

Portishead Town Council Full Council

Agenda item 11: Recommendation to delegate authority to the Clerk and Councillor Bull to negotiate a 30-year lease with a 5-year funding agreement with Portishead Youth Centre, subject to a full building condition survey

(Councillor Bob Bull / Town Clerk)

19th January 2022

1. Background:

a. Introduction:

- i. Portishead Town Council owns the Portishead Youth Centre building and site, which it leases to Portishead Youth Centre Ltd.
- ii. The current lease was dated 10th December 2013 for 10 years.
- iii. When the site was transferred from North Somerset Council to the Council in April 2012, it included a Community Investment Fund Grant plus budget transfer from North Somerset Council which was matched by the Council to cover management, repair, and maintenance to ensure that the community facility remains open and functional.
 1. This budget is held in the Council's earmarked reserves, and currently £76,930 remains in the reserve.
- iv. For several years, the Youth Centre has applied for, and been awarded, an annual Council Community Grant of around £35,000 to support its operational costs.
 1. This is vital for the Youth Centre, as many sources of funding preclude everyday operational expenditure.
- v. The Council also funds some maintenance and repair costs such as boiler repairs, tree management, etc. with 21-22 expenditure to date totalling £1,980, these annual costs have ranged up to £5,000 in the past.
- vi. The Youth Centre also funds repairs and maintenance.
- vii. The team provides an essential service to the town and its residents, supporting all generations from new-borns to older adults.
- viii. It originated in 1966 and has supported many thousands of residents since its creation.
- ix. Services and activity ranges from new-family classes, room hire to support local businesses, a community café which offers social interactions, the evening youth club, school holiday activities, 1-2-1 mentoring and alternative education.
- x. Volunteers, including members of the Lions Club also support the Centre by providing day to day maintenance and operational support.

b. The purpose:

- i. To authorise the Clerk and Staffing & Finance Chair to obtain legal advice and work with the Youth Centre team to draft a new 30-year lease and 5-year funding agreement which suits both parties' requirements and improves efficiencies for both.

c. Rationale for the recommendation:

- i. To enable the Youth Centre to bid for further funding, it requires a longer lease than the remaining 2-years to provide financial confidence to potential funders.
- ii. Also, providing operational funding certainty with a 5-year agreement (with scheduled review points), rather than a competitive annual grant process will give the team the confidence to continue to develop its provision, supporting even more residents.
- iii. The Youth Centre runs a 7-day operation including the evenings. By not relying on the Council's office team (which generally works during office hours) to arrange contractors and sign off expenditure, would reduce the impact on the Centre's provision.

2. Activity objectives:

a. Deliverables:

- i. Engage legal advice.
- ii. Carry out a full building condition survey to determine any major works required during the new lease term and agree a schedule and responsibilities.

- iii. Work with the Youth Centre team to agree terms of both agreements.
- iv. Agree a Town Councillor representative to join the Youth Centre Board of Trustees.
- v. Create the legal documents to be signed by the Chairman and Town Clerk.
- vi. Pay the funding instalments annually to the Youth Centre under the agreed terms.
- vii. The first instalment will be required by April 2022 to avoid damaging service provision.

b. Connection to Council strategic themes:

- i. Wellbeing:
 - 1. The Youth Centre services, and activity are pivotal to many Portishead residents' health and wellbeing.
 - 2. The team is fully engaged in the Portishead Wellness Partnership and Community Hub pilot project and offer the Council the opportunity to engage with and listen to young people.
 - 3. Volunteering has proven mental health benefits.
- ii. Prosperity:
 - 1. The Youth Centre is a local employer, including taking Duke of Edinburgh Award students, some of which have joined the paid team.
 - 2. Providing local businesses e.g. party planners, dance teachers, etc. a space to hold classes and events.
 - 3. Supporting residents with the life skills required to achieve and maintain employment.
- iii. Efficiency:
 - 1. Making efficiency improvements to the process around the Centre repairs and maintenance will benefit both organisations' teams.
 - 2. Also, removing the requirement to annually apply for Council grants frees the Centre team's valuable time and reduces administration for the Council.

3. Council resources:

- a. Budget / resource allocation:
 - i. Legal costs (TBC)
 - ii. There may be some urgent building repairs highlighted by the survey.
 - iii. Currently, £76,830 remains in the Council's earmarked reserves for the Youth Centre,
- b. Procurement policy:
 - i. All Council procurement will be carried out using the approved procurement process and documented accordingly.
- c. Long-term costs:
 - i. The annual funding agreement would be between £30,000 and £40,000 (subject to negotiation and an annual review).
 - ii. Initially the earmarked reserve would be spent, then the Council's revenue budget would be required.
- d. Staff resource:
 - i. The Town Clerk and Community Halls Manager with support from the Bookkeeper.
 - ii. The Staffing & Finance Chair.

4. Risk assessment:

a. Risks of doing the project:

Risks	Mitigation	Resulting risk level
Financial risk, depending on the building survey results	The survey is due anyway and the earmarked reserve can fund urgent building repairs	Amber
Continuation of funding, rather than annual grants could be seen as a lack of control on the use of Council budget	A Councillor would be offered a formal seat on the Board of Trustees and the funding agreement would be subject to an annual review	Amber
A longer lease would tie in the use of the site as a Youth Centre,	The provision of young people's support and activity is vital for any	Amber

which could lead to missed opportunities	town, so a better alternative use is unlikely The Centre teams have plans for development of the site, which a longer lease might enable.	
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b. Risks of not doing the project:

- i. The team's ability to secure external funding would be jeopardised without a new, longer lease, this could see the closure of the Centre.
- ii. Without the Council's annual grant / funding, the Centre may not be able to operate, or at least would require a reduced service.

5. Impact analysis:

	Potential impacts (positive / negative)
Wellbeing & health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued support for many Portishead residents' health and wellbeing • Connection to the Community Hub and Council projects for young people.
Equality, diversity, inclusion & safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Centre offers a truly inclusive service and activities.
Crime, disorder & transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting vulnerable residents could lead to reduced crime or anti-social behaviour
Transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The funding agreement will require a succinct annual report against a small set of key measures • The Council's budget and spending profile are published at committee meetings
Council / community finances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial outlay for the Council, then further efficiencies in administration
Scale (number of residents benefitted)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Youth Centre supports many residents of all ages

6. Recommendations:

- a. Recommendation to delegate authority to the Clerk and Councillor Bull to negotiate a 30-year lease with a 5-year funding agreement with Portishead Youth Centre (ranging between £30,000 and £40,000), subject to a full building condition survey.