

Title: Barford Youth and Community Centre Grant Application
 Lead Officer: Chris Elliott / Jon Dawson
 Portfolio Holder: Councillor Hales / Falp
 Wards of the District directly affected: Barford

Approvals required	Date	Name
Portfolio Holder	20.2.23	Cllr Richard Hales
	7.2.23	Cllr Judy Falp
Finance	3.2.23	Richard Wilson
Legal Services	17.2.23	Marina Moss (Stratford DC Legal)
Chief Executive	7.2.23	Chris Elliott
Programme Director for Climate Change	14.7.23	Dave Barber
Head of Service(s)	13.7.23	Andrew Rollins
Section 151 Officer	13.7.23	Andrew Rollins
Monitoring Officer	14.7.23	Andy Jones
Leadership Co-ordination Group	20.2.23	
Final decision by this Committee or rec to another Cttee / Council?	Yes	
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)?	Yes, Forward Plan item 1351– scheduled for 8 th March 2023	
Accessibility Checked?	Yes	

Summary

This report seeks Cabinet agreement to a funding request for up to £250,000 from a local community group in Barford as a contribution towards the cost of construction of a new youth and community centre. The funding for this project is specifically provided for in the budget recently agreed for 2023/24.

Recommendation(s)

- (1)** That Cabinet agrees to the funding request from Barford Youth and Community Centre Charity (BYCC) for up to (and no more than) £250,000 excluding VAT towards the cost of construction of a new youth and community centre, to be funded from the Community Project Funding List subject to the following conditions being met:
- a) That the project works receive a variation consent to the existing planning permission and any other statutory consent necessary before any drawdown of the funding.
 - b) That a detailed project plan is submitted before any drawdown of the funding.
 - c) That a 'final' business plan is agreed before any drawdown of the funding.
 - d) That an updated quote still within the quote timescale validity from the preferred contractor for all the proposed works is provided to verify the amount of funding being sought before any drawdown of the Funding.
 - e) That the building energy performance measures set out in section 2.6.2 of the Business Plan are delivered, along with any other carbon minimisation measures that can be achieved within the available budget; these works must be included and specified in the final up-to-date contractor quote.
 - f) That the current lease is extended to a 30-year term before any drawdown of the funding.
 - g) That copies of archaeology and other surveys undertaken to manage risks are provided before any drawdown of the funding.
 - h) That funding for the whole project costs can be demonstrated before any drawdown of the funding.
 - i) That staged payments are made on production of supplier(s) invoices that are addressed to Barford Youth and Community Centre.
 - j) That due recognition in any publicity is given to this Council's support for the proposal.
 - k) That an annual report is given to the Council for the next 3 years on the performance of the business plan of the facility.
 - l) That any other conditions that normally apply to RUCIS schemes also apply to this scheme.
- (2)** That the approval of the items listed in (1) above is delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Head of Finance and the 'Resources' and 'Safer Communities, Environment & Leisure Services' portfolio holders.
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1 Reasons for the Recommendation

- 1.1 Barford village has several vibrant community groups, for example, Scouts, Beavers, Cubs, arts, drama, sewing, who have been using the existing Scout hut for many years to meet, store their equipment, carry out indoor activities and as a base for outdoor activities. BYCC own the present building and are the leaseholder for the land. The Scout hut was already approximately 25 years old when it was bought 30 years ago and has now reached the end of its useful life. BYCC plan to replace the existing Scout Hut with a new youth and community centre; the new building will be a facility fit for purpose for the diverse range of users, from the very young to the very old, to reduce isolation, encourage learning and increase wellbeing. The new building will have a larger capacity than the existing one to meet the needs of the growing villages, best practice for accessibility and inclusivity and will meet current environmental standards thus supporting the Council's climate change action programme.
- 1.2 Total potential whole project costs are circa £866,000; BYCC have £227,000 in cash reserves and have total pledged funds of £143,500. BYCC also have an offer of a gift of £100,000 and a finance arrangement interest-free offer of another £100,000 both of which are conditional of Warwick District Council support; BYCC are therefore seeking an underwriting for a grant contribution of up-to £250,000 from the Council. BYCC are applying to other grant providers to cover the circa £45,500 budget shortfall; they may raise more funds than are needed, in which case the Council's grant would be lowered.
- 1.3 A business plan has been prepared for the overall scheme which is attached at Appendix 1. Such a community project as proposed would normally be one that the Council would look to fund from its RUCIS grant scheme, however, this project falls outside the remit of that fund as the sum being sought is over the maximum £20,000 contribution to overall project costs.
- 1.4 However, the Council has on an exceptional basis funded a limited number of community schemes where the scale of investment requires significant Local Authority match funding to attract and secure other funding. This is one such case and provision has been made in the budget as part of the Community Project Fund list for 2023/24 for a contribution toward the cost of this facility of up to £250,000. The proposal therefore is to agree that this funding be drawn down subject to several conditions as set out in recommendation 1 of this report and under recommendation 2 that authority be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Head of Finance and the portfolio holders for Resources and Safer Communities Leisure and Environment to sign off compliance with those conditions.

2 Alternative Options

- 2.1 The Cabinet could decide not to award the grant; however, the project is very much in the spirit of the RUCIS scheme to which the Council is very committed. The Council therefore should consider the project in those terms which would otherwise be very supportive. Additionally, without the Council's support, the offer of a £100,000 gift and £100,000 interest-free finance arrangement would be withdrawn; with the project very unlikely to go ahead as a result, and the existing Scout hut would fall into further disrepair until eventually becoming unusable.

- 2.2 The Cabinet could decide to vary the amount awarded; however, this will potentially prevent the project from being completed. The longer it takes BYCC to raise further funds the high likelihood of further cost increases which will put the project beyond reach.

3 Legal Implications

- 3.1 There are no legal rights implications for the proposals.
- 3.2 The application and business plan have been assessed from a subsidy control perspective which may be an issue, we have sought and received a response from BYCC which asserts that as a non-profit making charity organisation whose charitable objectives are to provide a meeting space for local user groups, especially children, with no employees, just volunteers, they believe they do not meet the 'limbs' of the test of the Subsidy Control Act 2022. They have also re-iterated that the Barford Memorial Hall is already at full capacity and have at an earlier stage of this project provided a letter of support for the BYCC grant application and the building of the new community centre.

4 Financial

- 4.1 The proposal will have no ongoing revenue implications for the Council. Provision has been made within the 2023/24 budget in the Community Project Funding List for a contribution of up to £250,000 toward the capital cost of the scheme.

5 Business Strategy

Warwick District Council's Fit for the Future (FFF):

- 5.1 Health, Homes, Communities; community grant applications (including RUCIS scheme applications) such as this proposal are designed to encourage and support local communities and local not-for-profit organisations in developing cohesive and active communities.
- 5.2 Green, Clean, Safe; through the delivery of community grants such as this proposal the aim is to deliver cohesive and active communities which in turn help to support and maintain lower levels of crime and ASB. This proposal will also support the Council's climate change action programme.
- 5.3 Infrastructure, Enterprise, Employment; the proposed community facility is another piece of the community infrastructure that supports the resilience of the local community and economy. BYCC's current lease is a 30-year term; however, this runs to 1st October 2047 meaning there are just over 24 years remaining. BYCC are in the process of extending the lease with 'The Rector and Churchwardens of Barford in The Diocese of Coventry'; BYCC have requested a longer lease, with 30-years being the minimum sought, notwithstanding that 30-years is longer than the 25-years term normally sought by most other grant providers, for example, the National Lottery.
- 5.4 Effective Staff; not applicable.
- 5.5 Maintain or Improve Services; not applicable.
- 5.6 Firm Financial Footing over the Longer Term; not applicable.

6 Environmental/Climate Change Implications

- 6.1 The proposal for the new community centre will meet the building requirements for energy efficiency; this will include an air-source heat-pump to reduce carbon emissions by 804kg per annum compared to a combination gas boiler system. To reduce energy use they will use motion-sensor, LED lighting, and

have specified triple glazed windows and doors, and a high-specification insulation in the floor, walls, and ceiling.

- 6.2 By providing a new fit-for-purpose community centre 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.
- 6.3 Outside there will be new tree and hedge planting, to create habitat and to offset carbon use.

7 Analysis of the effects on Equality

- 7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not required; there are no new or significant policy changes proposed in respect of Equalities.
- 7.2 The new fit-for-purpose building will assist equality issues, for example:
 - Community groups will be able to continue to operate in the village, providing activities for all to participate and be easily accessible by foot or cycle. Without the new building, the existing Scout hut will at some stage soon become unusable which will likely result in several community groups and activities currently held in the village cease to exist
 - Improved toilet facilities will be suitable for disabled use and will have baby changing facilities
 - People with additional access needs will be able to fully enjoy the amenity of the building
 - The venue will provide additional capacity for new activities and groups as the village grows, ensuring a thriving community. There will be an additional smaller room, meaning two organisations can potentially meet at the same time
 - The building will be at the south end of the village, meaning those who cannot travel the distance to the Church, school, or Memorial Hall (all at the north end of the village) will have access to a community space
 - The new building will provide better facilities to host a baby and toddler group, reducing the risk of isolation for new parents and allowing very low-cost activities for young children before they can access nursery or school provision
 - There will be much improved accessibility to support a thriving community café; this allows all generations to meet, chat and reminisce in an informal venue
 - A larger, well-equipped kitchen would enable catering for groups to be available; lunch clubs, social evenings etc would be possible
 - Care has been given to design the external environment, providing a sheltered, safe outdoor area for the very young and old to use comfortably, as well as storage for bicycles, wheelchairs, and buggies
 - Members of the community with a lack of access to private transport will be able to continue to participate in activities

8 Data Protection

8.1 There are no data protection implications for the proposal.

9 Health and Wellbeing

9.1 The project supports a combination of potential reductions in anti-social behaviour, obesity, and social isolation as set out in paragraph 7.2 above.

10 Risk Assessment

10.1 There are no direct risks for this proposal for the Council. Risks may exist for the BYCC which is for them to manage. Clearly there may be the possibility that escalating costs lead to the group approaching the Council for more money but the Council makes it clear in the recommendations that its contribution is fixed, and any cost change is for the group to manage.

10.2 The conditions set out in the recommendations seek to ensure that all due diligence conditions are followed through. This approach has been successfully applied to many community schemes.

10.3 The application may potentially have subsidy control issues, but this matter is felt to be low risk.

Background papers:

Not applicable.

Supporting documents:

Appendix 1; BYCC business plan.