

BODY: Cabinet

DATE: 22 March 2017

SUBJECT: Bridgemere Centre

REPORT OF: Director of Service Delivery

Ward(s): St. Anthony's

Purpose: To seek Members' approval for a variation in the terms of an allocation of a capital funding to the Bridgemere Centre

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Recommendations: Cabinet is recommended to approve a variation in the terms of the grant offered to the Bridgemere Centre.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 At its meeting on 13 December 2016, Cabinet approved a one-off capital payment to the Bridgemere Centre to contribute to the purchase of the Centre subject to a range of terms protecting the Council's investment.
- 1.2 Members are asked to consider and approve variations in these terms to ensure that the Bridgemere Centre or its successors are not left with a debt which they have no means of paying.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Cabinet has agreed an allocation of £20,000 to the Bridgemere Centre to enable them to buy the Centre with the aim of ensuring the future financial viability of the Centre and the community activities and services.
- 2.2 The Trustees have asked that the terms be changed to protect against the eventuality that they, or their successors as managers of the community centre, are unable to continue managing the Centre or sell it and recoup the value of the Council's investment.
- 2.3 They also wish to allow for the possibility of alternative premises becoming available which offer better facilities.
- 2.4 They have therefore asked that the period within which they are required to repay the £20,000 is reduced from 40 to 20 years, and that the sum to be repaid is reduced by £1,000 each year.

2.5 The grant offered would protect the use of the Bridgemere Centre as a community centre for the next 20 years and ensure its sustainability for a reasonable period without imposing repayment terms which are disproportionate to the level of grant or restricting the Centre management from moving to better facilities should the opportunity arise.

3.0 Proposal

3.1 It is proposed that the grant of £20,000 offered to the Bridgemere Centre Ltd. is made subject to the following revised conditions:

- The grant is made subject to a signed agreement confirming:
 - its use solely for the purchase of the property, such purchase to be made within a reasonable time frame (in 2017);
 - the requirement that the property is to be used as a community centre for 20 years, provided that this requirement will cease to have effect if the grant is repaid in full within the first year together with interest payable at the Bank of England base rate plus 1%; or if, in subsequent years, the initial £20,000 less £1,000 for each completed year is repaid together with interest payable at the Bank of England base rate plus 1% and
 - repayment of the grant in full within the first year together with interest payable at the Bank of England base rate plus 1%, or, in subsequent years, the initial £20,000 less £1,000 for each completed year together with interest payable at the Bank of England base rate plus 1% if there is any breach of the grant conditions.
- The Council's investment is protected by putting a charge on the property protected by registration of a restriction.
- No Eastbourne Borough Council Community Grants will be made towards the core costs of running the Bridgemere Centre in future years.

4.0 Consultation

4.1 The Trustees of the Bridgemere Centre have been consulted about these revised terms and are keen to accept the Council's offer on this basis.

5.0 Resource Implications

5.1 The proposal is for a grant of £20,000 to be made to Bridgemere Centre Ltd. to enable them to purchase the freehold of the community centre which they currently manage.

5.2 This contribution would allow the Bridgemere Centre Ltd. to run the Centre on a sustainable financial footing in the future and would

remove the need to continue supporting the Centre with grants, freeing up an average of £3,000 a year, thereby covering the costs of this investment within 7 years.

6.0 Implications for Equalities and Fairness

6.1 The Bridgemere Centre offers opportunities for people of all ages to receive services and support and engage in activities which help reduce social isolation and promote positive health and employment outcomes. The Centre has fully inclusive policies and procedures.

7.0 Legal Implications

7.1 The Legal implications are set out in the body of this report.

8.0 Other Implications

8.1 There are no Environmental, Staffing or other implications arising from this report.

9.0 Recommendations

9.1 Cabinet is recommended to approve a variation in the terms of grant offered to the Bridgemere Centre as set out in paragraph 3.

Ian Fitzpatrick
Director of Service Delivery

Background Papers:

None.