

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**CABINET MEMBER FOR CUSTOMER AND COMMUNITIES****DATE: 31 OCTOBER 2023****REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER: DENISE TURNER-STEWART – CABINET MEMBER FOR CUSTOMER AND COMMUNITIES****LEAD OFFICER: MARIE SNELLING – EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR CUSTOMER AND COMMUNITIES****SUBJECT: YOUR FUND SURREY APPLICATION – Puttenham Community Transport Hub****ORGANISATION STRATEGY PRIORITY AREA: EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES****Purpose of the Report:**

This report sets out the Your Fund Surrey application from **Puttenham Parish Council** for the consideration of the Cabinet Member for Customer and Communities.

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.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Cabinet Member:

- 1. Approves the full amount requested of £175,658 composed of:**
 - **£135,933 capital funding towards to construction of the community transport hub to be paid in staged payments on evidence of spend.**
 - **£30,943 (20%) to be held by SCC as contingency.**
 - **£8,782 (5%) to be held by SCC until final evidence of income, expenditure and evaluation has been received.**

Reason for Recommendations:

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 wider aims and published criteria of the fund to justify funding. The project is robust and there are no concerns that the objectives won't be delivered. The project did not, however, score as highly as other Your Fund Surrey projects in terms of delivering wider community benefit.

The project aims to develop neglected wasteland to provide improved and safer access to the village of Puttenham to encourage residents and visitors to enjoy the existing open spaces, community facilities and village amenities. It will also provide disabled access to the annual events held in the village, held to raise funds for local good causes.

Executive Summary:

1. Puttenham Parish Council (PPC) are seeking to redevelop an unused area of wasteland close the centre of the village into an environmentally friendly community transport hub. The area is located to the south west of Jubilee Field (see annex 1) and is currently used as an impromptu turning circle. The land is uneven and unsafe causing problems with access to the local green spaces and the local primary school.
2. PPC have listened to feedback from their community which has highlighted the need for this area of land to be redeveloped for residents to have improved access to the open spaces. The project seeks to level the area making it useable; including electric charging vehicle points and cycle racks to support the expansion of green transportation. There is a trackway from the main road into the area of land, the project will also improve this trackway and incorporate passing places. All of the land is owned by PCC and therefore SCC have no responsibility for its maintenance.

Project Summary

3. Puttenham is a village in the Borough of Guildford and the Division of Shalford. Although close to larger towns (Guildford and Farnham), the village itself is fairly rural and remote.

Lower Super Output Area (LSOA)	Pilgrims, rank 20764
National Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)	7
Surrey Index of Multiple Deprivation	3
Neighbouring LSOAs	Godalming central & Ockford, 9226 (Surrey decile 1) Milford, 18627 (Surrey decile 3)

4. Jubilee Field is a key green space in the area, providing access to various amenities including a skatepark, adventure playground, table tennis table, outdoor gym, tennis court, a football pitch with pavilion and a community orchard. All the amenities are open for the public, but are currently underutilised due to poor access and lack of parking provision. This is particularly the case for people with mobility issues.
5. Yearly events are also held at Jubilee Field, including the annual fireworks night which attracts 4,000 visitors per year. This would benefit from having improved access as participation at this, and other similar community events are currently restricted. The annual fireworks night and summer fair raise considerable funds for local good causes and the funding would enable these events to become accessible for those with mobility challenges or disabilities.
6. The proposed development will also enhance the safety of children using the adjacent skatepark and playground. It is currently dangerous as the area is used as an impromptu turning circle. This risk will be significantly reduced by this project.
7. People from outlying villages often visit Puttenham to visit the countryside or use the facilities. Many travel by bike and so the hub would provide a safe place to store them. It may also encourage others to travel by bike, the Headteacher at the nearby local Primary School is particularly supportive of the project as it will improve safety during

school drop-off and collection times as the village can get very congested. This, in turn, would help with pupil punctuality.

8. Colleagues from the Surrey County Council Highways team have utilised a portion of their annual volunteer time to support PPC in designing and planning the project.

Details

Description of project benefits

9. The key benefits from this project are:
 - Supports greener travel and encourage people to travel by bike
 - Improve access to existing green spaces and recreation grounds
 - Provides disabled parking and access to annual village events
 - Improves safety for children attending the local primary school and using the recreation facilities
 - Encourages visitors to the village

Project Timeframes

10. The project is relatively small and should not take longer than three weeks to complete, depending on weather conditions.

Management of the project

11. PPC will be overall responsible for developing and managing the site, working in partnership with the chosen contractor to deliver the project. On-going maintenance is expected to be low but will be the responsibility of PPC. A project group has been established, consisting of The Chairman of PCC, Vice-Chairman of PCC and a Parish Councillor.

Financial and Value for Money Implications

12. YFS funding is requested for the key elements of the project. The project has applied for £175,658 which equates to 95% of the overall project costs.
13. Table 1. Financial Summary details the £10,000 of other funding which has been secured against the total project cost of £185,658.
14. Table 2. Project Cost Breakdown and Grant Utilisation, itemises the allocation of YFS grant against specific works.

Table 1. Financial summary

Amount applied for:	£175,658
Total project cost:	£185,658
Percentage of cost against total:	95%
Have other funding sources been secured?	Yes
Other funding:	<u>Achieved</u> Puttenham Parish Council contribution - £5,000

	Puttenham and Wanborough Fete Committee - £1,000 Puttenham and Wanborough Community Group - £1,000 <u>Expected</u> Puttenham Bonfire and Fireworks 2023 - £3,000
Volunteer contributions	Yes
Is there a commercial element to the project?	No
Amount suggested for funding:	£175,658

Table 2. Project Cost breakdown and Grant utilisation

Activity	Total Cost (Including VAT)
Clearing, levelling, drainage and laying hard core	£132,082*
Electrical charging points and cables	£17,766*
Cycle storage shed	£2,818*
Height restrictor	£2,049*
Contingency (20%)	£30,943*
Total	£185,658

*Denotes YFS funded elements

15. As with all applications, there is a risk that construction and purchase costs will increase between application and approval. This is mitigated by the contingency (which will only be released if there is 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.

Assessment of the application against the criteria for the fund:

Advisory Panel Comments

16. The Advisory Panel functions in an advisory capacity and its role is intended to assist the formal decision-making processes which sit outside the Panel.
17. The Advisory Panel met on 20th September 2023. A number of questions were raised from Members regarding the future running of the car park and whether other departments in Surrey CC could contribute funding. Members requested that further information was sent post-panel before they submitted final views on the project. There were subsequently additional concerns raised regarding the community benefits of the project and percentage of funding being requested from SCC. The majority of the Advisory Panel supported the project, sighting the benefits to the local village, however one Member objected as the project had not scored highly in some areas.

Consultation

Summary of Support

18. Have your say, which has had Puttenham Community Transport Hub featured on the Commonplace website, received 151 comments. There were no negative comments.
19. The community car park was included in the Neighbourhood plan, approved and voted on in 2021. The project was further developed after Puttenham Parish Council conducted a review – the recreational and amenity survey – asking everyone in the village for their views via a door to door survey. As a result of these discussions, the project extended to include electric charging points and a safe bike storage facility.
20. Letters of support have been received from:
- Headteacher, Puttenham Church of England Primary School
 - Angela Richardson MP
21. The Divisional Councillor Matt Furniss provided the following supporting comment:

Your Fund Surrey Team

REF: Puttenham Parish Council Application

I am writing to fully support the Puttenham Parish Council application to YFS for the upgrade to the community field in the centre of the village.

The improvements to drainage, access, safety and environmentally sustainable travel options will benefit the village and the wider community.

It will enable the village community to hold improved events for fundraising which support the many community groups in the area plus provide a safer travel scenario for the local school which will be supported by our Road Safety Team.

The resolution of the drainage and providing a stable surface will significantly enhance accessibility for everyone to the site which will allow everyone in the community to enjoy all events that take place.

The EV chargepoints also allow for those without a drive (as on street charging will be challenging) to make the switch to a more environmentally friendly way of travel.

I urge you to support this bid in full which has been carefully and thoroughly thought out in order to benefit the community of Puttenham and it has my fullest support.

Yours sincerely



Section 151 Officer commentary:
--

22. Significant progress has been made in recent years to improve the Council's financial resilience and the financial management capabilities across the organisation. Whilst this has built a stronger financial base from which to deliver our services, the increased cost of living, global financial uncertainty, high inflation and government policy changes mean we continue to face challenges to our financial position. This requires an increased focus on financial management to protect service delivery, a continuation of the need to be forward looking in the medium term, as well as the delivery of the efficiencies to achieve a balanced budget position each year.

23. In addition to these immediate challenges, the medium-term financial outlook beyond 2023/24 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 the stable provision of services in the medium term.

24. As such, the Section 151 Officer is assured the financial assessment of this project has been completed. There are concerns around the materially high value of YFS funding (at 95%) and that the minimal wider funding secured could demonstrate a lack of wider support. Whilst some public benefit can be envisaged there are concerns about value for money. From documentation submitted the project management will ensure the project is delivered to a high standard and that ultimately the YFS funding would be secure long term.

25. The borrowing costs associated with the fund have been fully built into the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy. The annual cost of borrowing for this specific project of £175,658 would be £10,237.

Legal implications – Monitoring Officer:

26. 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.

27. 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.

Equalities and Diversity:

28. 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 the local community and particularly those with protected characteristics that may be more likely to experience social and economic exclusion.

29. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been produced for YFS and was circulated as an Annex to the YFS Cabinet Report 26th January 2021.

Risk Management and Implications:

30. The applicant has provided an overview of risks against the project in Table 3 below. Officers consider there to be adequate control measures in place.

Table 3. Summary Table of Risks and Key Mitigations

Risk description	RAG	Mitigation action/strategy
Poor weather during construction		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project may lengthen in time, but the area will be closed off to Members of the Public
Vandalism of the site		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project site will be sealed off to members of the public during the construction phase

Other Implications:

31. 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.

Table 4: Implications for council priorities and policy areas

Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children	No direct implications
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children & adults	Improves capacity to safeguard vulnerable people at a well-used community venue
Environmental sustainability	Enhanced environmental credentials of the building
Public Health	The project has a positive impact on wider health outcomes, with young people, women and girls and those with disabilities being encouraged to increase their physical activity. Increased socialisation amongst vulnerable groups.

What Happens Next:

- Following Cabinet Member 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.
- 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.

Report Authors:

Patrick Culligan, yourfund@surreycc.gov.uk, Nikki Tagg, yourfund@surreycc.gov.uk

Consulted:

Division County Councillor

Corporate Finance – Surrey County Council

Sources/background papers:

YFS Criteria

YFS Governance Document

This page is intentionally left blank