
REPORT TO:	FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 10
DATE OF MEETING:	14th MARCH 2019	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	STRATEGIC DIRECTOR (SERVICE DELIVERY)	OPEN
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SUBJECT:	MIDWAY COMMUNITY CENTRE – BUDGET AND FORWARD PLANS	
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	MIDWAY	TERMS OF REFERENCE: FM08

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 That a budget of £20,217 in 2019/20, £20,622 in 2020/21 and £21,034 in 2021/22 is approved in order to continue Council management of Midway Community Centre.
- 1.2 That members note forward plans for the centre in relation to infrastructure and community engagement.
- 1.3 That the “windfall” Capital Receipt received from the original development is earmarked to fund the outline works identified in the report and that the detailed costs are reported back to the Committee when finalised.

2.0 Purpose of the Report

- 2.1 To update members on activity at Midway Community Centre since its handover to the Council from developers in September 2016.
- 2.2 To seek approval for a three-year budget to continue Council management of the facility.
- 2.3 To seek approval for continuation of plans to improve infrastructure and community engagement at the site.

3.0 Executive Summary

- 3.1 None required.

4.0 Detail

- 4.1 Members approved a three-year revenue budget for the Council to manage a new community facility at Chestnut Avenue, Midway in February 2016. The new facility was named Midway Community Centre and after handover from the developer (Strata Homes) was officially opened on 26 October 2016.

- 4.2 The February 2016 Committee report acknowledged that it was imperative that the Council was adequately resourced to manage the new facility from the outset but stated that the long-term ambition for the Council was that once opened representatives from the community would come forward and wish to manage the facility for themselves.
- 4.3 To assist with the ambition to realise community ownership of the building South Derbyshire Council for Voluntary Services (SDCVS) was engaged to undertake community development and ascertain community needs and local interest in some form of management of the facility.
- 4.4 To this end SDCVS implemented a project plan that has involved researching and making contact with potential community activists and agencies. It undertook two surveys of local residents, held drop-in sessions, public meetings and a celebration event. It has also set up a positive activities committee rebranded as Midway Liaison group made up of interested local people and agencies active in the area.
- 4.5 Despite the above work and the initial intelligence that suggested there were individuals present in the community willing to be active in running activities and helping to manage the facility substantial community support has not been forthcoming.
- 4.6 Although community management of the facility appears some way off there are some successes in community engagement with the impending start of both a youth club and a community café that are set to be run by local volunteers.
- 4.7 There are other successes in terms of activity at the centre with the building being used five days a week from 7am to 3pm by Little Sparkles Day Nursery; used at weekends by adult and junior football teams during the football season; used on weekday evenings for dance classes, martial arts classes and creative arts classes for young people and at other times for occasional bookings such as private parties or meetings.
- 4.8 The transition from an original dilapidated site with no community involvement to a new facility sited in the same area but managed in some way by the local community was always going to present some difficulties. The site has suffered from significant anti-social behaviour manifested in poor conduct from some young people and persistent littering and dog fouling. This has been combatted by a combination of approaches including positive interventions for young people, enforcement, increased security and multi-agency working.
- 4.9 The plan for Council Officers across different units, SDCVS and attendees of the Midway Liaison Group is to continue to work towards increased community engagement and ownership of the new facility. However, in recognition of the difficulties experienced to date and indeed incumbent in virtually any transfer of a community asset it appears sensible to request a budget for the Council to manage the facility for a further three years. A three-year budget allows a much more realistic timescale to undertake the kind of community development work required to undertake an effective "asset transfer" at this site.
- 4.10 The proposed budget is based on experience of running the site and is attached as Appendix 1. Years two and three of the budget show an inflationary rise of 2% on salary, repairs and income budget lines but leave other budget lines the same pending a more thorough review during the annual budget process.

- 4.11 In addition to the plans to continue community development at the site there are also plans to improve site infrastructure. The physical constraints on the site, original budget to build the facility and limited ability to affect end design has meant that the building as is has been compromised in relation to storage and flexibility of use. This is a significant hindrance in allowing more than one booking at a time and associated income generation.
- 4.12 In an attempt to improve matters consultants have been engaged to design added storage and combine this with an additional entrance that would enable separate functions to be held at the same time. Planning approval is currently being sought and approval for the scheme will be subject to a future report to this Committee.
- 4.13 The quality of the football pitches at the site has not matched initial expectations with wear, standard of the surface and drainage all less than satisfactory. Requirements to bring the pitches up to the necessary standard are being followed up and as with the potential storage and entrance solution will be subject to a future report to Committee.

5.0 Financial Implications

- 5.1 The revenue cost outlined in Appendix 1 is a best estimate based on operational experience to date although its accuracy will continue to be somewhat dependant on to what extent use of the facility is taken up by the local community.
- 5.2 A budget of approximately £20,000 was approved for 2019/20 following the ending of the previous three-year funding that had been included in the Base Budget pending the transfer of the facility. On-going costs in 2020/21 and 2021/22 have also been provisionally included the Medium Term Financial Plan approved by the Committee in February.
- 5.3 There will be financial implications resultant on any improvements to the site infrastructure but these will be the subject of separate reports. As previously reported, a “windfall” receipt of just over £700,000 from the original development remains uncommitted in the General Capital Receipts Reserve. It is recommended that this sum is used to pay for the additional works.

6.0 Corporate Implications

Employment Implications

- 6.2 Part of the requested budget is to continue the employment of a part-time caretaker at the site.

Legal Implications

- 6.1 The nature of any community involvement in the future management of the facility or indeed any eventual asset transfer would need to be the subject of legal scrutiny and appropriate formal legal documentation.

Corporate Plan Implications

- 6.2 Continued effective management of the site and attempts at community engagement fit with the People and Place themes of the Corporate Plan.

Risk Impact

- 6.3 Risk is primarily to the Council's reputation should the site not be managed effectively and promises to engage in community development and community "ownership" not be honoured. The proposed budget and forward planning mitigates against this risk.

7.0 Community Impact

Consultation

- 7.1 Consultation with the local community and agencies active therein is at the heart of work to date and at the forefront of future plans. The outcomes of community consultation will inform both activity at the centre and future plans in relation to any asset transfer or form of community management of the facility.

Equality and Diversity Impact

- 7.2 Midway Community Centre supports community activity in an area with higher than average indices of multiple deprivation and as such has a positive impact on equality and diversity.

Social Value Impact

- 7.3 None in terms of procurement but the ongoing presence of Midway Community Centre and its activities positively contributes to the long-term wellbeing and resilience of individuals and the local community.

Environmental Sustainability

- 7.4 No impact.

8.0 Conclusions

- 8.1 An approved three-year budget to manage Midway Community Centre will allow a reasonable timescale to consolidate activity at the site and engage in further community development in an attempt to realise the long-term ambition for the Council to have increased community involvement in managing the facility.

- 8.2 Planned investigations into potential improvements to site infrastructure continue to be pursued.

9.0 Background Papers

- 9.1 Chestnut Avenue Community Facility – Report to Finance and Management Committee on 18 February 2016.