

Full Council

Report Title:	Community Youth Centre Working Group
Meeting Date:	15 November 2022
Contact Officer:	Mandy Sturdy, Town Clerk Andrea Oughton, Asset Manager

Purpose of the Report

1. To update the Council on recommendations made at the Community Leisure and Recreation Committee held on 25 October 2022 (Item 4) on the progress of the planning phase of the Community Youth Building and to request additional financial resources to enable the planning application submission.

Background

2. The Community Youth Centre Working Group (CYCWG) is tasked to oversee the specification, tender, planning application and build process, along with all relevant swift decision making, ensuring a correct legal basis and conformance with all funding and planning conditions in delivering a new Community Youth Building on Southern Road Recreation Ground (SRRG).

Update

3. Following agreement of the outline brief Acanthus Clews Architects (ACA), in conjunction with CYCWG, have developed designs for the new building. ACA and CYCWG have met monthly since February to develop the design.
4. An informal meeting to present plans to date took place between the architects, representatives of Thame Youth Project Group, and the Town Council on 27 September 2022.
5. A pre-planning application was submitted to South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) at the end of September and a site meeting with the architects and planning officer assigned to the pre-application took place on Wednesday 12 October 2022. The formal response from SODC is expected prior to the CLR meeting.
6. Pre-planning designs were presented by ACA during the CLR committee meeting on 25 October 2022. The design includes community space, function/community hall (to accommodate 20-100 people which can be opened up to accommodate 200 for special events), dedicated areas for the youth, a kitchen, office, servery, toilets, two changing rooms and referee's rooms.
7. Consultations have already been carried out with many youth groups including local schools, Scouts, Guides, Army and Air Cadets. A further public consultation will take

place on 19 November 2022 at the Guide Headquarters on Sothern Road, with further displays of the proposed plans at the Town Hall and in prominent areas around the town, prior to submission of a full planning application. The Town Council will also be consulted at each future stage.

8. There has been no clear directive from SODC regarding changing room provision due to not having anyone in a leisure post at present. A senior planning officer has suggested the best course of action is to submit a pre-application enquiry with details of what is proposed and how it is supported by the Thame Neighbourhood Plan and SODC will carry out some pre-application consultations with Sport England as part of the process. CYCWG continue to consult with sporting groups to ascertain potential usage for changing rooms on SRRG.
9. Plans also include provision of a new car park and relocation of the play area to the opposite side of the existing access road. The cost of moving the play area is not included in cost estimates and will need to be funded from elsewhere, possibly using s106 or CIL funds.
10. Landscape architects have been appointed and have submitted initial designs.
11. CYCWG are currently working through a business plan to ensure the building is self-sufficient and provides resources for all aspects of the community.
12. The current programme (subject to funding) is for completion by December 2024.

Resource Appraisal

13. It was agreed at Full Council on 26 April 2022 that £80k from general reserves and £40K of CIL funding could be used to progress this project to planning permission. The aspiration is for the funds to be returned to general reserves once planning permission is granted and alternative funding can be found.
14. This above funding was to cover the initial estimates of £112,838. Due to an increase in the building size and subsequent higher architects' fees and additional surveys the total budget to get to planning has increased to £128,336. Therefore, a further £15K is requested from general reserves to cover the overspend and include a contingency taking the total to £95K.
15. Thame Youth Projects are using their experienced fundraising team to identify suitable grants and funding. Officers are also investigating funding options using experience and lessons from previous successful projects.
16. Promotions and marketing will be required to reach a wider audience for both the building consultation and fundraising – this will include some officer time.

Risk Assessment

17. Planning permission is rejected – potential additional architect fees to resubmit planning application.
18. Increase in build cost, plus cost of landscaping and relocation of the play area.
19. The building cannot be funded – value engineering exercise to reduce cost, reduce size of building or delay the build date to allow further time to raise funds. A review of community use to engage new stakeholders who could help fund the build.

Legal Powers:

- Local Government Act 1972 s133
- Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 s16
- Localism Act 2011 s1 General Power of Competence

Action:

- i) To **note** the report.
- ii) To **recommend** that concept designs are approved and submitted as part of the planning application.
- iii) To **recommend** that the additional £15K funding from general reserves to cover the additional costs to planning are approved.