

# Cambridge City Council

## Record of Executive Decision

### **Approval of funding to Cherry Hinton Community Benefit Society Limited for fitting out and starting up the Cherry Hinton Hub**

Decision of: Councillor S Smith, Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources

Reference: 24/URGENCY/

Date of decision: 26/06/2024

Date Published on website: 28/06/24

Decision Type: Key

Matter for Decision: Approval of funding towards fitting out of the community kitchen and rooms and starting up the Cherry Hinton Hub (Planning Ref: 19/1713/FUL)

#### FOR PUBLICATION

Why the Decision had to be made (and any alternative options): The Cherry Hinton Hub scheme is nearing practical completion. The specification of works and bill of quantities for fitting out the community kitchen and rooms were not included in the construction contract, and no provision was made to support the start-up costs of the hub operator, the Cherry Hinton Community Benefit Society Limited.

The Council requested the Benefit Society to raise £50k towards the above costs. However, these costs are forecast to exceed £100k.

To date, the Benefit Society has raised £43k. Of this sum, Thalia has approved a £30k grant specifically towards the community kitchen fit out costs of £50k, subject to confirmation of a lease from the Council. The balance of £13k has been raised by the community.

A council grant of £50k is required as follows:

- a) £20k towards the £50k cost of fitting out the community kitchen,
- b) £20k to fund the cost of furnishing and equipping the community rooms, and
- c) £10k towards the community hub start-up costs.

A cash flow forecast provided by the Benefit Society identifies that funding is required to cover start-up costs before any room hire income is generated. This is to purchase café stock and meet building service charges. Local community donations

received to date of £13k will contribute to these initial start-up costs, pending break even.

Thalia require confirmation of match funding by 30<sup>th</sup> June 2024 to approve a grant funding application, and this is why an out of cycle decision is required before any future scrutiny committees or as part of the council's next standard budget setting process.

Practical completion of the building and handover is due to take place on 24<sup>th</sup> June, and so this decision will allow access to the building for commencement of fitting out works, required for the earliest possible opening of the hub. A Council grant decision will enable the Community Benefit Society to demonstrate funds required for Thalia and to let contracts to fit out the kitchen, furnish and equip the community rooms and acquire equipment and stock required for starting up the new community hub.

The Executive Councillor's decision: Approval of £50,000 funding for Cherry Hinton Community Benefit Society.

Reason for the decision: As detailed in the Officers supporting briefing report.

Scrutiny Consideration: As special urgency the Chair of Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee has to agree the use of special urgency. This has now been confirmed by the Chair.

Conflict of interest: None

Comments: Part 4C section 6.1 of the Councils Constitution, permits decisions to be taken which are outside of the budget framework if the decision is:

1. a matter of urgency (this is correct)
2. it is not practical to convene a quorate meeting of the Council, (this is correct);  
and
3. the Chair of the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee agrees the matter is of urgency (**the Chair to agree**).

The decision will be reported back to S&R Committee on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024 and Full Council on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2024.

**Recommendation:**

- To approve £50,000 additional capital funding towards the costs of fitting out and equipping the community kitchen and rooms and supporting the start-up phases of the Cherry Hinton Community Hub.

**Background:**

- The councils [Community Centre Strategy](#) identified a gap in access to community facilities for high need residents in Cherry Hinton. New community facilities planned for nearby growth sites at Marleigh, GB1/2 and Land North of Cherry

Hinton will not provide access for the existing community to facilities within a 15 minute walk time

- A new community facility for Cherry Hinton therefore remains a strategic priority for the council and a priority for residents who do not have currently have access to facilities
- Residents have been working with the council since 2006 to bring forward a scheme to extend the existing library building to create a Community Hub
- Following extensive consultation with residents, planning approval was granted for the Cherry Hinton Hub scheme in September 2020
- Following design work and competitive supplier and contractor quotations, a contract was let for the required demolition and structural works, mechanical heating and ventilation, access control and interior finishes at a capital cost of £1,643,089
- Having been set a requirement to raise £50k, the Cherry Hinton Community Benefit Society has identified a requirement for £90k + to fit out the community kitchen (£50k), furnish and equip the community rooms (£20k) and operating start-up costs (£20k +). Of this sum, the Benefit Society has secured a £43k, of which £30k is subject to a lease. To address the funding gap, the Benefit Society has requested a £50k grant from the Council to be paid in two tranches of £25k. The special conditions to be attached to the deed require prior to the Community Hub opening: submission of quotes received for the works; adoption of the policies for Health and Safety, Safeguarding (child and vulnerable adults), Equality and Diversity, Confidentiality / Data Protection (GDPR), Complaints and Environmental; submission of necessary insurance documents, a budget for the first year of operation, and proof of expenditure of the first payment prior to the release of the second grant payment.

**Why an out of cycle decision is required:**

- An out of cycle decision is now required because:
  1. The next opportunity for scrutiny at Strategy and Resources Committee (S&R) of the additional capital requirement would be S&R Committee on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024, but this would be too late to allow the hub to fitted out ready for opening in a timely manner.
  2. The next opportunity to include a capital request as part of the council's financial cycle would be the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) in October 2024.