



16 June 2023

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DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE DECISION MEETING

A meeting of the Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance Decision Meeting will be held at Council Chamber - Trinity Road on **Friday, 30 June 2023 at 1.00 pm.**

Rob Weaver
Chief Executive

Recording of Proceedings – The law allows the public proceedings of Council, Cabinet, and Committee Meetings to be recorded, which includes filming as well as audio-recording. Photography is also permitted.

As a matter of courtesy, if you intend to record any part of the proceedings please let the Committee Administrator know prior to the date of the meeting.

AGENDA

1. **Transfer of Land at Fortey Road, Northleach to Northleach with Eastington Town Council (Pages 3 - 12)**

This report seeks the approval of the Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance of the recommendations for the transfer, with a dowry, of Land at Fortey Road to Northleach with Eastington Town Council.

Reporting Officer: Jasmine McWilliams (jasmine.mcwilliams@publicagroup.uk)

DATE OF DECISION: NO EARLIER THAN 30 JUNE 2023

DEADLINE FOR COMMENTS: NOON ON 29 JUNE 2023

Note: Any Member who wishes to comment on an item is requested to send those comments (preferably by e-mail) to the Reporting Officer, copied to Democratic Services, by the deadline identified.

Any comments received will be reported to the Decision-Maker prior to the decision(s) being taken.

2. **Community Welfare Grant 2023 Report (Pages 13 - 18)**

This report seeks the approval of the Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance of the recommendations to agree a roll forward of current arrangements until new arrangements commence, anticipated to be 1 April 2024.

Reporting Officer: Joseph Walker (joseph.walker@cotswold.gov.uk)

DATE OF DECISION: NO EARLIER THAN 30 JUNE 2023

DEADLINE FOR COMMENTS: NOON ON 29 JUNE 2023

Note: Any Member who wishes to comment on an item is requested to send those comments (preferably by e-mail) to the Reporting Officer, copied to Democratic Services, by the deadline identified.

Any comments received will be reported to the Decision-Maker prior to the decision(s) being taken.

(END)

Agenda Item 1



Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE DECISION MEETING
Subject	Transfer of Land at Fortey Road, Northleach to Northleach with Eastington Town Council
Wards affected	Northleach
Accountable member	Cllr Mike Evely, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance Email: mike.evely@cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Andrew Turner, Business Manager for Assets and Council Priorities Email: andrew.turner@publicagroup.uk
Report author	Meriel Gould Estates Officer Email: meriel.gould@publicagroup.uk
Summary/Purpose	To consider the transfer, with a dowry, of Land at Fortey Road to Northleach with Eastington Town Council.
Annexes	Annex A – Plan Annex B – Heads of Terms
Recommendation(s)	That the Cabinet Member agrees to the transfer of the land known as Land at Fortey Road, Northleach owned under titles GR343929, GR343865, GR343840, GR343824 and part of GR343802 to Northleach with Eastington Town Council with a dowry of £10,000.
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering our services to the highest standards • Helping residents and communities access the support they need for good health and wellbeing
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Heritage and Design Team

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Council owns the freehold to the land at Fortey Road, Northleach as shown on the plan at Annex A which comprises mainly woodland. The land has a public right of way running across it and has been used for many years for public amenity. The land was purchased by Northleach Rural District in 1947 and through the local government reorganisation in 1974 became the property of Cotswold District Council. Terms have been agreed with Northleach with Eastington Town Council for a transfer of the land to them as shown at Annex B.
- 1.2 The Council's scheme of delegated authority gives the Cabinet Member responsible for assets authority to agree disposals of land at values between £50,000 and £250,000.

2. MAIN POINTS

- 2.1 Over the years officers have been asked to look at ensuring that the woodland is preserved for public use. Local management of the land would be more beneficial by giving scope for the community to become involved with how the land is used now and in the future. Community stewardship should increase public use of the land.
- 2.2 Discussions have taken place with the Town Council and terms have been agreed for the land to be transferred to them with a one off payment of £10,000 to cover future maintenance.
- 2.3 Large scale tree works were carried out in 2021 ensuring the land was in a satisfactory state before a transfer could be proposed and which will help the Town Council with their plans to make the land more accessible to the public. The Town Council wish to continue with restoration work and plan to make part of the woodland part of the green link around Northleach for the benefit of the public.
- 2.4 It is likely that the Town Council and local groups would be in a better position to be able to access grant funding for the land than the District Council.
- 2.5 Transferring the land to the Town Council will remove the Estates Team and Heritage Design Teams' future management responsibilities much of which consists of tree maintenance.
- 2.6 The land is not considered to be suitable for housing development as that would result in the loss of woodland within the Cotswold AONB, however the Council will retain a small part of this land adjacent to 2 Fortey Road, as a potential housing plot which is shown edged blue on the plan at Annex A.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Tree works were completed by the Council in 2021 which included some tree felling, thereby minimising the need for major works over the coming years. Taking into account this work that has already been carried out and looking at previous costs the Council's Tree Officer estimated that it will cost £1000 each year to maintain the land.

- 3.2 The land would be transferred with a one off payment of £10,000 to the Town Council to cover future maintenance responsibilities for the next 10 years. The payment will be funded from a forecast underspend on the 2022/23 'tree works' heritage and design' revenue budget with any shortfall in funding to be provided via the Council's Priorities fund.
- 3.3 Grounds maintenance and tree maintenance costs will be removed from the Council's responsibilities once the transfer has been completed.
- 3.4 The land is categorised for Finance purposes as a Surplus Asset and the Net Book Value is £61,000. This value is for accounting purposes and represents a notional market value. The Transfer imposes restrictions on the use of the land for public amenity woodland and therefore a market value price would not be appropriate. The transfer of this asset at nil value is not recognised as a loss under local government statutory accounting requirements and will have no impact on the Council's General Fund.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Council has the power within the Local Government Act 1972: General Disposal Consent (England) 2003, which considers the sale of land for less than best consideration to dispose of any asset at less than best consideration, without the requirement for approval from the Secretary of State, at up to £2 million below open market value if it can justify the undervalue by the virtue of other benefits either social, environmental or economic.

This proposed transfer is justified in two ways:

- (i) the benefit of local management and other benefits as detailed in the report;
 - (ii) the fact that the use of the land is restricted and therefore the value is restricted. Any removal of this restriction in the future would require payment of a premium to the Council
- 4.2 In addition the land does not have any restrictions on the registered title or planning designation as 'open space' therefore it is not believed that an advertisement under s123 LGA is required
 - 4.3 Covenants will be imposed in the Transfer restricting how the land can be used, including not using the land for any other purpose other than amenity woodland.
 - 4.4 Rights will be reserved over the land in favour of the land to be retained including the right to connect, repair and maintain all necessary service media to the land that is being retained for potential development.
 - 4.5 The Transfer will restrict the use of the £10,000 payment for the purposes of future maintenance of the land only and should the Town Council dispose of the land any remaining unspent balance will have to be returned to the Council.

4.6 If the Town Council decides to sell the land then it will have to give the Council the first right of refusal to purchase the land back.

5. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Transfer to the Town Council will enable more local management and public use as well as opportunities for biodiversity enhancement.

6. RISK ASSESSMENT

6.1 The risk of the Town Council using the land for uses other than public amenity is mitigated by the proposed covenant on use.

7. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

7.1 The Council could choose to retain the land and maintain it at a cost of approximately £1000 each year for the benefit of the local community but without local input the community may choose not to engage with the space as if it were managed locally.

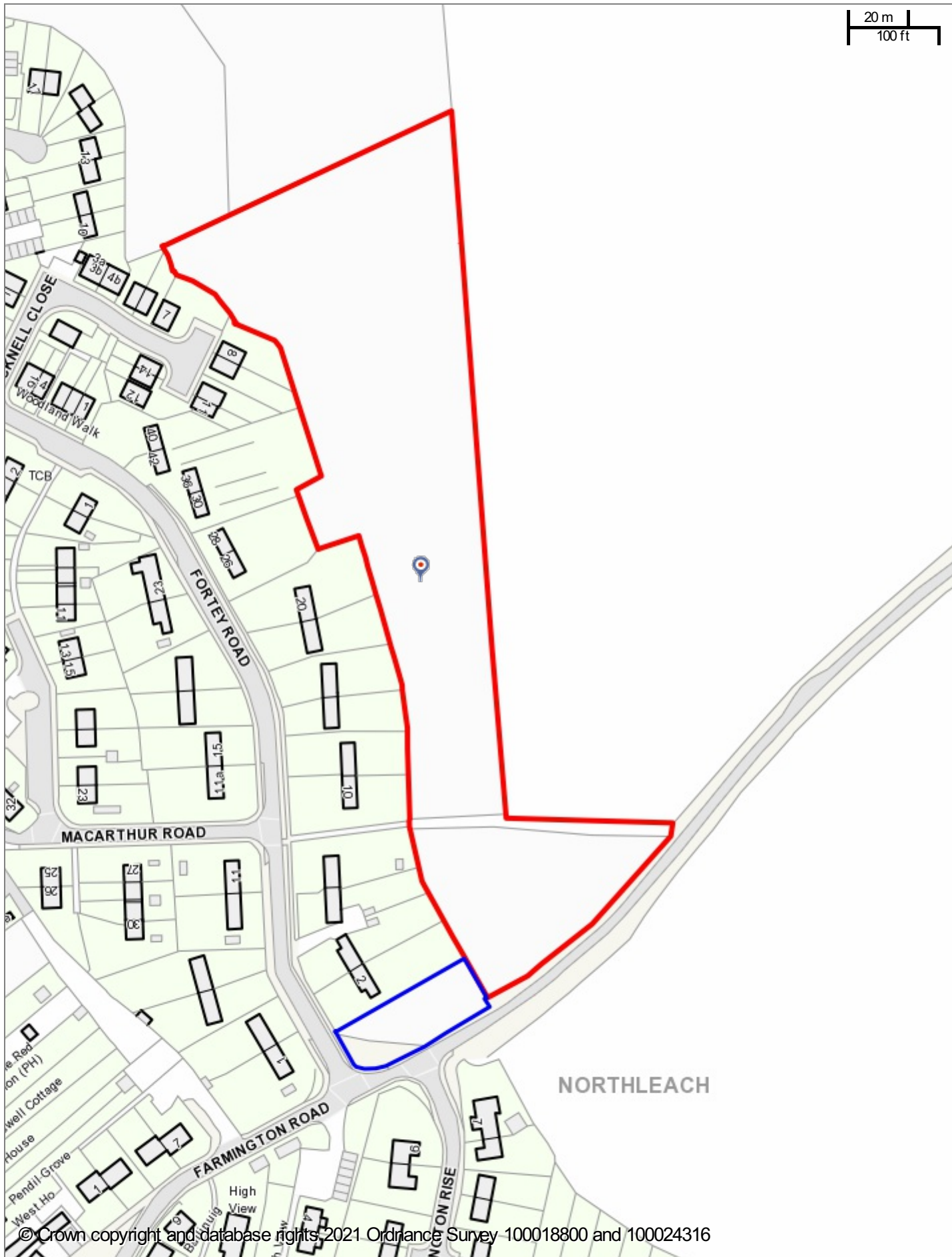
8. CONCLUSIONS

8.1 In order to reduce the Council's costs, preserve the land for public amenity and enable the land to be managed locally and more effectively the proposal to transfer to the Town Council is recommended.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 None

20 m
100 ft



Land at Fortey Road
Northleach

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Subject to Contract and Portfolioholder Approval

Heads of Terms
Disposal of the Freehold of Land at Fortey Road, Northleach

1.0	The Seller	Cotswold District Council Trinity Road Cirencester Gloucestershire GL7 1PX Jasmine McWilliams Asset Manager jasmine.mcwilliams@publicagroup.uk 01285 623255
1.1	The Seller's Solicitors	Interim Head of Legal Services Cotswold District Council Trinity Road Cirencester Gloucestershire GL7 1PX. Officer: TBC
1.3	The Buyer	Northleach with Eastington Town Council The Westwoods Centre, Bassett Road, Northleach, GL54 3QJ Pauline Rigby Town Clerk Westwoods office: 01451 885349 Town Clerk (direct): 01451 885349 E: clerk@northleach.gov.uk
1.4	The Buyer's Solicitors	TBA
1.5	The Buyer's Agent	TBA
2.0	Basics	
2.1	Property	Land at Fortey Road, Northleach as edged red on attached plan. Retained Land (edged blue) – land to be retained by the Seller

2.2	Registered title numbers	Whole of:- GR343929 GR343865 GR343840 GR343824 Part GR343802 The Seller is to retain part GR343802
2.3	VAT	N/A
2.4	Proposed Date of Exchange	ASAP
2.5	Proposed Completion Date	ASAP
2.6	Interest to be transferred	Freehold
2.7	Sale Price	Nil
2.8	Cost centre/income code	TBA
2.9	Other departments to be notified of disposal to cease works normally carried out	Tree Officer Grounds Maintenance
3.0	Other Terms	
3.1	Buyers Obligations	Upon completion of the Transfer, The Seller will pay the Buyer the sum of £10,000 as a contribution towards the future maintenance of the Property ("the Maintenance Fund")
3.2	Rights Granted to the Buyer	None
3.3	Rights Reserved to the Seller in favour of the Retained Land and its successors in title	The Seller reserves the right to connect, repair and maintain all necessary service media to Retained Land (part GR343802) The Seller reserves access rights in favour of the Retained Land
3.4	Other rights	The Property is transferred with such rights reservations and covenants as are existing on the registered freehold title

4.0	Sellers Obligations	
4.1	Covenants to be imposed under Section 33 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982	<p>1) The Property is transferred subject to the inclusion of a restricted use covenant that in perpetuity it is used only as amenity woodland</p> <p>3) No buildings to be erected</p> <p>4) To maintain boundaries to Property as shown by "T" marks on Plan (to be provided)</p> <p>5) To use the £10,000 for maintenance of the Property</p> <p>6) No overnight sleeping on Property</p>
4.2	Right of First Refusal/ Pre-emption	<p>The Buyer shall grant to the Seller a Pre-emption Agreement.</p> <p>Should the Buyer wish to dispose of the Property, it must first offer the Property to the Seller for nil value.</p> <p>Upon making a disposal of the Property, the Buyer will be required to repay to the Seller the balance of the Maintenance Fund as at the date of such disposal being the sum of £10,000 less any expenses incurred in connection with the maintenance of the Property</p>
5.0	Costs	Each party to pay their own costs
6.0	Declaration of Interests	<p>Any interests should be noted here, with the Council, Officers, Members, Tenant.</p> <p>No interest to declare.</p>



**Land at Fortey Road
Northleach**

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Agenda Item 2



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE – DECISION-MAKING MEETING – 30th June 2023
Subject	COMMUNITY WELFARE GRANT ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2023-24
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Cllr Mike Evemy, Cabinet Member for Finance Tel: 01285 623000 Email: mike.evemy@cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Andy Barge, Assistant Director, Community Email: andy.barge@publicagroup.uk
Report author	Joseph Walker, Community Partnerships Officer Email: joseph.walker@cotswold.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To roll forward current arrangements for the Community Welfare Grant for one year, to enable a grants review and roll-out of a new approach during the first year of the Council's next term.
Annexes	None



Recommendation(s)	<i>To agree a roll forward of current arrangements until new arrangements commence, anticipated to be 1 April 2024.</i>
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Deliver the highest standard of service ● Support health and wellbeing <p>The Community Welfare Grant supports a number of voluntary and community sector partners, who play a key role in supporting individuals and communities around the district. Partners are often useful allies in promoting the Council’s priorities, especially on climate change, and play a role in helping residents become work ready, and accessing employment</p>
Key Decision	No
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Local Management Team.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The Community Welfare Grant supports a number of voluntary and community sector partners, who play a key role in supporting individuals and communities around the district. This report seeks agreement for the distribution of this grant for 2023/24, and notes the intention to carry out further review in-year.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The Community Welfare Grant is a budget used to support one of the Council’s key areas of focus – help residents, businesses and communities to access the support they need to ensure a high level of health and wellbeing. One way we help to achieve this is to provide core funding support to voluntary and community sector (VCS) partners providing vital services and support aligned to this priority in the Cotswold District.

3. MAIN POINTS

3.1 The Community Welfare Grant budget is a key mechanism the Council uses to support the work of VCS partners, helping them to address the health and wellbeing of our residents,



particularly more vulnerable groups and individuals. The scheme has been tied into long-standing grant arrangements with key partners. This means that there is not a current process to consider new grants nor criteria to determine what scale of support should be provided. The process for allocating the Community Welfare Grant is therefore due for review.

- 3.2** A review also presents an opportunity to reflect on changes to the VCS landscape since the current allocations were agreed. There are a number of newer organisations doing valuable work, and as a positive legacy of the efforts the VCS and the public sector made during COVID, there is a strong local network of organisations, in regular contact, helping coordinate activity to address critical issues and sharing knowledge.
- 3.3** The operation of this budget, and how the Council supports its VCS partners should be reviewed early in the Council term which commenced this May. Officers recommend that this review takes a wider look at the Council's approach to community grants, as this would be an opportune time to review the operation and future of Crowdfund Cotswold - it will be three years this October since Cabinet took the decision to go down this route. The findings of this review will be the topic of a report to Cabinet.
- 3.4** In recognition of the valuable services our current funded partners provide, and in order to provide appropriate notice of any change to the support individual partners receive, officers recommend that the current arrangements are rolled forward pro rata until the commencement of the Council's new arrangements, to prevent any break in service provision to residents. New arrangements would be expected to commence at the start of financial year 2024-25, although will be subject to agreement by Cabinet. Such a timeframe will allow the design, agreement and implementation of a new scheme, reflecting the Council's priorities.
- 3.5** Moreover, this timeframe will also enable a managed transition into such arrangements for our partners - who could face a change to the level of support they receive from the Council, or may simply need to adapt case management/ performance management to respond to a new monitoring process. A key message within any transition is the assurance that a new approach is proposed to respond to the passage of time, good governance and changing circumstances, and is not a reflection on the work that partners currently carry out on behalf of our residents
- 3.6** Please see below the current distribution of this budget, which it is proposed to roll forward:
 - a. The Churn Project - £9,000 for services; a neighbourhood project working in Cirencester, services include providing support to jobless residents, befriending services and older people's groups. Contribution to core costs.
 - b. Cotswold Counselling - £5,425 towards rent; this is a registered charity dedicated to the relief of emotional distress caused by mental or physical ill health or by social or economic circumstances, affecting people in the Cotswolds and the surrounding area. Contribution to core costs.



- c. Cotswold Friends - £9,100 for services; services include community transport and befriending services as well as running social prescribing in the North Cotswolds. Contribution to core costs.
- d. Gloucestershire Rural Community Council - £13,100 for services; SLA covering a contribution towards the two local advisors covering Cotswold District, providing a range of services such as advice on external funding, neighbourhood planning, and setting up community organisations.
- e. Stroud and Cotswolds CAB - £70,920 towards advice services across Cotswold District.
- f. CHYP - £3,200 towards mortgage repayments
- g. People 4 You - £2,050 towards their Befriending service

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The Community Welfare Grant award proposed in this report will be funded from the 2023/24 budget.

4.2 The Council faces a significant budget gap in future financial years, as indicated in the Medium Term Financial Strategy considered by Council at their meeting on 15 February 2023. Members will need to consider the level of the budget, support provided to voluntary organisations, and the value of the contribution made as a result of the financial support as part of the 2024/25 budget setting process.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 This is discretionary activity by the Council, to recognise the vital work carried out across the district by partner organisations. The Council is not bound into long term agreements with such partners, but sectoral good practice indicates that funding arrangements should not be altered without appropriate notice.

6.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

6.1 In reviewing the Council's financial support of its voluntary and community sector partners, the biggest risk is impact on the services they deliver, and reputational fallout from such impact. Potential impact is mitigated by ensuring decisions are procedurally and evidentially sound, and notice of any changes given

7.0 EQUALITIES IMPACT (IF REQUIRED)

7.1 No EIA is required at this stage, as the proposal is to roll forward existing arrangements. However, a revised process to distribute this budget may need to be assessed, as any reduction in support to voluntary and community sector partners could have an equalities impact.



8.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS (IF REQUIRED)

8.1 None

9.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

9.1 None. This budget is established to support the voluntary and community sector, and it has already been agreed that a better process needs to be established. A roll forward of the existing arrangements is the best way to create the time and space for such a review without negatively impacting on the organisations this budget supports.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

(END)

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