

Cabinet

- Date and Time - **Monday 4 September 2023 – 6:30pm**
Venue - **Council Chamber, Town Hall, Bexhill-on-Sea**
-

Councillors appointed to the Committee:

Councillor D.B. Oliver (Leader), C.A. Bayliss (Deputy Leader), S.M. Prochak, MBE (Deputy Leader), T.J.C. Byrne, S.J. Coleman, K.M. Field, A.K. Jeeawon, R.A. McCourt, A. Rathbone Ariel and H.L. Timpe.

AGENDA

1. MINUTES

To authorise the Leader to sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2023 as a correct record of the proceedings.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

3. ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS

To consider such other items as the Leader decides are urgent and due notice of which has been given to the Head of Paid Service by 9:00am on the day of the meeting.

4. URGENT DECISIONS

The Leader to give details of those reports that have been referred to the Chairman of the Council to consider designating as urgent, in accordance with Rule 17 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules contained within Part 4 of the Council Constitution, and to which the call-in procedure will not therefore apply.

5. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

To receive any disclosure by Members of personal and disclosable pecuniary interests in matters on the agenda, the nature of any interest and whether the Member regards the personal interest as prejudicial under the terms of the Code of Conduct. Members are reminded of the need to repeat their declaration immediately prior to the commencement of the item in question.

6. REVENUE BUDGET AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING QUARTER 1 2023/24 (Pages 3 - 14)

At the discretion of the Leader, the order of the items set out in the agenda may be varied

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Rother District Council putting residents at the heart of everything we do.

7. **LAWN TENNIS ASSOCIATION TENNIS FOUNDATION GRANT** (Pages 15 - 20)
8. **COMMUNITY GRANTS SCHEME - ROUND 1** (Pages 21 - 32)

Lorna Ford
Chief Executive

Agenda Despatch Date: 24 August 2023

Rother District Council

Report to:	Cabinet
Date:	4 September 2023
Title:	Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Monitoring as at Quarter 1 - 2023/24
Report of:	Duncan Ellis – Interim S151 Officer
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Jeeawon
Ward(s):	All
Purpose of Report:	To note the estimated financial outturn for 2023/24 based on expenditure and income to the end of Quarter 1, 30 June 2023.
Decision Type:	Non-Key

Officer

Recommendation(s): It be **RESOLVED**: That

- 1) the report be noted;
- 2) the virements to reflect the new service structure as contained within paragraph 2 and Appendix A be approved; and
- 3) the approached proposed to help manage the increasing costs of temporary accommodation in respect of leasing contained within paragraph 8 be approved.

Reasons for

Recommendations: To update Cabinet Members on the Quarter 1 position.

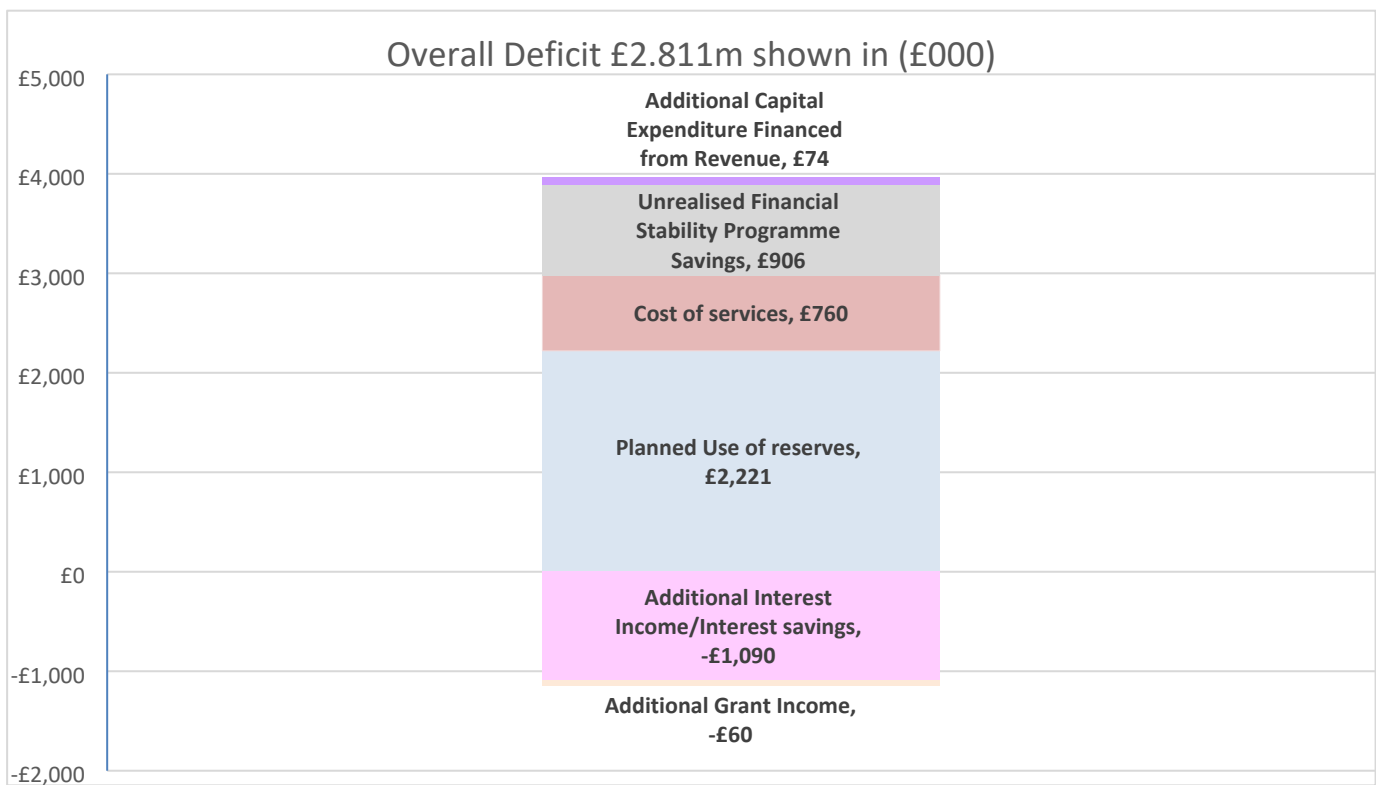
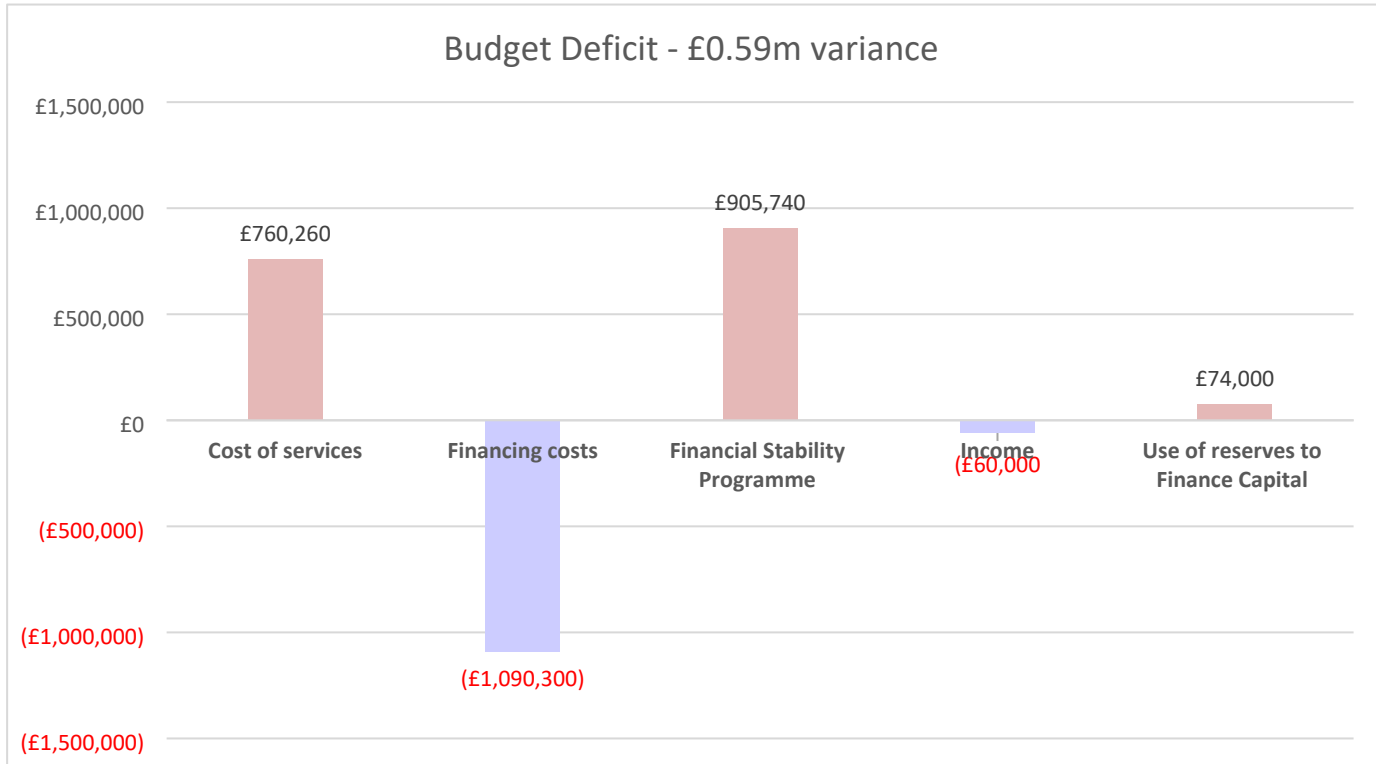
Introduction

1. This report updates Members on the Council's financial position as at the 30 June 2023 and projects a provisional outturn for 2023/24. The revenue budget and capital programme statements are summarised in Appendices A and B, respectively. The impact of the forecast on the Council's reserves is summarised in Appendix C. The report also includes a brief update on the Collection Fund performance.
2. The presentation of the revenue budget reflects the revised management reporting structure.
3. Since the detailed budget was approved by Cabinet on the 6 February 2023 a virement has been applied to reflect the internal service restructure, which is reported upon in Appendix A.

Overall position

4. The forecast for the 2023/24 financial year is based on the position as at 30 June 2023 and indicates a deficit position of £2.811m at 31 March 2024, against

a budgeted deficit of £2.21m which is a variance of £0.59m. In comparison, we drew down c£1.7m less from reserves in 2022/23. The opportunity remains for action to be taken to address this position to reduce the planned contribution from reserves and realise planned Financial Stability Programme (FSP) savings, both in year and ongoing, to address the financial position of the Council. The graph below shows the breakdown of the forecast variance to budget and the second graph shows the breakdown of the overall deficit.



Revenue Budget

5. The revenue budget forecast as at the 30 June 2023 indicates a deficit of £0.516m against the approved budgeted drawdown from Reserves of £2.035m resulting in a forecast reserve drawdown of £2.55m. The position is detailed in Appendix A and the main variances are summarised in paragraphs 6 to 12.

Cost of Services - £760,000 forecast deficit

Chief Executive – forecast Deficit £334,000

6. **Chief Executive** - £43k forecast deficit. The forecast includes an overspend in respect of staffing costs due to severance costs and agency cover for statutory officer posts.
- a. **Chief Finance Officer** – £43k surplus due to capitalisation of staff costs
 - b. **Democratic Services and Elections** - £313k forecast deficit. £243k of the deficit relates to unbudgeted costs of the Council's district elections and a further £60k relates to additional member related costs. The remaining deficit relates to systems and unbudgeted software inflation costs.
 - c. **Human Resources** - £20k forecast deficit. £8k of the deficit is in respect of staffing costs and £10k relates to unrealised anticipated savings on NNDR for the Town Hall with the remaining deficit made up of small amounts on materials etc.

Deputy Chief Executive – forecast Surplus (£62,000)

7. **Deputy Chief Executive** – (£4k) forecast surplus. This is made up of small surpluses on supplies and services.
- a. **Environmental Services, Licencing and Community Safety** – (£15k) forecast surplus. The surplus is due to additional income from fixed penalty notices (£33k) offset by additional salary costs.
 - b. **Revenues and Benefits** – (£73k) forecast surplus. The surplus is due to a large housing benefits overpayment (£40k) and salary savings (£75k) offset by increased systems and data costs of £47k.
 - c. **Internal Audit** – no forecast surplus/deficit.
 - d. **Digital and Customer Services** - £14k forecast deficit. The deficit is due to £9k of additional staffing costs and unbudgeted systems inflation costs of £5k.
 - e. **Corporate Programme and Improvement** - £21 k forecast deficit. This is due to additional staffing costs.
 - f. **Corporate Policy and Projects** – (£5k) forecast surplus. The surplus is due to additional unbudgeted income relating to the community lottery.

Director – Place and Climate Change – forecast Deficit £489,000

8. **Director - Place and Climate Change** - £2k forecast deficit. The deficit relates to additional costs of attendance at conferences.
- a. **Planning Development Management** - £79k forecast deficit. The deficit is due to £159k of additional staffing costs and £53k of additional systems costs offset by unbudgeted surplus income (£134k).
 - b. **Planning Policy** - £63k forecast deficit. The deficit is due to additional staffing costs.
 - c. **Neighbourhood Services** – (£102k) forecast surplus. The surplus is made up of savings on the grounds maintenance contract (£150k) and additional unbudgeted car park income (£200k) offset by additional costs of car park

resurfacing works of £45k, unrealised anticipated savings from devolvement of public conveniences to parishes of £140k, outstanding shortfalls on recycling property numbers of £50k and £14k of costs relating to new air pumps at Bexhill Leisure Centre.

d. Climate Change Strategy - £8k forecast deficit. The deficit is due to additional training costs.

e. Housing - £400k forecast deficit. The deficit is primarily due to estimated costs of temporary accommodation amounting to £540k reduced by £85k through proposed mitigating measures (see note below). Further costs relating to staffing costs of £85k and council tax on owned empty properties of £14k offset by unbudgeted income (£122k) relating to recovered DFG administration costs and underspends relating to the UK resettlement programme (£32k).

f. Regeneration - £39k forecast deficit. The deficit is due to £20k of additional staffing costs, £13k of additional maintenance salary costs, £5k of additional repairs costs, £19k of increased costs relating to properties offset by savings (£18k) related to business rates and void properties.

- **Housing – Temporary Accommodation (TA) – deficit £540k**

The forecast deficit in respect of TA of £540k is a significant concern and officers have been reviewing options to address this. The issue is being exacerbated by the amount of rent that the authority can offer private sector landlords – currently between Local Housing Allowance (LHA) levels and 10% below these.

With increasing costs it is not currently viable for landlords to accept our rental offers and it is proposed that payments increase. The table below demonstrates the cost savings to the TA budget should market rent be paid to landlords. The market rent in the below table is the average across Rother. Knowledge of the Private Rented Sector Team and localised market rents for each area would inform the offer to landlords without exceeding the market rent for Rother. The average monthly saving per household would be £1,025. Checks would be carried out to ensure landlords had not evicted previous tenants to access to this scheme and property checks under Housing Health and Safety Rating System would be carried out.

Bedrooms	Market Rent (pcm)	Current cost to RDC of 3 rd party TA (cost minus HB recovery, pcm)	Cost to council if market rent paid to owner (pcm)	Saving in TA costs (pcm, per placement)
1	£690	£1,411.28	£372.54	(£1,038.74)
2	£875	£1,515.25	£432.89	(£1,082.36)
3	£1150	£1,523.27	£584.39	(£938.88)
4	£1650	£2,043.50	£1,001.90	(£1,041.60)

If 15 properties were secured this would create a net annual saving of £169,125 (allowing one month void period for each property over a year). Given the position in the year it is anticipated that 50% of the net annual saving could be realised in 2023/24 reducing the deficit of £540k to £455k.

Should this proposal be agreed the impact on the forecast deficit position will be a reduction of (£85k) – this saving has been assumed in the overall forecast position (see appendix A).

Net Financing Costs – forecast Surplus (£1,090,000)

9. The budget was calculated on the assumption that the pace of the Council's capital programme would accelerate significantly once lockdown had finished. The interest due to be paid is lower than expected by (£470k) and the MRP is expected to be £291k higher than anticipated. Members should note that Financing costs will be subject to a detailed review of the capital programme for affordability. The review will be crucial in determining future programme deliverability, particularly in view of high inflation and recently increasing interest rates.
10. Interest income from investments is expected to yield an additional (£710,000) due to the interest rate increases since the budget was calculated. Further increases in the Bank of England base rate are likely to see these rates climb slightly further during 2023/24.
11. The budgeted contingency is shown as a surplus for the purposes of the report.

Financial Stability Programme – forecast Deficit £906,000

12. A number of small savings are being forecast by the end of the financial year, currently driven mainly by Neighbourhood Services and IT, but more are being sought to be delivered on the planned savings budget and need to be confirmed by budget holders in Quarter 2. Members will receive a financial update in the early autumn committee reporting cycle with a plan to address Financial Stability Programme forecasts for 2023/24 and for the following years of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Income – forecast Surplus (£60,000)

13. Since the budget was approved the Council have received several small grants totalling £60,000 from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing & Communities. The largest sum is a New Burdens grant of £34,000.

Capital Programme

14. The Capital Programme comprises a range of strategic projects that span more than one year and many operate for several years or have recurrent investments. Projects that have not spent all their allocation in the year of inception have the remaining funding carried forward into future financial years, profiled based on the anticipated expenditure for the project. The Interim S151 Officer is working with Heads of Service and elected Members to undertake a fundamental review of capital schemes which currently amount to more than £155m as reported in the 2022/23 outturn report. The table below shows the profiling of the capital programme as forecast as at 30 June 2023:

	23/24	24/25	25/26	26/27	27/28	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Capital Expenditure	27,696	68,045	23,503	8,694	28,183	156,121
Funded by:						
Capital Receipts	2,974	117	0	0	0	3,091
Grants & contributions	9,752	6,615	14,927	7,589	1,625	40,508
CIL	513	1,484	1,321	850	0	4,168
Borrowing	8,998	20,699	125	125	125	30,072
Capital Expenditure Charged to Revenue	260	130	130	130	130	780
Borrowing & Loan for RDC Housing Company Ltd	5,000	39,000	7,000	0	26,303	77,302
Section 106	200	0	0	0	0	200
Total	27,697	68,045	23,503	8,694	28,183	156,121

15. Appendix B shows the original budget approved by Cabinet on the 6 February 2023 updated for the outturn position as at 31 March 2023, new projects during Q1, scheme budget additions and reductions and re-profiling of anticipated expenditure over the MTFs period. The actuals figures represent expenditure (£2.4m – 8% of revised 2023/24 budget) incurred during the first 3 months of this financial year and the resulting variance is shown against the revised budget. At the time of writing a further £0.66m has been spent on capital projects
16. The revised 2023/24 budgets have been derived from reviewing the project cashflows and assessing the expected position at this time. Up to £27.7m is forecast to be spent in this financial year. During quarter 1 the following budget increases/decreases were applied to the capital programme:

Scheme	Increase £(000)	(Decrease) £(000)	Revised overall budget £(000)	Reason for change
De La Warr Pavilion Project	885		24,098	Inflation and cost increases
Heart of Sidley Programme	406		3,099	Inflation and cost increases
Bexhill Leisure Centre refurbishment	60		200	Capital investment in site
PIS - Beeching Park Estate		(22)	428	Project complete – no further spend
PIS - Buckhurst Place		(318)	10,182	Project complete – no further spend
Bexhill Promenade - Protective Barriers		(2)	48	Project complete – no further spend
Housing - Temporary Accommodation Purchase		(550)	17,644	Borrowing revised
Housing - Temporary Accommodation Purchase	195			Additional grant monies
Bexhill Promenade - Shelter 1		(12)	59	Project complete – no further spend
Total Scheme increases/(decreases)	1,546	(904)		
Funding				
Grants and contributions	1,486			
Borrowing		(904)		
Capital Receipts	60			
Total Funding increases/(decreases)	1,546	(904)		

The De La Warr Pavilion and Heart of Sidley scheme increases proposed are to take account of inflation and general cost increases since the original scheme values were calculated. It is anticipated that that these additional costs will be grant funded, albeit unsecured at this point, rather than an additional pressure on the Council's funding.

Impact on Reserves

17. The forecast impact on Reserves is a drawdown of £2.551m for revenue, which is £0.516m higher than the planned use of £2.035m and £0.260m for capital which is £74k higher than the planned use of reserves. Whilst the overall level of reserves is higher than budgeted this is due to lower use of reserves in 2022/23, resulting in higher than anticipated levels being brought forward into 2023/24. The additional forecast use of reserves will deplete these to £10m, although it should be noted that £3.7m of this relates to the Grants Reserve (see Appendix C).

Collection Fund

18. The collection rate as at the 30 June 2023 for the Council Tax part of the Collection Fund was 30.02% of the collectable debit, which is 0.21% higher than the corresponding figure in 2022/23. The budgeted yield is 30.65%, which is 0.3% lower than the same period in 2022/23. Collection performance is shown below:

	2023/2024	Equivalent Period 2022/2023
Income Received	£91,520,847.15	£86,307,494.22
Income Received as a % of collectable debit	30.02%	29.81%
Budgeted yield (at 98.3% collection)	£89,626,816.94	£84,513,438.24
Income Received as a % of budgeted yield	30.65%	30.45%

19. The collection rate as at the 30 June 2023 for the Business Rates part of the Collection Fund was 29.38% of the collectable debit, which is 0.11% higher than the corresponding figure in 2022/23. Collection performance is shown below:

	2023/2024	Equivalent Period 2022/2023
Collectable debit	£17,010,648.28	£17,721,864.63
Income Received	£4,997,899.91	£5,186,524.73
Income Received as a % of collectable debit	29.38%	29.27%
Amount outstanding for year	£12,012,748.37	£12,535,339.90

20. Collection rates have held up well despite the squeeze on finances following the pandemic and the cost of living crisis. Current economic situation may well lead to a decline in future collection rates, which will have an adverse impact on the income that the Council receives from Council Tax and Business Rates.

Conclusion

21. The forecast outturn at Quarter 1 2023/24 is a deficit of £2.811 million, which is £0.59m higher than the approved planned use of Reserves. The Interim S151 Officer will work closely with Heads of Services and Members to reduce areas of overspend and the impact on reserves.
22. The Council's capital programme is forecast to outturn at £27.7m with £8.2m being re-profiled into future years of the MTFs based on the anticipated timing of the expenditure.

Other Implications	Applies?	Other Implications	Applies?
Human Rights	No	Equalities and Diversity	No
Crime and Disorder	No	External Consultation	No
Environmental	No	Access to Information	No
Risk Management	No	Exempt from publication	No

Chief Executive	Lorna Ford
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Appendices:	Appendix A Revenue Budget Forecast Appendix B Capital Programme Forecast Appendix C Reserves
Relevant Previous Minutes:	None.
Background Papers:	None.
Reference Documents:	None.

Revenue Budget 2023/24 Forecast as at the 30 June 2023

Line	Rother District Council General Fund Summary	Original 2023/24 Budget £ (000)	Revised Budget 23/24 Q1 £ (000)	23/24 Q1 Actual £ (000)	2023/24 Q1 Forecast £ (000)	2023/24 Q1 Variance £ (000)
1	Deputy Chief Executive	331	331	11	327	(4)
1a	Environmental Services, Licensing & Community Safety	676	676	252	661	(15)
1b	Revenues & Benefits	1,308	1,308	1,868	1,235	(73)
1c	Internal Audit	165	165	43	165	(0)
1d	Digital & Customer Services	1,899	1,899	297	1,913	14
1e	Corporate Programme & Improvement	94	94	25	115	21
1f	Corporate Policy & Projects	402	402	149	397	(5)
2	Chief Executive	354	354	121	397	43
2a	Chief Finance Officer	1,483	1,483	392	1,440	(43)
2b	Democratic Services	652	652	461	965	313
2c	Human Resources Services	512	512	198	532	20
3	Director Place and Climate Change	115	115	32	117	2
3a	Planning Development Management	658	658	30	737	79
3b	Planning Policy	471	471	285	534	63
3c	Neighbourhood Services	5,942	5,942	616	5,840	(102)
3d	Climate Change Strategy	71	71	9	79	8
3e	Housing	2,607	2,607	483	3,007	400
3f	Regeneration	(873)	(873)	(694)	(834)	39
4	Total Cost of Services	16,867	16,867	4,580	17,627	760
5	Interest from Investments	(586)	(586)	(228)	(1,296)	(710)
6	MRP	224	224	0	515	291
7	Interest payments	1,106	1,106	228	635	(471)
8	Budget Contingency	200	200	0	0	(200)
9	Salaries turnover	0	0	0	0	0
10	(i) Increase income - Property Investment Strategy					
11	(ii) Increase income (net) - other	(69)	(69)	0	0	69
12	(iii) Lean and Demand	(180)	(180)	0	0	180
13	(iv) Service Prioritisation	(762)	(762)	0	(200)	562
14	(v) Reduced Staffing Structure	(95)	(95)	0	0	95
15	Net Cost of Services	16,705	16,705	4,580	17,281	576
	Income					
16	Special Expenses	(751)	(751)	0	(751)	0
17	Net Business Rates and Section 31 Grants	(4,699)	(4,699)	0	(4,699)	0
18	Non-specific Revenue Grants	(1,570)	(1,570)	0	(1,630)	(60)
19	Council Tax Requirement (Rother only)	(7,650)	(7,650)	0	(7,650)	0
20	Other Financing Contributions to/(from) Earmarked Reserves	186	186	0	260	74
21	Total Income	(14,484)	(14,484)	0	(14,470)	14
22	Contributions from Reserves/Funding Gap	(2,221)	(2,221)	0	2,811	590

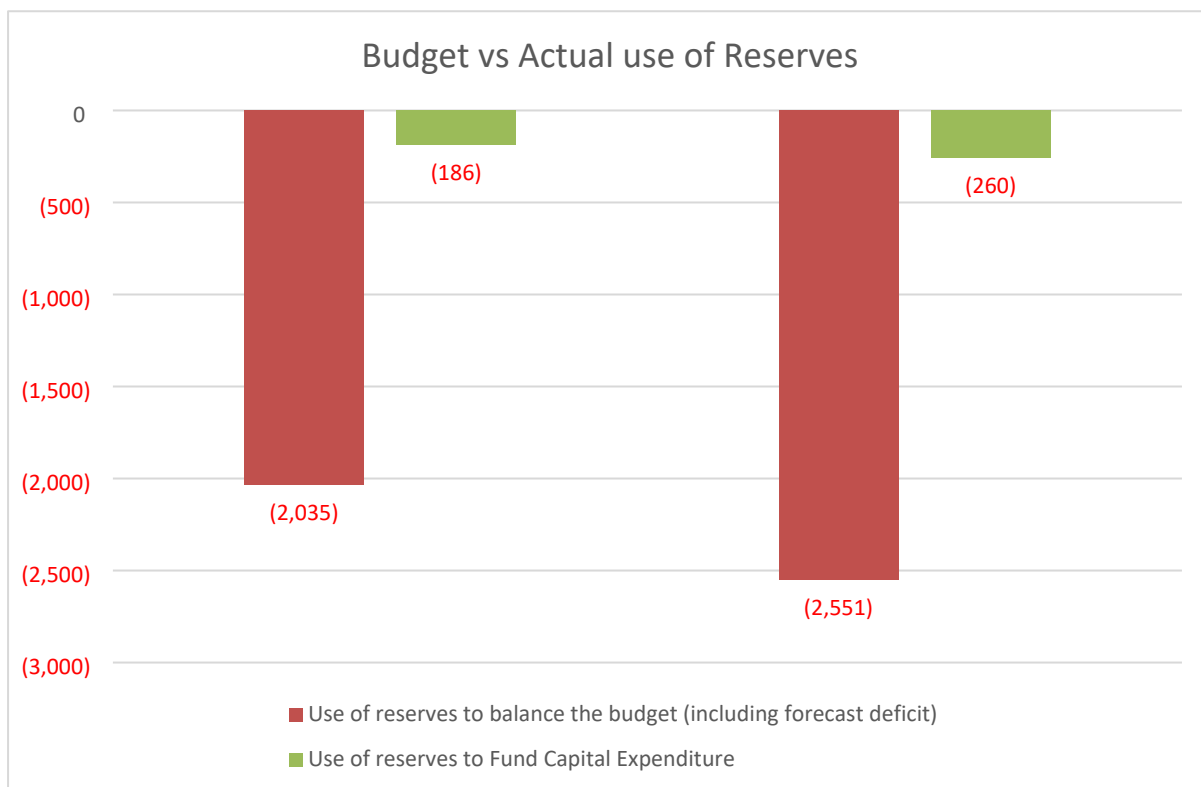
Capital Programme 2023/24 Forecast as at the 30 June 2023

	Total scheme budget At 22/23 Outturn	Prior year spend	Total scheme budget increases/ (decreases) in Q1 23/24	Remaining scheme budget	2023/24 Q1 Budget Re profiles	Budgets profiled into 24/25- 27/28	2023/24 Budget Updated	2023/24 Q1 Actual	2023/24 Q1 Variance	
	£ (000)	£ (000)	£ (000)	£ (000)	£ (000)	£ (000)	£ (000)	£ (000)	£ (000)	
Acquisitions, Transformation and Regeneration										
Other Schemes										
Corporate Document Image Processing System	120	33	0	87	0	0	87	0	(87)	
Rother Transformation ICT Investment	386	269	0	117	0	0	117	0	(117)	
Community Grants	1,416	636	0	780	0	520	260	18	(242)	
Development of Town Hall Bexhill	856	856	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	
Ravenside Roundabout	200	0	0	200	(200)	200	0	0	0	
UK Shared Prosperity Fund	131	0	0	131	0	0	131	0	(131)	
CIL Scheme 1 Village Hall Energy Project	500	17	0	483	(116)	141	342	0	(342)	Re-profile into 24/25
Property Investment Strategy										
Beeching Road Hotel and Foodstore Development	15,000	396	0	14,604	(2,500)	14,500	104	6	(98)	Minimal spend in 23/24 - re-profiled into 24/25
PIS - Beeching Park Estate	450	0	(22)	428	0	0	428	428	(0)	Scheme spend complete
PIS - Beeching Road 18-40 (Creative Workspace)	1,235	1,235	0	0	0	0	0	0	(0)	
Barnhorn Green GP Surgery and Industrial Development	9,741	1,486	0	8,255	0	4,942	3,313	107	(3,206)	
PIS - Buckhurst Place	10,500	10,182	(318)	0	0	0	0	0	0	Scheme spend complete
Housing Development Schemes										
Community Led Housing Scheme - CHF	327	327	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	
Blackfriars Housing Development - infrastructure only	11,500	6,416	0	5,084	0	0	5,084	671	(4,413)	
RDC Housing Company Ltd Investment	79,923	2,620	0	77,303	(2,000)	72,303	5,000	0	(5,000)	Re-profile into 24/25
Development of council owned sites	270	57	0	213	0	0	213	0	(213)	
King Ofa Residential scheme	805	146	0	659	-300	300	359	19	(340)	Re-profile into 24/25
Mount View Street Development - Housing	4,493	4,493	0	0	0	0	0	0	(0)	
Community Led Housing Schemes - Cemetery Lodge	200	0	0	200	0	0	200	0	(200)	
Camber, Old Lydd Road	369	27	0	342	-202	202	140	3	(138)	Re-profile into 24/25
Housing and Community Services										
De La Warr Pavilion - Capital Grant	388	275	0	113	0	57	56	15	(41)	
Bexhill Leisure Centre - site development	396	318	0	78	0	0	78	0	(78)	
Fairlight Coastal Protection	291	74	0	217	0	150	67	0	(67)	
Disabled Facilities Grant	14,223	6,098	0	8,125	0	6,500	1,625	381	(1,244)	
Sidley Sports and Recreation	857	857	0	0	0	0	0	(12)	(13)	
New bins	1,153	518	0	635	0	500	135	0	(135)	
Bexhill Promenade - Protective Barriers	50	48	(2)	0	0	0	0	0	(0)	No further spend anticipated
Housing - Temporary Accommodation Purchase	12,830	5,364	(355)	7,112	0	750	6,362	657	(5,705)	Borrowing element overstated - adjusted to re-align
Bexhill Promenade - Shelter 1	71	59	(12)	0	0	0	0	0	(0)	No further spend anticipated
Bexhill Promenade - Outfall pipe	200	9	0	191	0	0	191	0	(191)	
Bexhill Leisure Centre - refurbishment	140	110	60	90	0	60	30	0	(30)	Additional capital investment
Capital - Sidley House Open Space Improvements - Parks LUF	75	4	0	71	0	0	71	1	(70)	
Pebsham Toilets	54	0	0	54	0	0	54	0	(54)	
Camber Conveniences	1,012	0	0	1,012	(943)	943	69	0	(69)	CIL element re-profiled into 24/25
Strategy & Planning										
Payments to Parishes - CIL	211	40	0	171	0	0	171	0	(171)	
Resources										
ICT Infrastructure Replacement Programme	137	137	0	0	0	0	0	0	(0)	
New website development	31	23	0	8	0	0	8	0	(8)	
Invest To Save initiatives (Financial Stability Prog)	750	45	0	705	0	0	705	0	(705)	
LUF De La Warr Pavilion Project LUF Grant	23,203	9	885	24,079	(539)	22,058	2,021	12	(2,009)	Revised cost predictions and spend re-profiled
Capital - LUF Programme	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	25	25	
LUF Heart of Sidley Programme	2,692	2	406	3,096	83	2,825	271	6	(265)	Revised cost predictions and spend re-profiled
Battle Train Station	1,000	0	0	1,000	(1,000)	1,000	0	0	0	Re-profiled into 25/26
Seddlescombe Traffic Calming Measured	74	0	0	74	(74)	74	0	0	0	Re-profiled into 25/26
Battle Sports Pavilion	400	0	0	400	(400)	400	0	0	0	Re-profiled into 24/25
Total Capital Programme	205,697	50,218	642	156,121	(8,191)	128,425	27,696	2,338	(25,359)	8%
Funded By:										
Capital Receipts	3,192	1,092		2,100	0	117	2,974			
Grants and contributions	55,280	16,011	1,486	40,755	374	30,756	9,752			
CIL	3,978	57		3,921	(3,683)	3,655	513			
Borrowing	60,360	29,384	(904)	30,072	(2,882)	21,074	8,998			
Capital Expenditure Charged to Revenue	2,764	1,054	60	1,770	0	520	260			
Borrowing and Loan for Rother DC Housing Company Ltd	79,923	2,620		77,303	(2,000)	72,303	5,000			
Section 106	200	0		200	0	0	200			
Total Funding	205,697	50,218	642	156,121	(8,191)	128,425	27,696			

Reserves

Reserves forecast	2023/24 Budget	Q1 Forecast	Variance
	£000	£000	£000
Opening Balance	7,528	12,828	5,300
Use of reserves to balance the budget (including forecast deficit)	(2,035)	(2,551)	(516)
Use of reserves to Fund Capital Expenditure	(186)	(260)	(74)
Forecast balance	5,307	10,017	4,710

*As per draft 2022/23 Outturn (of which £3.7m relates to the Grants Reserve)



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Rother District Council

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 4 September 2023

Title: Lawn Tennis Association Tennis Foundation Grant

Report of: Deborah Kenneally, Head of Neighbourhood Services

Cabinet Member: Councillor Timpe

Ward(s): Central

Purpose of Report: To seek approval to accept a Lawn Tennis Association grant to deliver resurfacing of tennis courts and access gates in Egerton Park, Bexhill.

Decision Type: Non-Key

Officer

Recommendation(s): **Recommendation to COUNCIL:** That subject to Cabinet approval, funding of £104,070.50 be included in the Council's Capital Programme for 2023/2024;

AND

It be **RESOLVED:** That the £104,070.50 grant from the Lawn Tennis Association Tennis Foundation be formally accepted to deliver five refurbished tennis court surfaces and two controlled access gates for public use in Egerton Park, Bexhill.

Reasons for Recommendations: By accepting the grant and improving the courts, the Council commits to working with the Lawn Tennis Association and other partners to develop parks tennis, through making the courts more accessible, welcoming and enjoyable for members of the public.

Introduction

1. This funding programme is a nationwide investment totalling £30m, announced by the UK Government in October 2021 to refurbish tennis courts that are open to the public across the United Kingdom. The initiative is supported by investment from the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) Tennis Foundation and delivered by the LTA. The fund does not support private courts or tennis courts that are leased to clubs.
2. The funding programme is a key part of the LTA vision of "tennis opening up" and their mission to 'grow' tennis by making it 'relevant, accessible, welcoming, and enjoyable'. Park tennis courts are seen as vital for providing accessible and affordable opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to pick up a racket, get active, and enjoy playing tennis.

3. The funding is directed at bringing derelict or poor-quality park sites back into use, and improving existing facilities where there is potential to support growth in player numbers. Egerton Park tennis courts has been identified as one of the latter sites.
4. The funding will include court refurbishment and new gate access technology. The project does not require match funding from the Council, but the Council must give a commitment to maintain the courts and provide members of the public with access to tennis coaches to provide development programmes and achieve a sustainable increase in the use of the courts. The funding is only applicable to 'open access' public courts available to the public and used for tennis.
5. Increasing outdoor physical activity and promoting an active lifestyle is the main focus of Rother District Council's *Health and Wellbeing: Leisure Facilities Strategy* and tennis plays an important part in this outcome.

Details of the project

6. Egerton Park in Bexhill has eight tarmac courts and are the only courts owned by the Council in Rother District. Of the eight courts, two are leased to Bexhill Tennis Club and one is used as a general 'kick-a-bout', with the remaining five courts available to members of the public as tennis courts. The 'kick-about' court is popular with a wide range of children and young people, and their parents, and so should be retained.
7. As mentioned in paragraph 4 above, the funding criteria will only support courts that are used for tennis and open to the public. Officers have discussed this opportunity in detail with Bexhill Tennis Club (BTC) and after due consideration they have decided to apply for a new lease, and therefore BTC's two courts will not qualify for this funding. Options were explored by BTC to fund refurbishment themselves, including obtaining a quote from the LTA contractor, but are unable to cover the cost at this time. It is not known if other contractors could complete their court refurbishment at a lower cost so BTC may seek to progress this in the future through alternative contractors and funding avenues. Although historically the club has been granted three-year leases, longer leases may be possible and officers will work with BTC to seek an appropriate length of lease that will support BTC with future funding initiatives.
8. Council officers have worked with the LTA to progress an application to the Lawn Tennis Association Tennis Foundation for funding to refurbish five tennis courts and install two new access gates and have been successful in being offered a grant offer of £104,070.50.
9. The new gate access system will link into the existing ClubSpark system, and after booking and paying, members of the public will need to input a unique gate code to enter a court. This will support the Council's ability to ensure an income stream, and therefore a sustainable facility is developed.
10. The use of gate access technology has been piloted successfully through the LTA for the past three years across the UK, and the evidence from sites across the country is that installing gate access technology increases participation. This is because it means people can book a court online, in advance, and know it will be available when they arrive to play with friends and family, meaning it is

easier to get on court. It also means that free tennis sessions and coaching can be scheduled on the courts at specific times. Finally, it also helps reduce anti-social behaviour and vandalism which has been a problem on some courts in the past.

11. In return for this funding, the Council is required to maintain a 'sinking' fund to meet the LTA criteria for surface refurbishment in 15 years, equivalent to £1,200 per annum. The Council will also be committed to enabling tennis coaching and the continuation and evolution of weekly 'tennis for free' and LTA tennis initiatives for all ages and playing abilities.
12. It is important that park tennis court facilities are sustainable, and money can be set aside for repair and maintenance, to ensure courts do not fall into disrepair in the years ahead and are available for generations to come. Otherwise, there is a risk that this transformational investment into refurbishing the courts will be wasted, and the courts will not be maintained to the high standard that this investment will ensure. Retaining a small fee to book a court, which the Council already does, will help to build up a sinking fund to repair courts in future years, when they inevitably need further maintenance.
13. Local authorities are working with the LTA to ensure that there will be weekly free tennis sessions on courts, including the chance to borrow equipment. This means nobody in the local community will be excluded from the chance to pick up a racket and start playing. Additionally, a range of options are available for people to get on court, including an individual court hire fee; an affordable season pass; and targeted activities for all.
14. Proposed work to five courts (excluding gate technology works):

Apply double court markings in white water based acrylic paint to prepared asphalt surfaces
Power wash, apply moss treatment, pierce at 450m centres, fill pierced holes with pea shingle, vibration compact existing asphalt surface, application of bitumen emulsion 'tack' coat, installation of 25mm consolidated depth of 6mm asphalt surface course and application of two tone colour coating slip resistance of 60 wet or dry including raising existing pedestrian access gates
Break out and dispose off site existing perimeter kerbs & installation of new precast concrete kerbs 150mm x 50mm with associated insitu concrete bed and haunching

15. Three operating models for the five courts were considered with the LTA as part of the grant criteria as follows:
 - RDC to manage the courts 'in-house' and only outsource the coaching programme (current model) - the Council would benefit from all surplus revenue generated and retain court maintenance responsibilities.
 - Outsource operation to regional/local dedicated tennis operator via management arrangement. The Council would receive a guaranteed income from Operator and possible profit share but retain court maintenance responsibilities.
 - Outsource to regional/local tennis operator via a full repairing lease arrangement - the Council would agree a lease to include all operational aspects including maintenance making this a potentially cost neutral arrangement.

16. Future devolvement of the parks' services may impact the management of the Egerton site and so the funding application was submitted as an 'in-house' operation but this model can be reviewed and changed in the future if desired.

Conclusion

17. Officers recommend the Council accepts the grant offer of £104,070.50 to allow five courts to be refurbished and two gates installed. In seizing this opportunity to improve the quality of the courts at nil cost to the Council, residents will have sustainable opportunity to participate and develop tennis skills in a healthy and safe outdoor environment.

Financial Implications

18. No match funding is required for this grant award.
19. There is a requirement to maintain a sinking fund of £1,200 per annum per court over 12 years to meet the funding criteria of the cost of court re-painting in year 6 (c£3k per court) and court resurface in year 12 (c£11k per court). This can be managed on an annual basis by transferring income each year to a reserve account.
20. There is a cost to maintain the two gates of £1,072 per annum. The LTA will waive the current venue registration cost of £300 per annum.
21. Current usage data for the site within ClubSpark:

Total unique users/contacts (since system was introduced) = 703

2022 (Jan-Dec) Court usage

- 563 individual bookings = 856 court hours booked
- £955.25 income

2023 (Jan-to date) Court usage

- 316 individual bookings = 428.5 court hours booked
- £803.75 income

Legal Implications

22. As part of the funding conditions RDC must use LTA Framework Agreement to complete the work. The LTA are procuring the contractor for the project and procurement team are happy with the process LTA has followed.
23. Consideration should be given to the commitment to refurbish the courts to the same standard in 15 years and implications if the service/tennis courts were to be devolved or leased to another party or town council. Legal will support with the compliance with subsidy control requirements.

Human Resources Implications

24. The operation of the courts will remain in house so no impact on staff resources.

Equalities and Diversity

25. There will be improved accessibility for users through the new gate access technology system as they will be able to have equal opportunity to book a court. Although it is felt most residents will wish to be able to self-serve and book their court on-line as they do now, the Council will offer an alternative for those people who may not have access to the internet. This will be via customer services sports bookings, or in the future may be through a coaching provider.
26. The new gates will support easier access for wheelchair users.

Risk Management

27. There is a risk that the 'sinking fund' of £1,200 per annum per court will not cover future refurbishment costs in 12 years. A separate code should be set up in accounts to track the fund.
28. There is a risk that revenue from use of the courts will not generate sufficient income to meet the £1,200 per annum per court 'sinking' fund. Fees and charges to be closely monitored to ensure revenue covers planned expenditure.
29. There is a risk that the Council is unable to source a suitable tennis coach.
30. As one gate will allow access to three courts, and the second gate will allow access to two courts, there is a risk that one unique gate access code will enable use of any of three courts, or any two courts for the one hour booked. During peak season and busy times this will become self-policing.

Crime and Disorder

31. The new gate system which requires a unique code to gain entry to the courts should reduce misuse and vandalism on the courts.

Environmental

31. The LTA will ensure the contractor adheres to environmental considerations when completing the works.

Other Implications	Applies?	Other Implications	Applies?
Human Rights	No	Equalities and Diversity	Yes
Crime and Disorder	Yes	Consultation	No
Environmental	Yes	Access to Information	No
Risk Management	Yes	Exempt from publication	No

Chief Executive:	Lorna Ford
Report Contact Officer:	Deborah Kenneally
e-mail address:	deborah.kenneally@rother.gov.uk
Appendices:	N/A
Relevant Previous Minutes:	N/A
Background Papers:	N/A
Reference Documents:	N/A

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Rother District Council

Report to:	Cabinet
Date:	4 September 2023
Title:	Community Grants Scheme – Round 1
Report of:	Lorna Ford, Chief Executive
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Prochak
Ward(s):	All
Purpose of Report:	To present and recommend approval of Community Grants applications for Round 1, 2022/23
Decision Type:	Non-Key

Officer

Recommendation(s): It be **RESOLVED**: That:

- 1) the community grants detailed within Appendix A as recommended by the Grants Panel be approved, subject to specific conditions relating to each application; and
- 2) all Members be requested to promote the various Community Grants schemes and the Rother Community Lottery within their Wards.

Introduction

1. The Council's Community Grants Scheme (CGS) makes provision for up to £130,000 per annum to be made available to community groups or organisations that meet the grants criteria of Rother District Council's (RDC) CGS.

Community Grants

2. The Community Grants Panel has delegated authority to award grants up to £1,000. One application was awarded in Round 1 from the small grants scheme to Family Support Work for £312. Two applications have been awarded from the Rother Reduce, Reuse and Recycle scheme to The Hunter Gatherers for £1,000 and Bexhill Environmental Group for £364.
3. Round 1 of the Rother CGS for 2023/24 closed on 6 July 2023. Six applications were received requesting £57,340 in total. The Panel met on 27 July 2023 and have recommended awards for four applications.
4. Cabinet is asked to consider the following applications for funding from the Council's CGS as set out in Table 1 (each application is summarised in Appendix A):

Applicant	Amount requested	Amount recommended
1. Battle Pre-School	£3,600	£3,400
2. Community Supporters	£10,000	£10,000
3. Fairlight Parish Council	£7,338	Defer
4. Little Gate Farm	£30,000	Defer
5. Right Path Hiking and Camping Skills	£2,600	£2,384
6. Winchelsea Village Hall	£3,802	£3,802
Total:	£57,340	£19,586

Table 1: Grants Panel recommendations

5. Should Cabinet agree with the Panel's recommendation to award the applications as set out above, this will result in a maximum of £19,586 being awarded in Round 1. This leaves £90,144 for grants for the Round 2, 2023/24 opening on 1 October 2023 and closing 30 November 2023 (£5,000 is ring-fenced each year for the small community grants scheme, and £15,000 for the Rother Reduce, Reuse, Recycle Grant for 2023/24).
6. Members are reminded that conditions are applied when awarding the grants which include that full funding is obtained in advance of any Rother payments being made and that RDC is acknowledged in any publicity and promotional material associated with these projects. Other specific conditions will also be applied to grants as appropriate.

Small Grants and Rother Reduce, Reuse, Recycle Grants Scheme

7. Members are reminded that small grant and Rother Reduce, Reuse Recycle (RRRR) applications are accepted all year round. Applicants are encouraged to make applications through the online application process. Support and advice can be accessed through Rother Voluntary Action (RVA) and it is recommended applicants contact RVA before the submission of an application. A balance of £4,687.50 remains for small grants, and £13,636 for RRRR grants applications for 2023/24.
8. It should be noted that all applications are to be driven by community support, and need to have an element of match funding, whether their own contributions or at least funding applications submitted to the total value of the project. This is to demonstrate it is fully costed, funded and ready to go. Applicants are strongly encouraged to seek funding from Parish and Town Councils.
9. Further information is available via the CGS section of the Council's website: <https://www.rother.gov.uk/benefits-grants-and-funding/community-grants-scheme/>

Rother Community Lottery

10. We now have 81 causes signed up and over 620 players for the current draw. £7,825 has been won in prizes, with ten lucky people winning £250. There has also been 1,388 prizes of 3 extra tickets that have been won.
11. Since the first draw, approximately £47,000 has been facilitated by the Rother Community Lottery, with £28,500 of this amount directly to the various good

causes. Prize money of £800 has been donated by winners back to the cause they support.

Conclusion

12. Members are requested to consider the applications attached at Appendix A and be mindful of the clear benefits these offer to their communities. The CGS offers a robust assessment process that benefits communities applying for grants and secures considerable additional value for money benefits for the Council.

Financial Implications

13. The assessment and monitoring system for Community Grants will mitigate the financial and reputation risks associated with handing over grant finance. The Council attaches specific conditions to grant applications to mitigate risk.

Environmental Implications

14. All community grants applications request for environmental considerations to be noted.

Risk Implications

15. We are often at the hands of voluntary groups to the amount of time, effort and other financial support they can commit to their projects. This is mitigated by the good working relationships that exist across the district, and the support provided by RVA.

Other Implications	Applies?	Other Implications	Applies?
Human Rights	No	Equalities and Diversity	No
Crime and Disorder	No	External Consultation	No
Environmental	Yes	Access to Information	No
Risk Management	Yes	Exempt from publication	No

Chief Executive:	Lorna Ford
Report Contact:	Nicola Mitchell – Corporate Policy and Projects Manager
e-mail address:	Nicola.mitchell@rother.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix A - Community Grants Round 1 2023-24 Summary
Relevant Previous Minutes:	None.
Background Papers:	None.
Reference Document:	None.

Rother Community Grants Summary of Applications – Round 1, 2023/24

1. Battle Pre-School

Total cost of project: £7,207

Funding secured: £2,307

Funding shortfall: £4,900

Amount requested: £3,600 (note: grants applied total £1,500, leaving £3,400 shortfall)

Percentage of total project costs requested: 50%

Funding shortfall if full grant approved: Nil

Applicant and Grant Request Details

The applicant is Battle Pre-School, a trustee run, charity registered not for profit pre-school providing pre-school education for children ages 2-4.

The grant will be used to purchase physical play equipment for use both inside (on wet days) and outside.

Benefits

The pre-school needs suitable climbing equipment and physical activity items for its children. This promotes muscle building, healthy exercise, and balance skills, plus risk learning and confidence building. The tool station then links in with how items are built and offers fine motor skills and turn taking lessons.

The pre-school is open to children who require pre-school care of education from the age of 2-4 years old.

The project will enable the nursery to build better foundations for children before progression to school. This will help Battle Pre-School to continue supporting the families by providing excellent care and having facilities for their children.

Support for the Project

Support for the project has been received from Councillor Burton, parents and children who attend the pre-school. A grant application has been submitted to Battle Town Council, to include support for the project.

Project Sustainability

Battle Pre-School regularly check and maintain the equipment. They have items from Community Playthings over 10 years old which are still in perfect working order. Minor repairs or maintenance come within their annual budget.

Funding details

The project is expected to cost £7,207. The applicant has committed £2,307 to the project. This has been raised by the pre-school fund raising team including events such as quiz nights and a Teddy Bears picnic.

They are awaiting confirmation of funding, having applied for £1,000 from British Gypsum and £500 from Battle Town Council. This leaves a shortfall of £3,400 (nil if full grant awarded).

If successful, RDC's contribution would be acknowledged in their parent newsletter, on their website and in news articles sent to the local newspaper.

Environmental Considerations

The equipment chosen is mostly wood based, avoiding the use of plastics. Several items are sourced from Community Playthings in Robertsbridge which are very well made and exceptionally long lasting.

Panel recommendation:

£3,400 subject to standard terms and conditions.

2. Community Supporters

Total cost of project: £26,600

Funding secured: £11,600

Funding shortfall: £15,000

Amount requested: £10,000

Percentage of total project costs requested: 44%

Funding shortfall if full grant approved: Nil

Applicant and Grant Request Details

The applicant is Community Supporters. The charity aims to advance the education of environmental protection and the natural environment, and to promote conservation protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment for public benefit.

The grant will go towards funding phase 1 of the 'Bexhill Beach Garden Project' to provide accessibility to the beach at West Parade to view the pebble mural created by residents and one 'Lily pad garden'.

Benefits

This is the first phase in a larger project with an ambition to create a community beach garden area on the shingle at West Parade, Bexhill that is accessible for all with educational and recreational uses.

This application is for the installation of a boardwalk to provide access to the mural 'Wave of Hope' created by Bexhill Creative with pebbles painted by the residents of Bexhill expressing their sentiments from the Covid pandemic. Gabion seating is to be installed, along with one lily pad style platform for people to sit and enjoy the garden. The lily pad will be anchored down protecting it from the natural elements.

The beach garden will be free, open access for any Bexhill resident or visitor. Specifically, disabled and mobility impaired people and those with young children in pushchairs will gain better access to the beach. It supports mental health, physical wellbeing, environmental education, and a place for people to gather for a while.

Future phases include the continuation of the boardwalk, construction, and installation of 3 additional lily pad decking areas and refurbishment of the disabled facilities and installation of educational information boards and panels along West Parade promenade.

The lily pad areas will be used for Community Supporters' Beach School classes to educate children and others in the community about the beach plant life growing in the garden. The boards proposed will contain information about the flora and fauna, climate change issues and underwater habitats, promoting greater awareness of environmental issues. These boards and topics will be designed and put together in conjunction with local schools and local community groups. The design of the garden is created so that multiple groups or families can use the space at once.

These future phases are not included within this application and funding opportunities are being explored by Community Supporters.

Community Supporters have obtained planning permission for the works to be carried out and will be built to building control accessibility standards.

Support for the Project

Support for this project has been received by Councillor Oliver, the Lord-Lieutenant of East Sussex, Parkinson's UK, Homecall, Bexhill Caring Community, and the wider community through social media engagement and crowdfunding support.

Project Sustainability

A 'Friends of the Beach Garden' group has been agreed to set up with Bexhill Environmental Group to carry out any maintenance that would be needed in the future.

Funding details

Phase 1 of this project is expected to cost £26,600. Community Supporters have committed £4,100 raised through crowdfunding, a community pledge platform and received grants of £6,000 from Homecall and £1,500 from Bexhill Trust. A response is awaited from a £5,000 application to Screwfix. This leaves a shortfall of £10,000 (nil if full grant awarded).

If successful, the applicant will acknowledge RDC's contribution via social media promotion, a press release and a plaque will be placed in the garden.

Environmental Considerations

The contractor undertaking the work of building the boardwalk and lily pads is local to Bexhill and is using as much recycled timber as possible. Community Supporters are an environmental education charity, aiming to educate the public on environmental issues, which this project is based upon, as well as protecting beach wildlife.

Panel recommendation:

Grant £10,000, subject to standard grant conditions, and:

- a) Signage is to be erected regarding litter within their budgeted information boards, as agreed with RDC Neighbourhood Services.
- b) The boardwalk meets Building Regulations requirements for accessibility.
- c) An agreement is entered with RDC Estates relating to liability and maintenance matters of the land of the project location.
- d) An agreement is entered with Bexhill Environment Group regarding the maintenance of the beach garden.

3. Fairlight Parish Council

Total cost of project: £14,676.48

Funding secured: £7,338.48

Funding shortfall: £7,338

Amount requested: £7,338

Percentage of total project costs requested: 50%

Funding shortfall if full grant approved: Nil

Applicant and Grant Request Details

Fairlight Parish Council wish to replace the existing slide, toddler swing set and safety matting surrounding these items at Wood Field Playground, with like-for-like equipment.

Benefits

During the past year, both pieces of equipment have been closed due to essential repairs. As their condition declines and will result in them being closed for health and safety reasons. The latest annual safety inspection recommends a replacement for the toddler swings as they are beyond repair.

Parents/Grandparents/Carers will benefit as the equipment proposed will provide a safer environment for children to play on and in. Safety tile matting will be upgraded to meet current standards.

It has been observed that since the pandemic, the recreation ground and play area usage has increased as people want to spend more time outdoors.

Support for the Project

Support for the project has been received from Councillor Mier.

Fairlight Nursey support the grant application in part and have received many comments from parents that the existing slide is greatly loved and is a focal point of the playground and should not be replaced as it cannot be replaced like for like due to its height and style. The Parish Council observes that for safety and cost reasons the request for the slide to remain cannot be satisfied. It is proposed that the replacement slide is of similar height etc.

Project Sustainability

The current slide has been on the playground for over 40 years. Wicksteed (who also complete the annual inspections), are a renowned company for producing high quality and long-lasting outdoor play equipment. Future maintenance costs will be very low and funded through the Parish Council's revenue budget.

Funding details

The total cost of the purchase and installation of the slide and swings is £14,676.48. Fairlight Parish Council have committed £7,338.48, leaving a shortfall of £7,338 (nil if full grant awarded).

Environmental Considerations

All metal components of the equipment will be removed and scrapped in the appropriate manner for recycling upon replacement of the slide/swings. The existing rubber tiles can be removed and repurposed elsewhere. Any materials to be removed from the site such as soil etc. will be done by the contractor and be reused. The proposed new surface is made of 100% recycled materials.

Panel recommendation

Deferral subject to community engagement and exploring of alternative options and future plan for the playpark.

4. Little Gate Farm

Total cost of project: £60,000

Funding secured: £30,000

Funding shortfall: £30,000

Amount requested: £30,000

Percentage of total project costs requested: 50%

Funding shortfall if full grant approved: Nil

Applicant and Grant Request Details

Little Gate Farm's purpose is to place adults with learning disabilities and autism into sustainable paid employment within Rother and the surrounding areas. They are requesting a grant of £30,000 to acquire a new diesel minibus with an accessible wheelchair ramp.

Benefits

Little Gate Farm rely heavily on ageing buses that are in constant need of repairs and maintenance. They have become a financial burden and limit their ability to serve their beneficiaries effectively due to the frequent breakdowns.

The new minibus will offer a reliable and efficient mode of transportation, significantly reducing breakdowns, repair costs, emissions, and operational disruptions. This improved reliability will allow Little Gate to provide uninterrupted services, ensuring people can access essential programs and activities without interruptions.

With a wheelchair ramp, the new bus will enable them to accommodate individuals with disabilities who use wheelchairs or have mobility impairments. This inclusive transportation option will empower their beneficiaries to participate fully in community activities, educational outings, and social events, fostering their independence and overall well-being.

The presence of an accessible minibus will enable Little Gate to expand their outreach and engage with more individuals who require specialised transportation services. They can collaborate with local schools, healthcare facilities, and community organisations, forging partnerships to enhance the overall impact of their programmes and services.

Support for the Project

Support for this project has been received from Councillors Bayliss, Biggs and Ganly, as well as East Sussex County Councillor Redstone, the community, and users of Little Gate's services.

Project Sustainability

Little Gate will establish a regular maintenance schedule for the minibus to ensure its optimal performance and longevity. This plan will include routine inspections, servicing, and repairs conducted by certified mechanics. By following a proactive maintenance approach, they will prevent breakdowns and costly repairs in the long run.

A portion of their existing budget and any additional funds received are allocated towards the ongoing maintenance and running costs of the minibus. This will include expenses such as fuel, insurance, licensing fees, and regular maintenance services.

Funding Details

Little Gate Farm have allocated £2,353.75 of their own funds towards this project. They have received a grant of £7,646.25 from The Big Give and £20,000 from The Gosling Foundation. This leaves a shortfall of £30,000 (nil if full grant awarded).

If successful, the applicant would acknowledge RDC's contribution by putting the RDC logo on the minibus, as well as on social media and their website.

Environmental Considerations

Little Gate Farm are replacing a 17-year-old diesel minibus with a brand-new diesel minibus. Newer diesel engines are more fuel-efficient than their older counterparts, leading to better mileage and reduced fuel consumption. The increased efficiency translates into lower carbon emissions, contributing to a smaller carbon footprint.

Little Gate Farm extensively researched the market for a replacement minibus for several months and had many discussions with support staff, drivers, and mechanics about the best option for Little Gate and for their trainees. This careful consideration led to deciding that whilst an electric bus was the preferred option, a diesel bus is the best option both financially for the organisation and for stability for the trainees. An electric bus would add an additional £10,000 to the cost of purchase and the raising of funds would delay the purchase of this critical item.

Support staff and drivers raised concerns that the range of electric buses was not high. Bus breakdowns and poor reliability have been a huge source of anxiety for many of the trainees and breakdowns in the past have caused problems for some trainees. Buses do multiple pickups around Hastings and Bexhill and then drive out to Beckley. The farm is in a rural location down country lanes.

There was also concern that the district does not have the infrastructure in place to charge an electric bus and if the bus was able to be charged at the farm the added distance of driving from the farm to pickups would further reduce the range.

Panel Recommendation:

Defer, pending exploration of additional £10k of funding for electric / hybrid options to meet the Council's climate agenda.

5. Right Path Hiking and Camping Skills

Total cost of project: £5,278.93

Funding secured: £2,678.93

Funding shortfall: £2,600

Amount requested: £2,600

Percentage of total project costs requested: 50%

Funding shortfall if full grant approved: Nil

Applicant and Grant Details

Right Path Hiking and Camping Skills are a new community group based in Bexhill, providing opportunities for people to learn how to hike, orienteer and camp in a safe and fun environment. Their aim is to help people make connections, friendships and support one another through recovery journeys.

The grant requested is towards the costs of training and equipment of their group members.

Benefits

Right Path's project is open to all, but targeted at those who struggle with addiction and mental health by providing a platform to empower and to build confidence. It is also an opportunity for like-minded people to get together and share knowledge of local support available and experiences had on their recovery journey.

Right Path Hiking and Camping Skills wish to support those members to get practical skills as well as obtain industry recognised qualifications that could lead to paid work and be a steppingstone to continuous personal development. Their members are in recovery from addiction and mental health problems.

Support for the Project

Support for this project has been received from Councillor Coleman, Rother Voluntary Action (RVA) and members of the group and community.

A trial hike was carried out to gauge demand and support. It proved a success, receiving positive feedback. Through the support of RVA and local community network meetings, word is getting around and membership is growing.

Project Sustainability

Ongoing running costs will be minimal as the group is 100% volunteer led. Right Path Hiking have linked with other charities who are willing to provide equipment free of charge. As the group expands, options will be explored to become a charitable incorporated organisation or community interest company which will open funding opportunities.

Funding Details

The project is expected to cost £5,278.93. Right Path have successfully applied for a grant of £2,678.93 from Sussex Community Development Association (SCDA).

This leaves a shortfall of £2,600, however there are items in the budget which are not eligible under the Community Grants Scheme. These costs total £511. Therefore, the maximum grant that can be awarded is £2,384.

If successful, the applicant would acknowledge RDC's contribution via social media, their website and other marketing material.

Environmental Considerations

Right Path operates a 'leave no trace' policy. They make attendees aware of the countryside code and how to respect the natural environment. They also try to choose locations accessible via public transport.

Panel Recommendations

Grant £2,384, subject to standard grant conditions.

6. Winchelsea Village Hall

Total cost of project: £20,435

Funding secured: £8,500

Funding shortfall: £11,500

Amount requested: £3,802

Percentage of total project costs requested: 20%

Funding shortfall if full grant approved: £8,133

Applicant and Grant Details

Winchelsea Village Hall wish to reconstruct the interior of the female toilets to provide new facilities, including thermal insulation and hygienic surfaces and to repair the sash windows so that they can open to provide ventilation and increase their thermal efficiency.

Benefits

The existing facilities are inhospitable to modern perception, are in much need of an overhaul, being semi-detached outhouses to the 1926 Hall with aging facilities. The interior has painted brick walls and the ceilings are a patchwork of surfaces. The walls and ceiling are uninsulated.

The strip out and reconstruction of the female facilities will provide a uniformed feel rather than the dated piecemeal that is there presently. The project supplements the recent addition of a new accessible toilet at the front of the Hall.

The work planned will provide more comfortable and warmer facilities in the winter for the many users of Winchelsea Village Hall.

Support for the Project

Support for this project has been received from Councillors Creaser and McGurk, Icklesham Parish Council, Community groups and users of the facility.

Winchelsea Village Hall facilitated a focus group in 2016 on the hall's interior in which the facilities were identified. The observations highlighted are being worked on as funding opportunities and resource capacity allows.

Project Sustainability

Winchelsea Village Hall have a budget for maintenance, the revenue covers day to day running and maintenance costs.

It is planned for the male facilities to be completed in the future.

Funding Details

The project is expected to cost £20,435. The applicant has committed £8,500 to the project. Funding has been applied to Little Cheyne Court Windfarm (£5,000), the Rye Fund (£1,500) and the Sussex General Giving Fund (£1,633). This leaves a shortfall of £3,802 (nil if full grant awarded).

If successful, the applicant would acknowledge RDC's contribution via their website, public noticeboard, and a news column in the Parish news magazine.

Environmental Considerations

The existing facility has little retention of heat. Addressing the thermal insulation will cut down the wasted energy provided by the radiator. The improvements are designed to last the lifetime of the building so the material investment is worthwhile. Local craftsmen are being employed to carry out the project.

The hall is also participating in the RDC Village Halls Energy Project and will take recommendations from this project into consideration.

Panel Recommendations

Grant £3,802 subject to standard grant conditions.

End of report.

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