

Minutes



OF A MEETING OF THE

Listening Learning Leading

Community Investment Fund Panel

HELD AT 9.45AM ON 8 JUNE 2010

AT COUNCIL OFFICES, CROWMARSH GIFFORD

Present:

Ms J Bland, Mrs P Dawe, Mrs E Gillespie, Mrs A Midwinter, Mr A Rooke,
Mrs P Slatter

Apologies:

Mrs S Cooper, Mr J Nowell-Smith

Officers:

Mrs J Bolton, Mr E Nieburg, Mrs J Thompson, Mr T Warren

3. Briefing

The grants manager briefed the panel members on the timetable and procedure for the next item.

4. Bids for funding from the Community Investment Fund

AFC Henley Football Club – children's sports pavilion

Mr T Howell and Ms T Atkin presented details of the application and answered questions.

The club now had 16 league teams plus a mini-soccer school for under-8s, and had over 300 members and 700-1000 people using the facilities. The club and members had received a number of awards in recognition of their work. The grass pitches were used by the club, schools, and for community events. However, the facilities were inadequate for the club as the clubhouse was situated across the road from the pitches and there were no changing rooms, toilets or storage adjacent to the pitches. The proposed new pavilion beside the pitches would provide children's facilities and storage, leaving provision of adult facilities at the existing clubhouse. This would provide a safer environment for children, create more space, and provide on-site facilities for other users. Planning permission had been granted, a 25-year lease agreed, and an application supported by the Oxfordshire FA would be made to the Football Foundation when their grants scheme re-opened.

The hockey club was now happy with the scheme and would be able to use the new building. They had not developed a joint project with the hockey club as the sports had access to separate grant schemes and separate projects were easier to progress. The scheme probably could not start until March 2011 as full funding would not be secured until then. Several local people were willing to help with fundraising, and fundraising through sponsorship or donations was ongoing. Henley Town Council had granted the lease at a very low rent. The club had not approached neighbouring parish councils for grants.

The building met the Football Foundation criteria as these only required provision of additional toilets and storage. However, the criteria limited the funding that could be requested. The building would be available for community use.

Didcot Civic Hall – refurbish civic hall, information centre and offices

Mr S Carter (deputy town clerk), Mr C Wynn (hall manager), Mr I Blake (architect), and Cllr B Cooper presented details of the application and answered questions.

The civic hall catered for about 4000 users per month and had 40 regular group bookings. It provided space for functions and weddings as well as a variety of community groups, and housed the town council's offices and information centre. The facilities required major refurbishment and rearrangement to allow better use of the space and reduce energy consumption and maintenance costs. The town council were proposing to extend the building to provide more space, increase the on-street presence, and increase the visibility of the entrance to make the civic centre more obvious and welcoming. The extensions and refurbishment would provide more flexible space, more storage freeing up currently unusable back-stage areas, and improve the heating, insulation, and acoustics in the building. The new entrance would provide access from two points, a larger foyer and a larger information centre to cater for the 25 visitors and 70 phone calls each day. The refurbishment of the existing building could proceed separately without planning permission, and without the new development, and would in itself provide modern and more accessible and versatile facilities.

The council had some reserves and a loan available to help fund the project. S106 money would not be available until some larger housing developments were under way, and while the hall's income covered running costs, it did not generate sufficient surplus to cover the proposed work. Work could start in September after tenders had been approved.

Didcot Skatepark

Ms B Andrews (technical manager for the skatepark) presented details of the application and answered questions.

The skatepark was built in 2002 and extended in 2005. There were two sections for different groups. The application was to extend one of these to provide a modern

design and more interplay between the different parts of the section, allowing larger numbers and a wider range of abilities to use the ramps. Skating attracted a growing number of people of different ages and abilities and provided a demanding sport for a mixed-age community as it was not limited to a specific age range. Older skaters looked out for and taught the younger ones, providing good role models and moderating the behaviour of the groups. The informal grass areas provided places to play ball games or for spectators to watch the skaters. The park was very popular, was managed informally by the users, and had attracted no complaints from residents. The proposals had come out of a number of meetings with skaters and designers and reflected what skaters wanted. The ramps were well-constructed and very low maintenance. Soil jumps were provided intermittently for BMX bikers, and shelters had been considered for skaters and spectators but discounted as they may attract under-age drinkers to the park.

Funding would be sought from Biffa and WREN once the outcome of this application was known. Further quotes for the work would be available shortly.

Great Milton recreation ground pavilion - revitalisation

Mr A Noble (chairman of the managing trustees) and Ms E Johns (chairman of Little Owls nursery) presented details of the application and answered questions.

The hall was used by the nursery, Saturday and holiday sports coaching, youth and adult cricket and football clubs, and for village events and meetings. It was opened in 1982 and needed refurbishment. The internal layout was no longer suitable for the users as facilities for the disabled and the nursery were inadequate. The refurbishment of the existing building and planned extension would be done in phases. This application was for a grant towards the refurbishment. This would provide internal alterations, new toilets (for which £40,000 was available from the early years fund), energy saving measures, and a vandal and damage proof roof. A new kitchen would be included in the proposed extension. The project was ready to proceed once building regulations approval was granted and funds in place. Some work would be undertaken over the summer break, then further work as time and money allowed over the school holidays to minimise disruption. Each user had contributed funds and helped with fundraising, and the parish council had contributed to the project as well as to maintenance costs.

Kenton Theatre, Henley on Thames – freehold purchase

Ms W Bowsher and Mr W Poet presented details of the application and answered questions.

The Kenton Theatre was the fourth oldest working theatre in the country. The venue provided low-cost entertainment in an accessible location; opportunities for volunteering and developing skills; activities for a wide range of ages and abilities; and space for organisations not directly connected with the theatre. It provided live theatre and film, had 11 associated theatre groups, and catered for 30,000 annual visitors as well as about 450 members and volunteers, 450 other supporters, and 24

regular bookings. The theatre could continue to expand its activities and its membership, and could refurbish the building, if it could access arts grant funding.

Many awarding bodies required the property to be owned freehold. Currently the property had a full repairing lease running till 2045. The freehold purchase would cost £350,000 of which £100,000 had been raised in the past few months. A structural survey had revealed no major problems. Other grant applications would be decided around July and there was a six month deadline on the option to purchase.

Nettlebed pavilion – new pavilion

Mr Nieburg went through the presentation and answered some questions on behalf of the applicants, who were unable to attend the meeting.

The sports association was re-established in 2007. At the request of Nettlebed parish council, the sports association had taken on the prime role of managing the project including fund raising, planning, and supplier negotiations for the new community sports pavilion. Once the project is complete, the sports association will continue as the prime body for the continued upkeep of the building and management of non-sporting and sporting activities in Nettlebed.

A sports pavilion will generate interest not just in cricket but running, health walks, football, and generating interest in sport amongst the younger members of the community. Antisocial behaviour has been on the increase and it is hoped this will reduce if more activities are available in the village. Henley cricket club is helping re-establishing youth coaching, and the association is hoping to revive the football club's youth and men's teams.

The old pavilion has had to be demolished due to health and safety grounds. Construction of the new building will use local tradesmen in Nettlebed and the surrounding area. Since September 2007 the association has raised over £61,000, has a grass roots charity commitment of £3,000, and is in the process of approaching the Fleming foundation (a local charity) to see whether they are prepared to contribute or guarantee a loan.

Henley Baptist Church – refurbishment and redevelopment

Mr M Sayers (development project manager) and Ms S Prior (Nomad manager) presented details of the application and answered questions.

The Baptist church housed Nomad, a charity with a remit to deliver services to under-25s in the town. The projects run covered the SureStart centre, youth work, work with young parents, excluded children, and struggling families and offered a variety of training and counselling services. Older people were catered for with a café and computer and craft classes. Community groups could hire space in the centre. Nomad's work reached about a quarter of Henley's under-25s and two-thirds of disadvantaged young people in the town – some 700 people per week. There was a structured programme, including expanding family support for the 9-14 age group, and the project aimed to increase numbers to 1000 per week. Some people came via

referrals, others independently. The centre received funds to provide early years services in the town, and in separate premises in Sonning Common, Woodcote and Goring. A revenue grant from South Oxfordshire District Council, PCT grants, fundraising, and letting income helped cover costs as services were provided free or at nominal charges.

The application was for a grant to cover the final phase of a long-term project to upgrade the building. It would create a mezzanine floor with counselling rooms, a new third-floor youth centre, refurbish the café and kitchen and fit out the large hall, and provide internet access. Some funding was secured, and the project could start once all the funding was in place.

Thomley Hall Centre – provision for teenagers

Ms C Actworth (centre manager) presented details of the application and answered questions.

The centre had three main aims: supporting disabled children, their families and friends; supporting parents by putting them in touch with those in similar situations; and supporting families and siblings through activities at the centre. Thomley had been set up by parents of autistic children in 2002 and now had 6000 visitors from 19 counties, reflecting the high level of need and lack of any comparable provision. The centre catered for all disabled children, although primarily those with autistic disorders, Down's syndrome, and other learning or developmental disorders.

The centre wanted to provide activities, support and life-skills for the 16-19 age range, expanding eventually to adults as well. There was a lack of appropriate activities and social opportunities for older teenagers. The proposal to renovate the manor house to provide a large kitchen for cooking lessons, a gym, and accessible toilets and changing areas would allow the centre to cater for older teenagers and for a larger number of visitors. The upper floors would be used for the centre's offices. Some funding from Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire County Councils had been secured. The lease had 16 years left and the centre was raising funds to purchase the site and secure its long-term future.

All Saints Church Hall, Didcot – new community hall

Ms J Buckel, Mr A Adams and Mr C Campbell presented details of the application and answered questions.

The current hall was a temporary building well past the end of its life and a long-term replacement was urgently needed. It was likely to become completely unusable within the next two years. The proposed new building included two halls, storage space, kitchen and toilets on the ground floor, and offices and storage on the upper floor. Energy saving features included insulation, a ground source heat pump, underfloor heating, rainwater harvesting, and large windows and rooflights. There were few community buildings in this part of Didcot. The hall would be used every day by current and potential users; and a number of groups including SOHA and the

army barracks had expressed interest in using a new hall. The building would provide much-needed community facilities in this part of the town, close to several large housing developments and the barracks. There were no other nearby facilities either existing or proposed in the short-term.

The parochial church council owned the land and had raised nearly £100,000 towards the cost. Applications to WREN and Biffa were pending. The success of the project depended on grant applications being successful as the church had limited resources.

Henley Hockey Club – refurbishment of club

Mr C Baker (club president), Mr D Dickie (fundraiser), Ms T Hedgie (director of youth hockey) and Mr K Walker (technical support) presented details of the application and answered questions.

The club now had four ladies', five men's and one mixed adult team, plus 200 youth members, and was working towards Club-First accreditation. Teams played in the South senior league and the club had county and national level players. As well as league games, the club organised a hockey festival with teams coming from across the UK to participate. The club wanted to continue to offer a structured path from junior to senior hockey and to higher levels, and to provide a community facility suitable for club members and their families and for other community groups. The club members had been consulted on the plans for refurbishment.

The clubhouse facilities no longer met the needs of club members. Hockey games were played sequentially on the artificial pitch, so while a large number of people used the clubhouse the use spread over the whole weekend. The bar area did not cater for families or for this pattern of use, and the rest of the premises needed refurbishment to meet modern standards. The plans included a café area and smaller bar to provide a sports-based social club, new catering-standard kitchen, new toilets, plant and lighting, and an enclosed garden area. They had applied for planning permission for an equipment storage shed. The lease from Henley Town Council ran until 2055 and the club had permission from the town council for the works. They had talked to Henley AFC about joint facilities, but had not progressed with a joint scheme as the clubs had different needs. They potentially would have access to the AFC's new pavilion.

Didcot Muslim Society – community centre

Mr M Islam, Mr F Naeem, and Dr A Abu-Median (members of Didcot Muslim Society) presented details of the application and answered questions.

The Didcot Muslim Society was a well-established and growing society. It provided a focus for a multi-ethnic community of Muslims from many countries to meet, engage in social and religious activities, and support each other. It helped bring together people locally, rather than them travelling into the cities for community events, and improved community cohesion by allowing people to form a community close to

home. There was a Saturday children's school, Friday congregational prayers attracting 80-100, and a wide variety of events from study groups to dinners. The society published a newsletter for members.

A dedicated building for use as a community centre would give the society a base, allow it to expand its activities, and provide a dedicated prayer hall. Meetings were held in different venues in the town, and bookings were not guaranteed and could be expensive. The proposal was to purchase a hall near the station and the town centres, easily accessible by public transport and with paid car parking nearby, and convert this into a community centre with a prayer hall and meeting rooms. The building should suit the society's needs for five to ten years. A property had been found, and recently started fundraising for the purchase had raised £8,000 from one meeting. There were opportunities to raise funds locally and nationally.

The meeting ended at 3.20 pm

Chairman

Date