

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Cabinet

5 February 2020

Report of the Head of Transformation - A.Thomas

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected:

Neath North

Project Proposal made to the Members Community Fund

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek Cabinet approval to fund a project proposal that requests financial support under the Members Community Fund. The project has been tabled by the two Ward Councillors for Neath North.

Executive Summary

2. The Members Community Fund is to be used to address local needs and to support projects and initiatives that will contribute towards creating vibrant and sustainable communities.

The Project Development & Funding Unit (PDFU) within ELLL is charged with the governance of the Fund and will act as the Grant Management Organisation.

Bids can be made for projects that enhance existing Council services, assist voluntary sector provision or form part of a larger initiative that is in need of additional financial support.

Eligible projects will include those that enrich the environment, promote non - statutory education and learning, assist Health & Well Being, and promote culture and / or recreation in all its forms.

Another project proposal now seeks funding and has been formally submitted to the PDFU. The bid has been checked for completeness, accuracy and deliverability and is 'fit for purpose' and ready for determination by Cabinet.

Background

3. To create a new sitting out area/Bistro or outdoor café quarter attaching to the Gnoll Visitor Centre .Deemed to be an important facility for ramblers and dog walkers alike.

The investment in this project is seen as an essential addition to the overall package of amenities currently on offer at the Gnoll Country Park. The Visitor Attraction does not lack in scenery, play equipment, dedicated Way Marked walking routes or history, but the opportunities for ramblers and dog walkers to refresh themselves with a well-earned beverage are limiting. This proposal will create a welcoming sheltered environment where muddy boots and man's best friend are catered for.

The project has been given new momentum as £25,000 has been bequeathed to the Gnoll from a patron who thoroughly enjoyed his visits there and has, in his passing, asked his family to honour his Will with this kindly donation.

The proposal involves creating an area for visitors to sit outdoors with a drink vended from the Visitor Centre, to relax and enjoy. Currently dog walkers are not allowed inside the Centre and a valuable income stream is lost to the café. The project will include widening access for disabled patrons (a new landing, ramp and handrail will be installed leading from the café to the Fish Pond), installing new stainless steel balustrade with armoured glazing, concrete hard standing and Bistro tables and stackable aluminium chairs. This facility will be housed

beneath the canopy and the solar panels that attach to the Centre. The outdoor compound will create a welcome refuge from driving wind and rain.

The need for this initiative has come from Customer Surveys and has been in the planning stage since the last Financial Year. The initiative is considered to be an important means of helping to sustain the facility and add to the revenue generated by this important Visitor Attraction and Country Park. The footfall to the Gnoll is circa 54,000 visits per annum and further investment in the visitor experience can only enhance that.

The project will promote use of the outdoor natural environment for recreation and exercise, plug a gap in provision, respond to customer demand, improve amenities for the disabled and make best use of limited resources.

The elemental cost breakdown for the project has been determined by seeking a quote from NPTCBC Building Services. The Architectural Services and the Project Manager has factored in the additional cost of Planning and the Building Regulation fees. The project will cost £34,507.10. £25,000 has been bequeathed. £4,655 is sought from Councillor Mark Protheroe's Members Fund and a further £4,655 from Councillor Alan Lockyer's Members Fund .The funding shortfall of £197.10 will be met by the PDFU 'Enabling Fund'.

Financial Impact

4. In order to win favour in Cabinet all projects must be sustainable. Projects must have a robust exit strategy that places no additional revenue or financial burden on the Council.

The ongoing upkeep of the sitting out area attaching to the Gnoll Visitor Centre will fall within the purview of the existing management arrangements for the Country Park. Given the construction (stainless steel and concrete) maintenance will be minimum and will be offset by an increasing revenue stream generated by secondary spend in the café.

Integrated Impact Assessment

5. A first stage impact assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its legislative duties (under the Equality Act 2010), the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, the Well - being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

The first stage assessment has indicated that a more in - depth assessment is not required as the summary concludes there are positive outcomes for the sustainable development principle, collaboration and involvement, with no impact on equalities or the Welsh language.

Valleys Communities Impacts

6. No implications

Workforce Impacts

7. There are no workforce impacts associated with this report.

Legal Impacts

8. The delivery of the Members Community Fund will come within the purview of the Local Government Act 2000 which introduced well-being powers which enable every Local Authority to have capacity to do anything which it considers likely to promote an improvement to economic, social or environmental well-being in the area. Under section 56 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 sanction is given for both Executive and Non - Executive Members to invest within their own Ward.

The Council's Constitution should be referred to for explicit guidance on governance.

Risk Management

9. There are no risk management issues associated with this report.

Consultation

10. There is no requirement for external consultation on this item.

Recommendations

11. That this project proposal to create a new Bistro/sitting out at the Gnoll Country Park is approved and that the Ward Members for Neath North contribute £9,310 under the Members Community Fund.

Reasons for Proposed Decision

12. To approve the Application for funding that has been received under the Members Community Fund. Full Funding Applications can be made to the Members Community Fund until the end of the financial year. The Fund will then close. Funds left unallocated will be returned to Reserves.

Implementation of Decision

13. The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period.

List of Background Papers

14. This Neath North initiative has been developed from the Members Community Fund Application Form submitted jointly by Councillors Mark Protheroe and Alan Lockyer. The project cost has been arrived at through the NPTCBC Building Services and Architectural Services. The Schedule of Work and the receipt of the £25,000 as bequeathed, has been validated and entered on File for reference. The first stage Impact Assessment documentation associated with this project proposal has also been retained.

Officer Contact

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