

REPORT FROM: DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES

TO: NELSON, BRIEFIELD AND REEDLEY AREA COMMITTEE

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BODIES IN MOTION BRADLEY GARDEN PROJECT

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update the Nelson, Brierfield and Reedley Committee on the Bodies in Motion Bradley Garden Project, further to the report considered by the Committee in November.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That the Committee notes the Executive recommendation to enable Bodies in Motion to access additional funding, to help meet the funding shortfall.
- (2) That the Resolutions previously agreed by the Committee in November are reviewed in light of developments since the November meeting.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) To support Bodies in Motion in accessing additional funding to meet the Phase 2 funding shortfall
- (2) The Council's own financial situation.

ISSUE

BACKGROUND

1. Members will recall that Pendle Borough Council has been approached by Bodies in Motion requesting financial support for their community garden project in Bradley. A report, outlining the project and funding shortfall, was considered by the Committee at their last meeting on 4th November.

CURRENT POSITION

2. In 2022, Bodies in Motion applied for funding through the Dept of Culture, Media and Sport's "Youth Investment Fund", a funding opportunity designed for voluntary, community and social enterprise youth organisations to deliver, expand and create high quality youth provision across England.

3. The application process, which took nearly two years to complete, resulted in a positive outcome and in February 2024, Bodies in Motion secured a total of just over £1.4million Youth Investment Fund (YIF):
 - £1,171,600.00 capital
 - £223,000.00 revenue
4. The project with the Youth Investment Fund has garnered attention from national media sources and earlier in 2024 Bodies in Motion was interviewed by the BBC, and featured on national television. Following the interview, Bodies in Motion has been advised that, once complete, the BBC would like to return and do a larger, more comprehensive interview, showcasing the facilities and project as a whole.
5. Bodies in Motion has allocated the capital expenditure to a number of different projects, including development of a Youth Games Zone and changing facility at Orchid House and a number of capital schemes at the Garden Project, to be known as 'The Garden Zone'.
6. The majority of the funding has been allocated for development work at The Garden Zone (Fleet St, Nelson), specifically for the construction of two buildings, Phases 1 (reception building) and 2 (youth building).
7. Phase 1, which is almost now complete, is a reception building and café, forming the main entrance for the project.
8. Phase 2, which is about to begin construction, is a new build youth zone building comprising of 280m² in a 2-storey format. Work is due to commence in November and projected completion date is May 2025. The facility will be used for the delivery of a wide-range of accredited learning opportunities, awareness raising sessions, various physical activities and a place where people of all ages will be able to meet and address the myriad of concerns associated with social isolation. It is anticipated that works can be advanced for an earlier completion by the end of March 2025 subject to no adverse issues arising. (A further stage, Phase 3, will be another large community building, from where Bodies in Motion can extend the range of activities available to all members of the community).
9. Longer term, Bodies in Motion would like to develop the Garden Zone to include various services for local people, working in partnership with other local providers and aiming to become a health and wellbeing hub.

FUNDING SHORTFALL

10. Bodies in Motion has informed Pendle Council that they now have a funding shortfall for phase 2: the double storey youth building. Bodies in Motion state that the building must be two storey to ensure they are able to meet the engagement targets set out in the original application. They have assured Pendle Council that a double storey building was costed in the original application, however, given the increased costs over the 2 year application period, they now have a short fall of £98,400:

Amount capital awarded:

£1,171,600.00

Orchid House and professional fees + Phase 1 of Garden zone site:

£246,419.00

Balance:

£925,181.00

Pinnington(Contractor) £853,000 + £170,600 VAT

£1,023,600.00

11. According to Bodies in Motion, this shortfall is despite "value engineering" the project to make it as affordable as possible under current funding restrictions. Phase 2 has been costed and is about to begin construction.
12. Bodies in Motion approached Pendle Council officers in September 2024, requesting a contribution of up to £100,000 to meet the funding shortfall and to safeguard the project in the longer term. Bodies in Motion indicated that, should Pendle Council approve a package of support, YIF may also provide further funding to ensure continuation of the project.
13. Members at the Nelson, Brierfield and Reedley Committee discussed the funding shortfall at its meeting held 4th November, 2024 and resolved that:
 - That Bodies in Motion's (BiM's) request for a contribution of up to £100,000 to meet their funding shortfall for the delivery of Phase 2 of their Bradley Garden Project be referred to the Nelson Town Deal Board and the Nelson Long-Term Plan for Towns Board.
 - That BiM be encouraged to continue actively pursuing the undisclosed other funding sources.
14. It should be noted that Town Deal funding is not possible as the scheme does not meet the objectives, and all funding has now been allocated. Any Long-Term Town Funding will not be available within the timescales required for Phase 2. Therefore, this is not an option.
15. Since the Nelson, Brierfield and Reedley Committee considered this request, Bodies in Motion has informed the Council of a funding stream it is exploring to help address the shortfall, the Edward Gosling Foundation Fund. This grant fund offers the potential to secure up to £250,000, sufficient to address the aforementioned shortfall, completing the remaining phases of the project.
16. To qualify for funding through The Edward Gosling Foundation, there must be at least 50 years left on the lease for The Garden Zone and, therefore, Bodies in Motion has requested an extension on the current lease (of which there is 18 years remaining) to at least 50 years.

PROPOSED NEXT STEPS

17. Although Pendle Council fully supports and endorses such projects, unfortunately it is not in a position to offer any financial support.
18. Members should also consider the implications of awarding funding on an ad-hoc basis to community/ voluntary groups who approach Pendle Council for grant funding outside any grant allocation process. This could set a precedent, raising expectations within communities that Pendle Council is able to award significant grants for community projects.
19. Wherever possible, Bodies in Motion should be supported to access alternative funding streams to help address the funding shortfall and complete all phases of the project. Thus, by issuing Bodies in Motion with a new lease, aligned to the requirements of the Edward Gosling Foundation, offers a potential solution- enabling Bodies in Motion to access additional funding to meet the Phase 2 shortfall whilst safeguarding the Council's financial situation.

20. In order for Bodies in Motion to secure the funding for 2024/25 and meet the requirements of the Youth Investment Fund delivery timescales, the Executive considered this request at its meeting on 28th November.

IMPLICATIONS

Policy: The Bradley Community Garden project aligns with Pendle Council corporate providing investment in the Bradley ward and helping to improve health outcomes for Bradley residents.

Financial: A request for financial support of c£100,000 has been received from Bodies in Motion to Pendle Council to help meet the shortfall in funding which has arisen in the project, since implementation commenced in February 2024. If the Council were to agree to this request, not only would it be setting a precedent and potentially open the Council up to requests from other groups, it would place additional strain on the Council's own funding position. The Council would have to fund the request through prudential borrowing which would increase the cost to the Council further through the interest costs.

Legal: None arising directly from this report.

Risk Management: None arising directly from this report.

Health and Safety: None arising directly from this report.

Sustainability: The funders require the development of environmentally sustainable youth facilities, which supports low carbon communities.

Community Safety: The Garden Project seeks to address anti-social behaviour amongst young people, by providing a dedicated youth provision in Bradley.

Equality and Diversity: None arising directly from this report.

APPENDICES: None.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS: None.