

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.

CABINET EXECUTIVE

4th February 2025

REPORT AUTHOR: County Councillor David Thomas
Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate
Transformation

REPORT TITLE: Request use of the Brecknockshire Committee Reserve

REPORT FOR: Decision

1. Purpose

1.1. Hay & District Sports & Community Association Ltd (“**HADSCAL**”) has requested use of a £200K reserve previously earmarked by the former Brecknockshire Committee of Powys County Council for a Community Centre in Hay on Wye. This report sets out the reason for the request, and approval is sought to release the funding.

2. Background

2.1. With the reorganisation of local Government in 1996, the former Brecknock Borough Council had several reserves which transferred into the new Powys County Council. These reserves included a reserve to provide additional car parking in Hay on Wye. At the time, it was decided that the then Brecknockshire Committee could make decisions on the reserves and on 26th October 1999 the Brecknockshire Committee resolved that the fund could be used more flexibly and could be used to progress the proposals for a Community Centre at Forest Road, Hay on Wye and for car parking provision in the Hay-on-Wye area. On 7th May 2002 the Board agreed that the reserve could be used exclusively for a community centre. Although various initiatives related to this construction have started over the years, due to a variety of reasons, the community facility has not been created. On 24th March 2015, the Cabinet agreed that a £70,000 interest free loan could be made to the Hay Town Council from the reserve for the refurbishment of the toilets in Hay. The Loan has effectively been repaid so that the reserve still stands in the sum of £200,000.

2.2. As a result of the introduction of executive arrangements in 2001, the responsibility for taking decisions on reserves was vested in the Board, and now the Cabinet.

2.3. A request has been made from HADSCAL, supported by Hay Town and Community Council, to release the £200k Brecknockshire reserve to fund the development through the full planning process, including design elements of the site, surveys and possibly an impact assessment and other necessary works.

2.4. HADSCAL feel the impact of this project will not just be felt by the residents of Hay but also by those from the surrounding areas who use Hay for their everyday needs, and the facilities will include:

- A community building that will provide a permanent home for both the Youth Club and the community transport provider (Hay Dial a Ride), as well as offer rooms of varying sizes for lease as office/practice space and community event rooms.
- Ten (10) business/start up units, generating income which will ensure the ongoing financial viability of the overall site.
- A community growing space, providing opportunities not just for growing fresh food, but also contributing to the improved physical and mental health of those involved.
- Multi Use Games Area, designed to provide an all-weather playing space for a number of sports.
- A fitness facility, potentially with a swimming pool, to meet demand for locally provided facilities, encouraging active travel and reducing the need for 30-40 mile car journeys in order to access a similar service.
- A Pump (bike) track, suitable for a range of ages and abilities.

3. Advice

- 3.1. The proposal by HADSCAL which has the support of Hay Town and Community Council is broadly in line with the intentions of the purpose of the reserve and an appropriate use of the reserve. It is proposed that cabinet approve the £200K funding for planning fees from the former Brecknockshire Committee Reserve.

4. Resource Implications

- 4.1. The £200k requested would be funded from the reserve identified earlier in the report. It is proposed that release of this funding should be drawn down quarterly in arrears with relevant information explaining relevant activity and costs incurred by the organisation.
- 4.2. The Head of Finance confirms the reserve has been held for community facilities in Hay on Wye and can be released quarterly in arrears as spend is incurred by HADSCAL. The use of the reserve complies with its original intention and so the recommendation is supported.

5. Legal implications

- 5.1 The Head of Legal Services and the Monitoring Officer has commented as follows I note the flexible way in which this reserve has been treated in the past and confirm that the Cabinet have the ability to use the reserve in a flexible way for the benefit of the residents of Hay. In the circumstances I support the recommendations.

6. Climate Change & Nature Implications

- 6.1. The project aims to be as carbon neutral as possible in both design and operation. For example, the car park will be partly covered by a solar array that will generate the power to run the heating/cooling pumps.

7. Data Protection

7.1. No issues identified

8. Comment from local member(s)

8.1. Hay has been awaiting a new community centre for over 20 years, and this proposed project offers a fantastic opportunity to bring together several much-needed facilities. This is Hay's chance to create a community centre that will serve residents of all ages, from youth to the elderly. Like Hay Town Council, I fully support using the Brecknockshire reserve fund—ring-fenced specifically for Hay—to make this project a reality.

9. Impact Assessment

9.1. Not needed

10. Recommendation

10.1. It is recommended that Cabinet approve a virement for a payment to HADSCAL an amount of up to £200k, paid quarterly in arrears, funded by the Brecknockshire Committee Reserve fund for the Community Hall in Hay-on-Wye from development through the full planning process, including design elements of the site, surveys and possibly an impact assessment and other necessary works.

Head of Service:	Anne Phillips, Interim Head of Finance
Corporate Director:	Jane Thomas, Director of Corporate Services