

# Record of decision taken under delegated powers by a council officer



Title:	<b>Your Fund Surrey Application – CF254 Bletchingley Village Primary School</b>
Divisions Affected:	Tandridge - Godstone
Key Decision:	No
Reason Key:	N/A
Decision taken under delegation by virtue of:	Cabinet/ Committee decision Cabinet 21st July 2020 Min Ref: 112/20 COMMUNITY PROJECTS FUND [Item 10] <a href="#">Decision - Community Projects Fund - Surrey County Council (surreycc.gov.uk)</a>

## Summary

This decision record sets out the key information for publication on the decision by the Executive Director for Customer, Digital and Transformation to approve expenditure for a Your Fund Surrey project located in Tandridge. The agreed recommendations are set out below and details of the project are set out in a decision report attached as an annex to this record.

## Decision made

### Decision made:

It was AGREED to:

- Fund project CF254 for the full £44,113 requested, composed of:
  - £44,113 capital funding towards the development of a wellbeing garden.
  - Including 5% to be held by SCC until final evidence of income and expenditure and building control sign-off is provided.

### Reasons for Decision:

This decision is to enable expenditure from Your Fund Surrey to be awarded to a project which has been the subject of a rigorous assessment by Officers, as set out in Annex 1.

Officers consider the project to meet the aims and published criteria of the fund, has been considered by the Your Fund Advisory Panel and satisfies the requirements to award funding.

Decision taken by:	Michael Coughlin – Interim Executive Director – Customer and Communities
Decision taken on:	21 March 2024

To be implemented on:	24 March 2024
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**Alternative options considered**

N/A
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**Summary of any financial implications**

<p>This project has been through due diligence and agreed governance processes.</p> <p>Cabinet agreed in March 2020 the funding for these projects will be drawn from capital funding allocated to Your Fund Surrey within the Capital Programme.</p> <p>Cabinet agreed in March 2020 to establish a core team to manage the delivery of the fund and risks associated with it, funded from the Corporate Feasibility budget.</p>
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**Declarations of conflicts of interest**

None
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**Consultation/Process Followed**

Decision taken in consultation with Cllr Denise Turner Stewart Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Customer and Communities, following Your Fund Surrey Advisory panel review.
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**Background Documents**

Annex 1 – Your Fund Surrey Decision Report CF254	Exempt: No
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**YOUR FUND SURREY - DELEGATED OFFICER DECISION REPORT**

**DATE:** 13<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2024

**SUBJECT:** YOUR FUND SURREY APPLICATION – BLETCHINGLEY PRIMARY VILLAGE SCHOOL

**PROJECT NAME:** CREATION OF A WELLBEING GARDEN

**CF REFERENCE:** CF254

**Purpose of the Report:**

This report sets out the key information on the shortlisted Bletchingley Primary Village Wellbeing Garden School Your Fund Surrey (YFS) Application for the consideration of the YFS Advisory Panel.

The vision of YFS is to bring community-led and place-making projects to life, with a focus on wider community benefit that leaves a real legacy.

The role of the YFS Advisory Panel is to review shortlisted applications following the assessment and scoring of bids by Officers, and to advise and inform the final officer recommendations to the appropriate decision-maker on the proposed funding awards to be made.

**Recommendations:**

**It is recommended that the YFS Advisory Panel:**

1. **Consider whether to fund project CF254 for the full amount requested of £44,113 composed of:**
  - **£44,113 capital funding towards the development of a wellbeing garden and including contingency (£2,200).**
  - **5% final payment to be held by SCC until evidence of completion and completed Investment and Income form approved.**

**Reason for Recommendations**

1. This application has been the subject of a rigorous assessment process by officers, as set out in the body of this report. Officers consider the project to meet the aims and published criteria of the fund and to satisfy the requirements to award funding.
2. The project is to create a wellbeing garden for the local community and schoolchildren, which will increase the number of green spaces within the area and improve the environment and biodiversity by planting plants and flowers.

**Executive Summary**

3. The Bletchingley Village Primary School (BVPS) is located in Bletchingley, Tandridge. The primary school is one of five local schools within the Tandridge Learning Trust, a multi-academy trust.
4. The land on which the wellbeing garden will be created is leased to Tandridge Learning Trust by Surrey County Council and is adjacent to a footpath

between the A25 and the school. The area is within the boundaries of the school and measures approximately 0.2 acres. Residents commonly use the footpath due to its connection between the Coneybury housing area and Bletchingley's shops, pubs, and post office. Previously, the piece of land was the village playground, but the playground was relocated elsewhere a few years ago. As a result, the land has been abandoned and is overgrown with brambles, rough grass, and some self-seeded trees and shrubs.

5. The YFS application supports the creation of a wellbeing garden for the whole community to use. It will be a place where both school children and the community can relax and enjoy the garden whilst promoting outdoor learning about the local environment and gardening skills. The garden will also provide a space to enhance social cohesion and reduce isolation in the community, offering a wellbeing space. It will offer volunteering opportunities and, additionally, the garden will increase biodiversity, reduce carbon emissions, and noise pollution.

<b>Project Summary</b>
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6. The BVPS is located in Bletchingley within the electoral division of Godstone. The land is located approximately four to five miles from Godstone station and three miles from Nutfield station. Residents will have access to the site on foot, and the community garden will be open to everyone.

Lower Super Output Area (LSOA)	Ranked 13692
National Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)	5
Surrey Index of Multiple Deprivation	1
Neighbouring LSOAs	12399 (Surrey decile 1), 10469 (Surrey decile 1), 1178 (Surrey decile: 1), 19198 (Surrey decile 3), 11615 (Surrey decile 1)

7. The project aims to create a new garden on existing land within the school's boundaries. The wellbeing garden will be used by parents, the school children and all Surrey residents and communities. A lockable gate on the school side of the wellbeing garden will prevent children from gaining access to the garden without supervision. On the other side of the garden, there is another gate adjacent to the footpath where the community can access the garden. It is anticipated that the garden will be open access all of the time.
8. Within their project proposal, BVPS plan to clear the land and remove the current fencing before starting the redevelopment. New fencing will be installed, and all pathways, including a circular footpath, will be covered with woodchips that will enable wildflowers, shrubs, grasses and trees to grow. New plants and flowers will be planted around the garden, and new signage installed so not only the school children know where the garden is but also the community. Currently, the school is not visible from the A25, and many people will need to be made aware of its existence. BVPS plan to leave the garden

as a natural growing garden, which requires little maintenance and will be tended to by volunteers, the school premises manager and the school children.

9. BVPS have identified a need for more open green spaces within Bletchingley and the surrounding area. There are two playgrounds within the area, including Grange meadow which is used for sports, events and exercise, but there is no space for reflection and to seek out wildlife. More outdoor space is wanted to improve residents' mental health and wellbeing and reduce isolation.
10. The project will develop a space that blends with the environment and enhances existing wildlife. Biodiversity will be boosted with the planting of scrubs, trees, plants, and flowers. The plans include the local school children building bird boxes and bug hotels for the garden, as well as adding recycling bins, to reduce litter.

### **Description of project benefits**

11. The benefits of the project include:
  - Promoting outdoor learning for children.
  - Increased volunteering opportunities.
  - Reduced vehicle movements by providing improved local facilities.
  - Offering a new community space with opportunities to enhance social interaction, reduce isolation. and improve health and wellbeing.
  - Supporting the Council's green objectives through increasing biodiversity, reducing carbon emissions and noise pollution.

### **Project Timeframes**

12. The project will take approximately 12 weeks to complete, consisting of:
  - Clearing the land
  - Removing existing fencing
  - Repairing railings
  - Refurbishments
  - Installation of new fencing
  - Construction of new pathways
  - Construction of garden, planting and installing hedges
  - Installing signage and benches
  - Installing water butts and bins

### **Management of the project**

13. The project will be overseen by the Chair of Governors, the Head Teacher and the School Premises Manager, who currently manages the extensive school grounds and will carry out site maintenance and liaise with the Head when additional support is required.
14. The project has identified 20 volunteers to help maintain the garden on an occasional basis as the garden has been designed to be low maintenance. Volunteers will receive training and a schedule will be set up to cover ongoing

maintenance. The school children will also help with gardening, to promote outdoor learning. The Head Teacher has agreed that some older children will build bird boxes and bug hotels as part of their environmental learning projects.

## Project Lifespan

15. The project will be monitored after completion for 5 years, and BVPS has secured a lease of 125 years, which demonstrates the project's longevity.

### Financial and Value for Money Implications

16. YFS funding is requested to develop a wellbeing community garden. The project has applied for £44,113 (including £2,200 contingency), which equates to 80% of the overall project costs. The remaining monies needed for the project are from various funders, as outlined in Table 1.
17. Table 1. Financial Summary details the £11,115 other funding which has been secured against the total project cost of £55,228.
18. Table 2. Project Cost Breakdown and Grant Utilisation, itemises the allocation of YFS grant against specific works.

**Table 1. Financial summary**

Amount applied for:	£44,113
Total project cost:	£55,228
Percentage of cost against total:	80%
Have other funding sources been secured?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bletchingley Parish Council - £250</li> <li>• Bletchingley Village Summer Fair - £250</li> </ul>
Volunteer contributions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Admin - £2,580</li> <li>• Garden Maintenance - £600</li> <li>• Total - £3,240</li> </ul>
Non-cash contributions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bletchingley Parish Council – use of meeting room for 2 hours per month - £50</li> <li>• BVPS – use of meeting room for 1 hour as and when needed - £325</li> <li>• Sibelco – land clearance, supply grader and operator to level ground and ground preparation - £7,000</li> <li>• Total - £7,375</li> </ul>
Is there a commercial element to the project?	No

**Table 2. Project Cost breakdown and Grant Utilisation:**

Activity	Total Cost (Including VAT)	YFS Contribution
Gardening tools for volunteers	£200	£200
Repair for railings	£15,260	£15,260
Construction of pathways	£14,800	£14,800

Entrance of sign purchase	£303	£303
Construction of garden, planting and installing a hedge	£8,300	£8,300
Purchase of heavy-duty and children's benches	£3,050	£3,050
Purchase of children's decorative items	£250	£0
Purchase of additional decorative items	£250	£0
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>£42,413</b>	<b>£41,913</b>
Build & Equipment Contingency	£2,200	£2,200
<b>Total</b>	<b>£44,613</b>	<b>£44,113</b>

19. As with all applications, there is a risk that costs will increase between application and approval. This is mitigated by the contingency (which will only be released if there is a demonstrated need). The applicant has secured quotes that support their costing, and will ultimately be funded based on evidenced, actual spend, up to the amount awarded.
20. Commercial & Finance – This funding request is for investment into a community area, which will be managed by a local school with the help of volunteers. The YFS contribution of 80% is a relatively low risk given the nature of the project and the positive support from the local community.

## Consultation

### Summary of Support

21. BVPS have engaged with the community through social media platforms and the local magazine. They have also consulted with local community groups, councillors and volunteers.
22. Have Your Say, which has had BVPS Wellbeing Garden featured on the Commonplace website, received 112 comments. There were two negative comments. The first respondent emphasised that the space was being wasted by developing a garden. In contrast, the second respondent stated that wildlife should be left alone to grow without the necessity of cutting it down. Letters of support have been received from:
- Tandridge District Councillor Gill Black
  - Surrey County Councillor Chris Farr – Godstone Ward
  - Tandridge District Councillor Liam Hammond – Bletchingley and Nutfield Ward
  - Ex Surrey County Councillor Rose Thorn – Godstone Ward
  - Tandridge District Councillor Tony Edouard Elias
  - 7 residents support emails were received highlighting others who are in support
23. The Divisional Councillor Chris Farr has commented as follows:

*“This project is for me what the Surrey fund should be geared towards, since it is an enhancement not just for wildlife on an existing green space but adds to the recreational aspect of the area whilst promoting outdoor education. I have no hesitation in adding my wholehearted support to the school in this matter”*

**Management and Implications:**

24. This application for funding has been through due diligence and agreed governance process. As part of this process the applicant has provided an overview of risks against the project. This is summarised below. Officers consider there to be adequate control measures in place.

**Table 3. Summary Table of Risks and Key Mitigations**

<b>Risk description</b>	<b>RAG</b>	<b>Mitigation action/strategy</b>
Volunteer Capacity		Create a volunteer schedule that clearly shows responsibilities for garden maintenance cover and identifies any gaps early on.
Delays		Ensure signing of contract is not delayed and includes penalties for delayed start. Review phasing of works according to actual start date.
Financial Risks		BVPS will monitor and undertake rigorous checks against claims of completed phased works. Designated contingency has been included to cover unexpected costings.

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**Consulted:**

Division County Councillor  
Commercial, Corporate Finance – Surrey County Council

**Sources/background papers:**

Your Fund Surrey Criteria  
Your Fund Surrey Governance Document