, a Chase Meadow Residents Association was formed to look at local issues on the new housing development and one high priority to emerge was the need to develop a community Centre for residents. A separate Community Centre legal entity was established to identify the best ways to develop and manage the new build. In 2010 the group became incorporated as Chase Meadow Community Centre Ltd (CMCC).
- 8.2 Chase Meadow Community Centre was established in 2013 to service the needs of the residents of West Warwick (Chase Meadow and Forbes Estate). The target audience is wide and varied and the centre programme aims to reflect the needs of young people, young families, older people via youth clubs, mums and tots, keep fit, social health – Dementia Group and business start up support.
- 8.3 As the owner of the land and the building the Council was keen to maintain a supportive role in the on-going operation of the Centre with the object of helping the Centre to become sustainable and also protecting a valuable Council asset. To do this the Council appointed an elected Member to the Board of Chase Meadow Centre Partners. This is currently Councillor Noel Butler.
- 8.4 The Project Board agreed that an umbrella organisation comprising of the three partners (CMCC, PCC and WDC) should be created to be responsible for the lease of the building. The purpose of this over-arching body was to put the Church on an equal footing in terms of leases with CMCC and to enable the Council to have an appropriate level of involvement in the operation of the Centre. A Community Interest Company was created as the over-arching body and is called Chase Meadow Centre Partners.

- 8.5 To reflect the above arrangement the leases were therefore structured as follows:
- A head-lease exists between the Council (landlord) and Chase Meadow Centre Partners (head-tenant)
 - Sub-leases below the head-lease are in place between CMCP and Chase Meadow Community Centre Ltd and the Church
 - CMCC's lease is for the Sports Hall area and also gives the right to use the communal area and the Church's lease is for the Place of Worship Area (and smaller meeting rooms) and also gives the Church the right to use the communal area too.
- 8.6 There is also a Management Agreement in place between the partners which sets out how the organisations work together as Chase Meadow Centre Partners. The Agreement sets out the rights and responsibilities (including financial) of each of the partners. It also explains the governance arrangements for CMCP, including the role of the Board of Directors, and the arrangements for decision making.
- 8.7 In spite of many successes since opening it's doors in September 2013, CMCC Ltd. accounts showed a small deficit in 2017 with a larger deficit predicted for 2018, along with a large increase in service charge payments, giving early concern to the Directors as to the viability and sustainability of CMCC.
- 8.8 Warwick District Council provided the services of ATI Ltd. to support the Directors and staff in carrying out a strategic review, providing an opportunity to look back, identify lessons learned and plan for future sustainability. However to ensure the delivery of this strategy (Appendix 1) and to achieve financial sustainability, CMCC is urgently needing financial support over the next 3 years from a range of restricted and unrestricted funding sources.
- 8.9 In September 2018 CMCC's reserves were such that they had insufficient funds to pay the Community Development Manager for the remainder of the financial year and were facing an overdue service charge of £6,000 for 2018/19.
- 8.10 Executive (November 2018) agreed to approve a recommendation to provide £11,500 emergency funding to cover staffing costs and service charges to tide the centre over to 31 March 2019 and until a further report could be presented in March to consider the Council's role in securing the long term sustainability of the centre. Due to successful negotiation with Knight Frank, the estates management company, the annual service charge has now been reduced to £1,500 per annum from the initial charge of £4,500 per annum. The Council's emergency payment has now been retrospectively reduced to £6,500.
- 8.11 In addition to this emergency funding, the Community Partnership Team (CPT) has allocated one day a week of Community Development Worker support, based at the centre, to boost the staffing capacity and to help develop specific projects.
- 8.12 One key project is the introduction of a community café which is a key focus of the Directors, creating a more lively and attractive hub for all members of the community to enjoy and providing an important source of income as part of the centre's aim to be more commercially and business orientated. The Business Plan for the community café can be referenced in Appendix 3.

- 8.13 The café is now up and running but is currently limited in the range of food it can provide, however a recent grant from National Grid will be used to upgrade the kitchen in early spring 2019 so that a more extensive menu can be provided in the future and catering for parties and functions will be possible to bring in additional income.
- 8.14 A resident survey is being conducted to a) raise awareness of the centre and it's services b) obtain feedback on gaps in service provision c) promote volunteering opportunities at the Centre. As a result a number of residents are now volunteering their time in different roles.
- 8.15 Warwickshire Community and Voluntary Action (WCAVA), in their capacity as a voluntary and community sector contract deliverer for WDC, has been brought in to support CMCC with the recruitment and training of new trustees and also to assist with identifying funding opportunities and hands on help with bid writing.
- 8.16 Below is a summary of community development activity since October 2018:
- CMCC ran the trial café sessions up until Christmas which were really successful and diversified the users of the centre. The centre is now ready to appoint to the role of café manager for 6 months with a view to making the café sustainable and provide more volunteering opportunities. It will also provide volunteering opportunities for people with additional needs.
 - Bereavement Support Group has now started and had a great turn out on the first session.
 - Next month a new group for parents with children with additional needs is starting. This has been supported by Transforming Communities and in partnership with Entrust Care Partnership.
 - Community survey is now online. Door to door survey and consulting centre users also.
 - CMCC is now working closing with the GP surgery to introduce social prescribing.
 - One lady has come forward interested in being a trustee.
 - Irene- a new volunteer has started and is helping out with admin.
 - Link made with Round Oak and Warwickshire college about volunteer opportunities for students at the centre.
 - Invitation went out to all WDC Executive members for the Christmas celebration.
 - County council road signage- application in progress to help improve signage to the centre
 - Walking for Health- New walk will hopefully start from the centre late April/early May.
 - WDC have agreed usage of greenspace on the estate for a community garden and a bid for this has gone into the Town Council.
 - Updated timetable for the centre has been done by media and a new newsletter is in progress.
 - Working with other shops/surgery regarding disputing the increase in service charges.
 - Funding- met with WCAVA- to put together an action plan.