

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE NHB COMMUNITY GRANTS PANEL

11TH AUGUST 2020, AT 4.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Members of the Panel: Councillors G. N. Denaro (Chairman),
S. R. Colella, S. A. Hughes, H. D. N. Rone-Clarke and S. A. Webb

Councillors attending as Observers: Councillor C. A. Hotham, Councillor
A. D. Kent, Councillor R. J. Laight and Councillor M. Thompson

Officers: Ms. J. Pickering, Ms. A. Scarce and Ms. J. Bayley

1/2020

WELCOME

Councillor G. N. Denaro chaired the Panel meeting and welcomed all those present. The general housekeeping rules and protocol for participating in virtual Committee meetings was outlined for the consideration of all attendees.

2/2020

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor S. R. Colella declared an other disclosable interest in respect of the application for Roadside Air Quality Management Signage for Hagley and Wythall, as he had supported the application.

Councillor A. Kent, who was attending the meeting in his capacity as a ward member for a bid rather than as a member of the Panel, also declared an other disclosable interest because he was supporting the application for Roadside Air Quality Management Signage for Hagley and Wythall.

3/2020

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The aim of this meeting was to provide the Panel members with an opportunity to discuss the applications with the applicants and for applicants to respond to any questions which might arise from those discussions.

Officers explained that the Panel would hold a further meeting (in private) later in the month to discuss the allocation of the funds available. The Panel would then prepare a report putting forward recommendations for the consideration of the Cabinet. The final decision for allocation of funds would remain with the Cabinet.

Applicants would be contacted following this private meeting in August to advise them of the Panel's recommendations. Successful applicants would subsequently be contacted following the Cabinet meeting to advise them of the next steps in the process.

4/2020

PRESENTATION TIMETABLE

Officers explained that each application had been allocated a five minute slot and those in attendance were advised that they were welcome to go when they had responded to any questions from Members in respect of their application.

5/2020

SUMMARY OF APPLICATIONS - HIGHER

Bromsgrove District Councillors – Ward Initiative – Roadside Air Quality Management Signage

Councillors S. R. Colella and A. Kent presented the application and in so doing drew Members' attention to a report that had been published by Public Health England (PHE) in March 2020 which had encouraged local authorities to install signage in respect of air pollution. This was considered to be particularly helpful in respect of tackling the impact of air pollution on the health of children and young people and by working with schools the project could help to raise awareness amongst teachers and parents as well as school children.

During consideration of this application questions were raised in respect of the following matters:

- The signage that would appear in parts of Bromsgrove District should the application be approved and whether Worcestershire County Council (WCC) needed to provide permission. The Panel was advised that Councillors Colella and Kent would liaise with WCC though did not anticipate that there would be an issue.
- The potential role of Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) in relation to signage pertaining to air pollution and whether that service could fund the signage or might need to be involved in the project. The Panel was informed that no issues had been identified in respect of this matter.
- The reasons why the application had been submitted to the New Homes Bonus (NHB) Community Grants Panel, rather than to a County Councillor for divisional funding. Members were advised that the idea had been proposed following a meeting between Councillors Colella and Kent where the subject of air pollution and the impact on children's health had been discussed. Councillor Colella was not a County Councillor so could not allocate divisional funds to a project.

Alvechurch Parish Council – Fit for Today, Fitter for Tomorrow

Parish Councillors John Cypher, Andy Humphries and Marc Worrall attended the meeting in support of this application. Members were advised that the grant, if approved, would fund 25 parking spaces in a car park for the Parish Council, which was considered to be the optimum number required for the sports activities taking place on site. The works would be undertaken as part of a strategy to improve the accessibility of the site and to reduce the impact of events on the neighbouring community.

The following points were discussed in relation to this application:

- The possible increase of £40,000 in Alvechurch Parish Council's earmarked reserves in 2019/20, which was identified by Members from the Parish Council's accounts. The Panel was advised that this information did not correspond with what had been reported to the Parish Council and would need to be verified.
- The potential environmental impact of the proposed work in respect of the car park. Members were informed that whilst some vegetation would be removed this would not include trees and a membrane cover would be used where new plants would be grown.
- The availability of parking and the reasons why a car park was required. The Panel was advised that there were limited parking options on site and therefore visitors parked on surrounding streets, which tended to create problems for neighbours.
- The arrangements that would be in place if Alvechurch Parish Council only received a portion of the funding that had been requested. Members were informed that there would be the option to install 17 car parking spaces in a scaled down plan.
- The amount of the grant funding that would be allocated to pavilion improvements. The Panel was informed that none of the funding would be allocated for this purpose.

Barnt Green Parish Council – Barnt Green Pollinator Initiative

Ms Tracey Bodley from Barnt Green Parish Council and Councillor C. Hotham, as the ward Councillor, attended the meeting in support of the application and delivered a brief presentation which provided an outline of the impact that the project could have locally on enhancing pollination at the site.

Members questioned the following:

- The number of beehives on the site. The Panel was advised that there were no managed hives on the site and instead the focus of the project was on wild bees, butterflies and other insects.
- The likely outcomes of the work that would be funded, if approved. Members were advised that there were a lot of brambles at the site at present; these would be removed and bulbs planted so that there would be seasonable plants flowering throughout the year.

- The cost of the project and the reasons why the full amount of funding had not been requested from the Council. Ms Bodley explained that additional funding had been obtained from another source to help cover the costs.

Bentley Village Hall – Project Warmth

Mr Jeremy Fish, from Bentley Village Hall, attended the meeting in support of the application. Members were advised that the Project Warmth scheme was focused on the installation of new doors and windows, installation of security and of a thermal wall at Bentley Village Hall.

Members subsequently commented on the following matters:

- The total cost of the project and why this differed from the amount of funding that had been requested from the Council. Members were advised that Bentley Village Hall had secured additional funding from another source.
- The procurement process that had been followed in identifying the costs associated with the project. The Panel was informed that three quotes had been obtained from three different suppliers. Should the application for funding be successful, the final decision in respect of the project would be taken at a Bentley Village Hall Committee meeting.

Bromsgrove Rugby Club – Extension and Refurbishment of Changing Rooms

Mr Jason Woodbine attended the meeting on behalf of Bromsgrove Rugby Club. The grant funding had been requested in order to modernise existing changing facilities and to provide new changing facilities for female participants.

During consideration of this application Members asked questions about the following matters:

- The information that had not been included in the application form in respect of the evidence of the impact of growth in the community arising from the project. Members were advised that there had been a significant growth in the number of junior participants and Bromsgrove Rugby Club would struggle to accommodate them all using existing changing facilities. The club was also trying to encourage an increase in women's participation in the sport.
- The availability of grant funding from the Rugby Federation. The Panel was informed that whilst the Rugby Federation had provided match funding in previous years, the federation had not been providing funding for community projects since 2019.
- The standards required for women's changing rooms. The Bromsgrove Rugby Club had consulted architects and Sport

England about the facilities and the number of showers required from a health and safety perspective.

- The access to the changing facilities for female participants in the sport. Members were informed that the proposed refurbishment would result in the introduction of a separate access for women to access female changing rooms, rather than a requirement for them to access the changing facilities through the men's changing rooms.

Bromsgrove Youth and Community Hub – Bromsgrove Youth and Community Hub

Reverend Paul Lewis and Ms Saz Mulhall attended the meeting on behalf of the Bromsgrove Youth and Community Hub. The grant would contribute to the overall costs to the Hub involved in providing support to children and young people in the town centre during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The following points were discussed by Members:

- The governance arrangements for the Hub. The Panel was informed that since the application was submitted the Hub had become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). The Hub had both a Board of Directors and a Youth Council, which provided an opportunity for young people to submit their views.
- The staff that would support the work of the Hub and whether any difficulties had been experienced in terms of employing qualified youth workers. Members were advised that Ms Mulhall was a qualified youth worker and worked with other qualified youth workers in partner agencies. Training was also offered to young people in respect of being young leaders and youth workers. Conversations had been held with the University of Birmingham in respect of facilitating student placements.
- The arrangements in place to encourage young people who lived outside Bromsgrove town centre to engage with the hub. Staff from the hub engaged in a lot of outreach work with local schools, engaged in community-based events and worked closely with the local youth work and outreach team. The Bromsgrove Street Pastors worked in partnership with other agencies and this also enabled the hub to link with partner organisations serving young people across the district.
- The issues that young people were tending to report in the local community. Members were informed that the hub worked closely with the Anglican Outreach Project and issues with ASB and intimidation had been reported.

Catshill and District Working Men's Club – Replace the Central Heating System

Ms Val Harman attended the meeting on behalf of the Catshill and District Working Men's Club. The grant had been requested to fund the

replacement of the heating system at the Working Men's Club and would result in the reduction of the venue's carbon footprint.

Whilst discussing the application Members raised the following points:

- The impact of Covid-19 on income at the venue. The Catshill and District Working Men's Club had been closed since March 2020 and, though aiming to reopen in September 2020, would take into account information about case numbers locally before deciding to do so.
- The accounts for the Catshill Working Men's Club and financial position. Members were advised that by August 2020 the accounts were on a sustainable footing.

Catshill Village Hall – Installation of Thermal Insulation

Mr Andrew Bate attended the meeting on behalf of Catshill Village Hall. The grant would fund the installation of thermal insulation at the Village Hall, which would help to reduce the utilities bills for the venue as well as the carbon footprint.

Following the presentation of this application Members discussed a number of points in detail:

- The cost of utility bills for Catshill Village Hall and the extent to which this was likely to increase. Members were informed that the Village Hall spent approximately £1,400 per year on gas bills and had received external advice suggesting that the costs were likely to increase by 10 per cent per annum over the next few years.
- The savings that would be accrued from installing thermal insulation in the main hall and smaller meeting room. Catshill Village Hall had been advised that this work could result in savings of between 40 and 50 per cent on gas bills each year.
- The availability of additional sources of funding to help pay for the thermal insulation if the full amount that had been requested was not granted. Members were advised that Catshill Village Hall had a small level of reserves but had not received any income since 22nd March 2020 due to the lockdown. Some funding had been provided by the Government to the Village Hall to cover the loss of income but this had largely been spent on measures to make the venue safe, such as hand sanitiser.

First Bromsgrove Otters Scouts – Enhancing Opportunities for Adventure and Skills for Life Development to Local Young People Through Scouting

Ms Joanna Parish attended the meeting in support of this application alongside Councillor M. Thompson, as the relevant ward member. The funding would be allocated to purchasing a trailer and other equipment to help young people and children.

Members discussed the following matters in relation to this application:

- The difficulties involved in engaging with children and young people in a modern world where computer games and electronic devices could be distracting. This was acknowledged as a challenge, but Members were advised that the First Bromsgrove Otter Scouts had a healthy waiting list and efforts were made to engage with children and young people from hard to reach groups through attendance at local events.
- The numbers of volunteers supporting the work of the First Bromsgrove Otters Scouts. The Panel was informed that there were lots of volunteers who provided help, though new volunteers were always welcome.
- The objective in respect of the purchase of this equipment. Members were informed that this would enable the First Bromsgrove Otters Scouts to take children and young people on more residential trips and activities.
- The benefits of the First Bromsgrove Otter Scouts in Charford. Councillor Thompson explained that just that day he had received calls about Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and young people hanging around in Charford. Groups like the scouts could help to provide activities for these young people and this would have a positive impact in the long-term on their skills and experiences, as well as provide a safe space.

Hagley Ramblers Scout Group – New Side Stores to the Scout Premises

Ms Sue Corlett attended the meeting in support of this application. Members were informed that work to introduce new side stores at the premises formed phase two of work at the site.

During consideration of this application the following points were discussed:

- The impact that Covid-19 had had on fund raising for the Hagley Ramblers Scout Group. The Panel was informed that the pandemic had had a negative impact on fund raising and a number of activities that usually took place where fund raising would have occurred had had to be cancelled.
- The number of people involved with the Hagley Ramblers Scout Group. Members were informed that there were approximately 160 children and 45 scout leaders.
- The work that had been undertaken during phase one of the project. Phase one had focused on expanding the premises to accommodate an increased number of participants.
- The activities that the group had held during lockdown. Members were informed that a lot of online activities had occurred and the majority of scouts had remained members throughout lockdown.
- The availability of alternative sources of funding should the full amount of the grant that had been requested not be made

available. The Panel was advised that there was some funding in the group's reserves but this was required to address the costs of maintaining the building and for unforeseen circumstances.

Hello Burcot – Community Seating Project

Members were informed that Councillor R. Laight, in his capacity as ward Councillor, had attended the meeting in support of the application. The funding would provide community seating to the local community based at Burcot Lane, Bromsgrove.

During consideration of this application reference was made to the following matters:

- The extent to which planning permission would be required for the installation of community seating at the site. Councillor Laight advised that he was not aware of the need for planning permission to be provided. The seating would be introduced on land owned by Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT) and the organisation had indicated that they were in support of the proposals.
- The contribution that community seating could provide to a sense of pride and belonging amongst local residents.
- The potential for BDHT to contribute or cover the full amount of funding for the project. Officers advised that a representative of BDHT had contacted the Council to explain that the organisation was working with the applicant and had indicated that BDHT would consider contributing some funding.
- The housing development that was anticipated for the site and the impact that this might have on the local community.

NewStarts – Breaking Bread, Building Communities

Ms Marion Kenyon attended the meeting on behalf of NewStarts. Members were informed that the grant funding would support work to develop resilience within local communities and would help to pay towards the costs for a member of staff.

The following issues were discussed during consideration of this application:

- The availability of other sources of funding to support the project. The Panel was informed that applications had been submitted for funding from other sources. NewStarts also received about 70 per cent of income from the sale of furniture and IT equipment.
- The sustainability of the project beyond the first year of operation. Members were advised that this would form part of the New Starts Programme. The organisation had been providing a lot of food parcels during the lockdown and it had become apparent that there was real need within the community for support in this area.
- The survey that had been undertaken by NewStarts in Bromsgrove District. Over half of the respondents had reported that they had

mental health issues. Providing an opportunity for people to meet and talk would help to tackle this problem.

- The potential for the project to be delivered in locations outside of Sidemoor. Members were informed that the service would be provided wherever it was needed, if possible, though NewStarts had struggled to find a venue within Sidemoor. All Saints Church had offered the hire of their hall but there would be a financial cost attached to this. Food parcels had already been delivered in Blackwell.

St Michael's Church PCC Stoke Prior

The Panel was advised that no representative of St Michael's Church PCC Stoke Prior had been available to attend the meeting for this item.

Members noted that an application had been received in previous years for this applicant in respect of the church steeple.

(During consideration of this item there was a brief adjournment from 4.38pm to 4.45 pm whilst representatives of some of the organisations that had applied for funding were invited to participate in Part 2 of the meeting).

6/2020

SCORING MATRIX TEMPLATE

Members would be considering the criteria within the Scoring Matrix when reaching their decision in respect of each application.

The meeting closed at 5.24 p.m.

Chairman