

**Report to:** Lead Member for Children and Families

**Date of meeting:** 21 June 2023

**By:** Director of Children’s Services

**Title:** Grant funded capital project to refurbish Youth Centres

**Purpose:** To consider proposals relating to the refurbishment of two East Sussex Youth Centres including the receipt of grant funding for this purpose.

---

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Lead Member is recommended to:

- 1) agree to the Council redeveloping Peacehaven Youth Centre (The Joff) and rebuilding Heathfield Youth Centre into Youth Hubs, subject to the receipt of grant funding for this purpose;
  - 2) agree to the Council accepting the award of grant funding (as detailed in paragraph 1.1 of this report);
  - 3) delegate authority to the Director of Children’s Services to agree the terms of the associated grant agreement; and
  - 4) delegate authority to the Director of Children’s Services to take any action they consider appropriate to give effect to the above recommendations including, but not limited to, entering into the grant agreement.
- 

## **1 Background**

1.1 In April 2023, the Council drew up proposals to redevelop Peacehaven Youth Centre (The Joff) and rebuild Heathfield Youth Centre to create two Youth Hubs. Creating Youth Hub facilities will increase the availability of open access youth provision for 11–19-year-olds and up to the age of 25 for SEND (Special educational needs and disabilities) young people. It is anticipated that a wide range of partner organisations will deliver new sessions and support services from the Youth Hub facilities 7 days a week once completed.

1.2 The Council has been provisionally awarded grant funding totalling £8,019,786 for this project. This is a combination of capital and revenue funding, as follows:

**Capital Grant:** £7,623,906

**Revenue Grant:** £395,880

1.3 The grant award is subject to a number of conditions, including that planning permission be granted for the proposed redevelopment. In addition, the Council will be required to enter into a Grant Agreement with the funder.

## **2 Supplementary Information**

2.1 If the Council secures the grant funding for this project, it represents a significant opportunity to improve facilities for young people in Peacehaven and Heathfield. However, as with any large capital programme there are, of course, risks. The Council has established a cross-departmental project group including representatives from legal and finance to take the project forward and are confident that appropriate mitigation can be implemented to manage the key risks.

2.2 The key risks and mitigations are as follows:

- a) **Timescales:** The delivery timescales attached to the funding are demanding, with a financial completion deadline of 31 March 2025. Inherent in any capital project is the risk of overruns, i.e., that the build takes longer than the Funders' financial completion deadline.  
**Mitigation:** A clear Project Delivery Schedule has been established which will be managed closely, and which contains flexibility to accommodate areas of pressure.
- b) **Planning permission:** A requirement of the grant funding is that planning permission is in place for the project. At the time of writing, planning permission has not yet been granted.  
**Mitigation:** The formal consultation period has closed, and reports are being reviewed by the Planning Officer. No objections have been raised by local residents.
- c) **Costs:** There is a risk that costs exceed the awarded capital grant.  
**Mitigation:** All project costs submitted in the grant application are covered by the grant, including our standard arrangement for specialist project management at 3% of the capital grant. As set out above, a dedicated project team has been established for this project which will monitor spend, and the project will be managed via the Council's Capital Programme.
- d) **Restrictions:** The proposed Grant Agreement reserves rights for the Funder to restrict what the Council can do with the buildings even after they are built e.g. a restriction on borrowing against the buildings and in respect of disposal of the assets. This means that the Council could be prevented from taking certain actions in the future because of these provisions.  
**Mitigation/compensation:** Borrowing against these premises is not something that is planned, and the existing premises are used as Youth Centres and so it is anticipated that the use of the buildings as for the benefit of children and young people would continue in any event.

2.3 The Council would not be in a position to take forward the project without this grant funding. The completed project will offer the Council an increased ability to generate revenue income in the short and longer-term.

### 3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1 The Council has been awarded capital funding to redevelop Peacehaven Youth Centre (The Joff) and rebuild Heathfield Youth Centre into Youth Hubs and revenue funding to enable delivery of youth services from alternative locations whilst construction takes place. Both awards are time limited to March 2025. The Lead Member is therefore recommended to agree that the Council accepts the award of grant funding as detailed in paragraph 1.1 of this report and proceeds with the redevelopment of Peacehaven Youth Centre (The Joff) and rebuild of Heathfield Youth Centre into Youth Hubs (subject to receipt of the grant funding).

3.2 In order to progress with the grant, the Council will need to enter into a grant agreement with the Funder and the Council is in the process of finalising the terms and conditions for this. The timescales for delivery are tight and the Council needs to proceed imminently to ensure that the project programme is achievable. To facilitate meeting the required deadlines, the Lead Member is recommended to delegate authority to the Director of Children's Services to agree the terms of the grant agreement.

3.3 The Lead Member is also recommended to delegate authority to the Director of Children's Services to take any actions they consider appropriate to give effect to the above recommendations including, but not limited to, entering into the grant agreement.

**ALISON JEFFERY**  
**Director of Children's Services**

Contact Officer: Colin Edgley  
Tel. No. 07919 227 619  
Email: [colin.edgley@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:colin.edgley@eastsussex.gov.uk)

LOCAL MEMBERS

Heathfield and Mayfield: currently vacant  
Peacehaven: Councillor Chris Collier

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None.