

WYMONDHAM PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS

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- Portfolio Holder:** Leader
- Ward(s) Affected:** Wymondham
- Purpose of the Report:** To set aside funds towards public realm improvements in Wymondham.

Recommendations

That Council:

- 1 Accepts the key points from the Wymondham Town Council resolution.
 - 2 Allocates the following sums toward public realm improvements in Wymondham.
 - The full capital receipt (less costs of sale) from the sale of Middleton Road.
 - £234,457 from the Co-Investment Fund, subject to a successful application and supportive business case.
 - £15,543 from the in-year surplus (in order to fully match the £250,000 Wymondham Town Council contribution).
- And agrees to use the in-year surplus to increase the CAF, rather than using some of the proceeds from the sale of Middleton Road.
- 3 Agrees that a formal agreement is entered into by all the parties, to govern how this project will be managed.
 - 4 Agrees the Terms of Reference for the Working Group as detailed in Appendix A (in line with the approach that was successfully used in Harleston).

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Budget in 2023 challenged local partners to form a co-investment fund for public realm improvements in Wymondham predicated on an assumption that the full receipt from the sale of Council-owned premises in Middleton Road would be used to help fund the works.
- 1.2 At the time of the last Council Meeting, on 21 February 2024, it has not been possible to gain the necessary co-investment commitment or in principle agreement to deliver a scheme in partnership with others.
- 1.3 Therefore, rather than this capital receipt from the sale of Middleton Road just sitting unallocated, it was agreed that £100,000 of this sum would be redirected to increase the CAF fund to allow additional projects across the wider district to progress.
- 1.4 It was further agreed at that meeting that up to £50,000 would be made available (from the in-year additional investment income) to support design creation and community participation for Public Realm improvements for Wymondham.

2 UPDATE ON SALE OF MIDDLETON ROAD PROPERTY

- 2.1 The freehold interest in Middleton Road was advertised for offers in the region of £425,000, and the sale is due to complete on 22 March 24.

3 UPDATE ON WYMONDHAM TOWN COUNCIL POSITION

- 3.1 On 5 March 2024, Wymondham Town Council discussed and unanimously agreed the following motion.

Council notes:

1. Decision by previous administration to allocate £250,000 from CIL money to a town centre regeneration project to improve the public space in Wymondham.
2. It has not been possible confirm funding for this project as the CIL has not been realised the Council's earmarked reserves do not include the previously agreed sum.
3. The current Town Council has been provided with information about the proposed town centre regeneration works at previous meetings but Councillors have expressed concerns about the lack of detail of proposals and that allocating this funding may prevent delivery of other projects.
4. The decision of South Norfolk District Council to provide £50,000 to support a process of community engagement with design of the town centre regeneration works.
5. The decision of South Norfolk District Council to reduce the sum available from the sale of the former offices at Middleton Street in view of other uses for the money. It might be possible to get this funding restored if Town Council confirms allocation of £250,000 to the public space project at its meeting on 5th March 2024.

Council resolves

1. To agree £250,000 funding to be earmarked as a reserve for the town centre regeneration works so that discussions about the detail of works and the nature of the partnership can proceed and Wymondham can benefit from the full value of the sale of the former offices on Middleton Street.
2. That this in principle agreement is conditional on South Norfolk District Council **confirming in writing** that the **full** proceeds of the sale of the former offices at 14 Middleton Street will be allocated to the town centre regeneration works spaces and

that the £250,000 earmarked by Wymondham Town Council will **be matched** by a further sum of at least £250,000 from South Norfolk District Council to bring the total available close to the £1 million that was suggested would be available.

3. That Finance & General Purposes Committee will agree changes to the earmarked reserves to allow creation of the £250,000 reserve for the town centre regeneration works.
4. That spending of the sum reserved for the town centre regeneration works is subject to agreement by the Town Council of the detail of works to be funded and the establishment of partnership arrangements that ensure the Town Council remains in control of how its contribution is spent.

4 UPDATE ON CO-INVESTMENT FUND

- 4.1 £2,000,000 of funding has been allocated to the Co-investment Fund, across two financial years 22/23 and 23/24.
- 4.2 The total awarded sum across the three projects to date (Cringleford, Stoke Holy Cross and Easton) totals £1,765,543.
This leaves an **underspend of £234,457** from the first two years of the fund.
- 4.3 This balance could be earmarked for Wymondham.

5 SUMMARY OF FUNDING AVAILABLE

- 5.1 The following table sets out the total funding now available for public realm improvements in Wymondham.

	At present	Proposed
Receipt from Sale		
Receipt from the sale of Middleton Road (Note)	Approx £425,000	Approx £425,000
Less costs of sale	Approx -£20,000	Approx -£20,000
Less sum reallocated to CAF.	<u>-£100,000</u>	
	£305,000	£405,000
Investment from SNC		
Design creation and community participation (From additional in year investment income)	Up to £50,000	Up to £50,000
Co-Investment Fund		£234,457
Additional sum from the in-year surplus to fully match the WTC contribution		£15,543
Investment from Town Council		
Wymondham Town Council Funding		£250,000
	£355,000	£955,000

Note: The receipt from Middleton Road is currently shown as £425,000, which is the price that this property was advertised for.

- 5.2 Regarding no longer using £100,000 of the sale proceeds to increase the CAF, this will instead be funded from the in-year surplus.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

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- 2 Allocates the following sums toward public realm improvements in Wymondham.
 - The full capital receipt (less costs of sale) from the sale of Middleton Road.
 - £234,457 from the Co-Investment Fund, subject to a successful application and supportive business case.
 - £15,543 from the in-year surplus (in order to fully match the £250,000 Wymondham Town Council contribution).

And agrees to use the in-year surplus to increase the CAF, rather than using some of the proceeds from the sale of Middleton Road.

- 3 Agrees that a formal agreement is entered into by all the parties, to govern how this project will be managed.
- 4 Agrees the Terms of Reference for the Working Group as detailed in Appendix A (in line with the approach that was successfully used in Harleston).

Appendix A: Terms of Reference for the Working Group

Purpose of Group

To enable a detailed approach to the development of the town centre to achieve improvements to the public realm.

Objective of Group

- To extend the trading day.
- To enable the town centre to be more commercially viable.
- To expand the town centre to have a variety of uses.
- To develop an improvement plan, initially utilising the £50,000, to work up designs, pay for any associated fees and ensure that widespread public consultation is undertaken.
- To review the consultation as part of the final proposal development.

Membership

- The working group to be made up of four district councillors (politically balanced), one county councillor, three Town councillors, plus the Chair.
- The SNC Portfolio Holder for Stronger, Greener Economy to chair the working group. The vice-chair to be appointed at the inaugural meeting of the working group.
- Where members are dual hatters then it needs to be clear which authority they are representing on the working group.

Quorum

The minimum number of five members must be present to transact any business of the working group.

Procedures

The Chair of the working group shall be responsible for maintaining order and the effective conduct of business at meetings of the group.

The working group meetings will be held without the press and public attending.

Any member of the district council or town council may attend the meeting and observe.

At the discretion of the Chair, any member attending the working group may speak or may put questions to any other participant.

Voting

Voting shall be by a simple majority show of hands.

In the event of an inequality of votes the Chair shall have a second or casting vote.

Supporting the Group

South Norfolk Council will provide clerking services to the working group and officers as appropriate.