



Winslow and Villages Community Board Funding Report - 2020/21 Date of Decision: 26 November 2020

Organisation Name	Winslow Town Council
Project Name	Community Facilities Feasibility study
Funding Stream	Local Infrastructure
Total Cost of project	£17987
Amount of Match Funding	£0
Amount being applied for	£17987
Amount suggested	£8993.50

Project Summary

Winslow Town Council is requesting a grant of just under £18,000 from the Local Infrastructure Fund to fully fund the feasibility study for Winslow’s new community facilities. The need for new community facilities in Winslow has very much been generated by the significant past and future increases in new housing/population.

The three potential elements identified for assessment include:

- refurbishment and enhancement of the existing Public Hall;
- construction of a new community building on the recreation ground, adjacent to or incorporating the existing Sports Club (which might be demolished and reconstructed as part of the project); and
- consideration of a potentially expanded role for the existing Royal British Legion hall. This would be the first expenditure in a project expected to cost in the region of £2.0 million.

It has been apparent for several years that Winslow lacks sufficient community meeting spaces to accommodate its needs, let alone meet the future needs of its rapidly growing population. The emerging Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan covering the period from 2013 to 2033 requires the delivery of over 1,000 new dwellings in the town, which will increase Winslow’s population during that 20 year period by about 50% to around 7,300.

Whilst the new Sir Thomas Fremantle School accommodates some community groups, many others that were displaced from the Winslow Centre have not found it possible to relocate there. This has resulted in the loss of a number of clubs, societies and the like because there is currently no suitable alternative accommodation for them in Winslow.

It should be noted that in October Buckinghamshire Council’s Cabinet approved the allocation of funds to complete the initial design stage of the redevelopment of the Winslow Centre which aims to provide a mixture of housing and community/sports facilities. The Business Case has identified that the delivery of community facility, sports facility, extra-care housing and residential housing would address the significant underutilisation of the site, alongside meeting increased demand in the area and enabling a significant capital receipt to be realised by the Council.

The proposal from Winslow Town Council would be complementary to this and states that the facilities sought include a suitable space to accommodate a youth club, improved facilities for the staging of plays and concerts with sufficient changing rooms for performers, a meeting room capable of accommodating at least 300 people seated in rows for a public meeting, play or concert or 240 seated at tables for functions such as weddings, and a space of sufficient size to accommodate indoor games such as badminton, table tennis and, if feasible, netball and basketball, as well as smaller rooms suitable for meetings and similar functions. The spaces should, where possible, be capable of accommodating different activities at different times.

How does the project address local priorities?

This project would be the first step in the proposed enhancements to the Town Centre would provide a fit for purpose space for a wide range of activities which means that the project has the potential to meet a number of the priorities set:

Health and wellbeing

Should the overall project go ahead, it is anticipated that this will increase access to facilities that can be used for a range of activities for the whole community. The proposed community space has the potential to be used for cultural events, sports and exercise as well as accommodating youth clubs, businesses and local groups. There are a number of health and wellbeing benefits that could be realised as a result of the works that the Town Council intends to carry out.

Improving the environment

The proposal from the Town Council is intended to improve Winslow Town Centre for the benefit of the community for a number of groups or organisations to make use of.

Transport and Road safety

The Town Council has highlighted that it intends to ensure that there is adequate parking for people to use this facility which evidences that road safety has been considered.

How does the project align with the values, objectives and corporate priorities of Buckinghamshire Council?

As mentioned previously, the feasibility study on its own does not directly link with the corporate priorities however as part of a larger project to improve the Town Centre Community Facilities there is the potential for the project to:

- strengthen our communities using the physical space to encourage cohesion, promote activities and enable access to a safe area that can be utilised for a number of purposes
- protecting the vulnerable by giving supported groups the opportunity to use this as a safe and accessible space for a variety of activities
- increase prosperity by enabling local businesses to utilise the space as well as encouraging visitors to the area, contributing to the local economy

How does the project achieve value for money?

To take these ideas forward and test their feasibility WTC identified three suitable organisations which were able and willing to undertake a feasibility study, and had the potential capability to take any agreed scheme forward to delivery. The three undertook preliminary inspections of the existing facilities and the site options and provided tenders with an outline of the work to be included in the preparation of a feasibility

study, together with an indication of the costs of undertaking that study as well as the subsequent steps necessary to bring any project on which WTC decides to fruition.

The candidates' respective lead personnel were interviewed by a Panel comprising three Town Councillors. The competitive pricing, relevant experience and enthusiasm of PCMS, and the references they were given by Haddenham and Chinnor parish councils, led the Panel to recommend that the contract should be awarded to PCMS. WTC subsequently confirmed that PCMS should be invited to undertake the feasibility study at an estimated cost of £18,000 plus VAT, with an expected delivery of its conclusions by December 2020.

Winslow Town Council's application states that there is no match funding offered for this stage of the project. Winslow Town Council has been approached to confirm if match funding would be considered and it was confirmed that, as funds have already been committed to other stages of this larger project, match funding will not be offered.

On 13 October 2020, Buckinghamshire Council's Cabinet approved the release of £800k from the Winslow capital project budgets to complete the initial concept design stage for the Winslow Centre Development (a One Public Estate funded feasibility project). This project proposes to install a number of outdoor sports pitches and a number of indoor spaces to accommodate community activities. The indoor space is likely to be smaller than the project proposed by Winslow Town Council but looks to achieve a similar outcome.

This project will see completion of the initial concept design stage including:

- Seeking pre-planning advice, public consultation and submission of the relevant planning application(s); including the development of a planning strategy and a full local member and stakeholder consultation plan;
- Continuing negotiations with specialist housing providers and public sector partners to inform the business case decision to be brought back to Cabinet;
- Appointment of Professional Teams and commissioning of further required surveys;
- The exploration of a property company for the management, rent and or sale of housing units (residential and independent living);
- Arranging the provision of a temporary library facility to prepare for the existing library decant whilst it is re-provisioned in a new facility.
- Cabinet welcomed reengagement with the Clinical Commissioning Group so that they could be involved in the provision of a new, fit for purpose community facility; provided commitment to enhanced sports facilities and confirmed that the project would have due regard to the Neighbourhood Plan.

Consideration should be given to whether Winslow Town Council's proposal for a new community facility duplicates the Cabinet decision to redevelop the Winslow Centre and if the request for £17987 of Community Board funding achieves value for money given the funding of £800k that has been released by the Council in order to complete the initial concept and design stage.

Community Board Coordinator comments

The proposed feasibility study would be one of the first stages of a larger project to be carried out by the Town Council, estimated to cost £2m in total. The planned study looks to ensure that the Town Council is able to be robust in its aim to make an informed decision to establish a large multi-use space for the benefit of the community.

The Town Council has provided information regarding the predicted increase in population as well as the lack of fit for purpose space available; indicating that this project aims to meet a local need. Similarly, the intended benefits of this wider project are in line with the Council's key corporate priorities, particularly if the opportunity is exploited and the space can be utilised by a wide range of people for a number of different uses.

The application states that a number of contractors were considered by a panel of Winslow Town Council Members and that competitive pricing was a key factor in their decision to hire this particular company. This is an indication of the organisation's intent regarding ensuring value for money.

The decision taken by Cabinet on 13 October 2020 to proceed with the Winslow Centre redevelopment project should be taken into consideration when determining whether the proposal from Winslow Town Council aims to meet a separate need or whether both projects are aiming to meet a similar need and are duplicating efforts to provide a community facility for residents. It should also be considered whether, if both projects are proposing to deliver a similar output, whether the Winslow Town Centre Feasibility Study, achieves value for money.

In light of the above, it is recommended that the Board considers the application submitted by Winslow Town Council taking note of the comments above.

The applicant will be required to agree to terms and conditions, which include a monitoring agreement, as discussed with the Community Board Coordinator before the fund will be formally awarded.