



Your Fund Surrey - Delegated Officer Decision Report

DATE: 16th May 2022

SUBJECT: YOUR FUND SURREY APPLICATION – Tatsfield Parish Council

PROJECT NAME: Ten Picnic Tables on a Lovely Village Green

CF REFERENCE: CF139

Purpose of the Report:

This decision record sets out the key information for publication on the decision by the Executive Director for Customer and Communities to approve expenditure for a Your Fund Surrey project located in Tatsfield on a Village Green.

This is to enable expenditure from the Your Fund Surrey to be awarded to projects which have been objectively scored and assessed to meet the criteria for Your Fund Surrey by Officers and further considered by the Your Fund Advisory Panel.

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

Recommendations:

Officer Recommendations in consultation with the Advisory Panel. It is recommended:

- 1. To fund project CF139 for the full amount requested of £10,146. No contingency to be held by SCC due to the simple one-off purchase of equipment.**
- 2. Approve the following conditions before funding can be released:**
 - A. An updated risk register provided to YFS that includes the new assets**
 - B. Evidence of updated insurance which covers the new assets**
 - C. Evidence that YFS funding is not being used to cover the insurance item in the project cost**

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.

Executive Summary

2. This proposal is for the purchase of ten recycled plastic, long-lasting and environmentally friendly picnic tables. The selected picnic tables are expected to have a life of 25 years and will be placed on the Westmore Green, providing a suitable outdoor meeting space for local people in the centre of the village. Two of the ten picnic tables will be wheelchair accessible.
3. The tables will be replacing five wooden picnic tables that were donated to the Parish Council during the Covid-19 pandemic when near end of life. The picnic tables were introduced as part of a project to tackle the social isolation and loneliness that many people felt during the pandemic. The tables were predicted to last only 2-3 months despite restoration by local volunteers and now over a year on they require replacing.
4. In addition the proposal includes six recycled planters to replace current planters in the village which are rotten. A local group, Tatsfield in Bloom, already provide volunteers to maintain the planters and will continue to do so.
5. The proposal will have a positive impact on local business. Having the benches in place gives residents an outdoor space to meet in whilst utilising the tearoom and shop. The outdoor space allowed the tearoom to open during the pandemic to offer take-away food and drink, this service is still in operation.
6. The applicant has demonstrated strong support from the local community, who are keen to see their outdoor meeting space be safeguarded for the future.

Details

Description of project benefits

7. Officers consider the project contributes towards the following areas of the SCC priorities 2021-2026:

Growing a sustainable economy so everyone can benefit

- Increased trade for local business by providing an outdoor meeting space, allowing for takeaway sales.

Tackling health inequality

- Increased opportunity for people to meet outside and encourages active lifestyles.

Enabling a greener future

- Using recycled materials to ensure long-life.

Empowering communities

- Provision of a local meeting place for residents to feel proud of.

Project Timeframes

8. The project timeframes are approximately 1 month, comprised of:

- 8.1. Ordering the assets from selected provider

- 8.2. Assembling and placing the assets
- 8.3. Risk assessing assets before opening for public use
- 8.4. Adding new assets to insurance policy

Management of the project

- 9. The overall management of the project will be led by the Parish Councillors, two of whom have experience in building and landscaping.
- 10. The Parish Council own the land on which the benches and planters will be situated. The new assets will be added to the current risk register and the maintenance of the picnic tables will be incorporated into the caretakers' responsibilities at no extra cost.
- 11. In addition to the picnic tables the project includes ground anchors, security chains and padlocks. These will be used to secure the picnic tables to the ground and will ensure their safety.
- 12. Tatsfield in Bloom already oversee the maintenance of the planters and they will continue with this. They will periodically inspect the picnic tables and report any issues to the Parish Council.

Project Lifespan

- 13. The sustainably sourced, recycled plastic picnic tables and planters will have a life expectancy of 25 years.

Financial and Value for Money Implications

- 14. YFS funding is requested for purchase of ten picnic benches and six planters. The project has applied for £10,146 which equates to 95% of the overall project costs.
- 15. Table 1. Financial Summary details the £500 of other funding which has been secured against the total project cost of £10,646.
- 16. Table 2. Project Cost Breakdown and Grant Utilisation, YFS funding is be attributed across all capital elements of the project. The insurance cost is not eligible for YFS and evidence that this is met from other funding will be sought. The applicant has secured quotes that support their costing, and will ultimately be funded based on evidenced, actual spend, up to the amount awarded.

Table 1. Financial summary

Amount applied for:	£10,146
Total project cost:	£10,646
Percentage of cost against total:	95%
Have other funding sources been secured?	Yes
Other funding:	£500 Roseheath Foundation
Volunteer contributions	Yes
Is there a commercial element to the project?	No
Amount suggested for funding:	£10,146

Table 2. Project Cost breakdown and Grant Utilisation:

Activity	Total Cost	YFS Contribution
Picnic Tables x 10	£7,195	£7,195
Ground Anchors x 10	£179	£179

Padlocks x 10	£265	£265
Security chains x 10	£195	£195
Planters	£2,790	£2,312
Insurance	£22	£0
Total	£10,646	£10,146

Assessment of the application against the criteria for the fund:

- 22. This application for funding has been through the due diligence and agreed governance process for the fund, which are publicly available on the County Council website.
- 23. The application has been subject to a rigorous two step application process involving assessment and scoring by Your Fund Surrey Officers, with input from the Expert hub, a group of specialist Officers providing insight for the eligibility of funding. The application has been assessed and scored independently by three Officers whose scores are then moderated. A summary of the Assessment Report comments against the funds five published scoring criteria are set out in Annex 2.

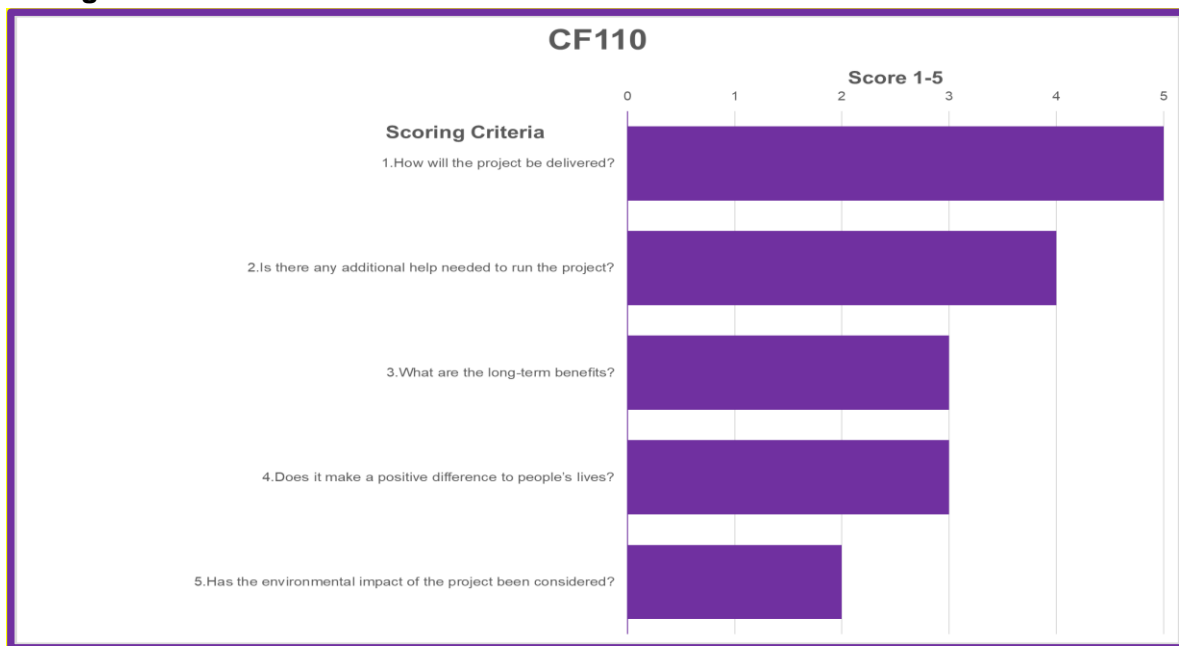
Expert Hub Review

- 24. Finance – The full YFS financial standing assessment has not been completed due to the small value and straight forward nature of this application. The documents presented do not raise any concerns with this request to fund the acquisition of benches for Tatsfield.
- 25. Tatsfield PC brought forward balance has been falling over covid times and it is not believed this project could necessarily be afforded despite the increase in the precept, likely to cover inflation and increasing current costs such as the social care levy NI employer's payment, energy bills etc.

Score Breakdown

- 26. The application scored a total of 366 out of 500 when scored by Officers broken down as follows:

Figure 1. Assessment score breakdown



Advisory Panel Comments

27. The Advisory Panel functions in an advisory capacity and its role is intended to assist formal decision-making processes which sit outside the Panel. 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.
28. The Advisory Panel was conducted via email and positive responses were received from seven of the nine Members on the panel. Responses were not received by two panel Members. A query was raised by one Member about the extent of the insurance that the applicants have on the assets, particularly whether their insurance policy covers theft and vandalism. YFS Officers explored this further with the applicant and satisfactory responses were provided.

Consultation

Summary of Support

29. Have your say, which has had the Tatsfield Benches featured on the Commonplace website, received 83 comments (66 of these comments confirmed their email addresses, meaning their views were visible on Have Your Say). There were no negative comments received.
30. Other examples of support include:
- 43 positive engagements on a Parish Council Facebook post asking for views on the project
 - 3 emails from residents supporting the project
 - Sheree's Store and Tearoom, a local business close to the project

31. The Divisional Councillor Becky Rush has commented as follows:

I am hugely supportive of this Your Fund Surrey application CF139 Picnic Benches. Tatsfield village is a small community of c 1,700 residents sited in the far Northeast corner of Surrey on top of the Surrey Hills. The centre of the village is a village green with a recently refurbished duck pond, local café and village shop. During the pandemic this area became a community meeting point with villagers coming together and catching up over a cup of tea in an outdoor setting using some dilapidated wooden benches which are well past their best.

The use of this area by villagers and visitors (it has been "discovered" and is very popular with walkers and cyclists) has continued to thrive and this application from the village is to invest in new long lasting picnic benches, with disability access, to enhance the area, be inclusive, and continue to encourage this community spirit and opportunity to catch up with friends and neighbours.

The replacement picnic tables have been well researched and will be wood effect to ensure they fit with the aesthetic whilst provide longevity of life; they will be in two areas, by the pond and by the children's playground. These will be a fantastic community addition for the village and will be well used all year round.

Risk Management and Implications:

32. This application for funding has been through the 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 5. Summary Table of Risks and Key Mitigations

Risk description	RAG	Mitigation action/strategy
Delivery delays or lack of stock		Multiple suppliers have been identified

Cost increases		Multiple suppliers have been identified that can provide at similar cost
Lack of use of facilities		Parish Council and local businesses to promote the new benches.
Damage to assets		Regular inspections and safety mechanisms in place

Section 151 Officer commentary:

33. Although significant progress has been made to improve the Council's financial position, the medium-term financial outlook beyond 2022/23 remains uncertain. With no clarity on central government funding in the medium term, our working assumption is that financial resources will continue to be constrained, as they have been for the majority of the past decade. This places an onus on the Council to continue to consider issues of financial sustainability as a priority in order to ensure stable provision of services in the medium term.
34. The long-term sustainability of the projects funded by Your Fund Surrey is a key factor in assessing their suitability. Certain projects are relatively straightforward, where ongoing sustainability relies only on identifying a modest and reasonably secure source of funds to maintain an asset.
35. The finance and commercial assessment is set out in paragraphs 24 and 25, along with a summary of risk and mitigations set out in paragraph 32. These factors set out alongside the expected benefits of the project have been scrutinised and challenged by officers and are deemed acceptable in this instance. An important consideration is that Your Fund Surrey is a key part of the Council's Empowering Community approach focused upon enabling communities through investing in a meaningful and lasting way. Therefore, the success of Your Fund Surrey will set against establishing a different relationship with communities, empowering them to be more self-reliant. In forging that relationship, the success of individual projects will vary within the benefits delivered by the programme as a whole. Learning points from successful and unsuccessful projects will be taken and used to inform the development and evolution of the fund over time.
36. The borrowing costs associated with the fund have been fully built into the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy.
37. This is a low value and low risk project, providing assets directly to a community and is widely supported.

Equalities and Diversity:

38. Your Fund is designed to provide investment in schemes that encourage community participation, reduce isolation, and develop the potential for social wellbeing and economic prosperity. As such it is anticipated that it will have a positive impact on a number of those who may rely on or gain support from within the local community and those within protected characteristics that may be more likely to experience social and economic exclusion.
39. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been produced for YFS and was circulated as an Annex to the YFS Cabinet Report 26th January 2021.

Legal implications – Monitoring Officer:

40. The report sets out the information and steps for the consideration of the application further to the Council's governance arrangements for Your Fund Surrey.

41. Further to those arrangements, if approved, the Council and the organisation will enter into a comprehensive funding agreement which will include the performance measures that will be put in place to ensure the funding is used as intended as well as clearly describing any support or additional conditions agreed as part of the funding award.

Other Implications:

42. The potential implications for the following council priorities and policy areas have been considered. Where the impact is potentially significant a summary of the issues is set out in detail below.

Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children	No direct implications
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children & adults	No direct implications
Environmental sustainability	Use of recycled plastic to ensure that the plastic does not go to landfill and the assets can have a long-life.
Public Health	The project has a positive impact on wider health determinants with specific reference to users being encouraged to be outdoors and use the facility to decrease social isolation and increase community cohesion.

What Happens Next:

- Following Delegated Officer approval of the funding a notice of the records of decisions taken under delegated power, will be published within 3 days of the decision being made. A note of this decision will be included in the YFS Decision Tracker and the next Cabinet report containing an update on Your Fund Surrey.
- Officers will prepare the relevant schedules and funding agreements to enable payment of funds and monitoring and evaluation of the project against its outcomes.
- The YFS Team officers will then issue a provisional offer of funding to the applicant, including a copy of the draft Funding Agreement incorporating any additional conditions.

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Consulted:

Division County Councillor

Corporate finance

Annexes:

Annex 1: Summary Scoring Comments

Sources/background papers:

Your Fund Surrey Governance Document

Annex 1: Summary of Scoring Comments

Criteria 1 - How will the project be delivered?

This proposal is a very simple purchase and installation. The Parish Council will include the assets in their risk assessments and maintenance schedules. Parish Councillors and local volunteers will be able to maintain the assets.

Criteria 2 - Is there any additional help needed to run, the project?

Additional help for the project is being provided by Tatsfield in Bloom, a local volunteer group. Resident support is high for the project, and it is likely that more volunteers would come forward if needed. The Parish Council has plenty resources to delivery this project.

Criteria 3 - What are the long-term benefits?

The project will safeguard a well-used community meeting space for another 25 years. The tables will help to further reduce social isolation caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and will benefit community cohesion. The local business will also benefit as footfall to the area will increase.

Criteria 4 - Does it make a positive difference to people's lives?

For the level of funding requested this project offers sufficient evidence that a positive different will be made. The picnic tables will be a focal point for the community and will enhance social cohesion.

Criteria 5 - Has the environmental impact of the project been considered?

This small nature of this bid means there can be limited impact on the environment. The use of recycled plastic is positive, and the benches may encourage people to stay local for outdoor space, reducing the need to travel by car.

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