

## **Report to Full Council**

### **Victory Hall Refurbishment – Oversight, Cost Review and Grant Agreement**

**Date:** 26 June 2025

**Prepared by:** Chair of the Council

## **Recommendation**

That Full Council:

1. Delegates oversight of the Victory Hall refurbishment project to the Finance & Governance Committee to oversee a full cost review, tendering and professional project support.
2. Commissions a qualified architect to produce updated layout proposals to ensure a future-proofed, inclusive design.
3. Confirms that all refurbished facilities must be accessible to the wider community and not reserved for a single group or user.
4. Defers any decision on signing the grant agreement with Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) until mutually agreeable terms are finalised

## **Background**

The Council is currently considering a proposal for the refurbishment of Victory Hall, including:

- A shared-use kitchen
- DDA-compliant toilet facilities
- External access ramp and shutter
- Electrical works (unspecified)
- A contingency of £6,800

The project is linked to a proposed **£60,401 capital grant** from EFDC, requiring:

- Match funding of £15,100 from the Parish Council
- A five-year commitment to free use of part of the Hall by the Chigwell Community Hub
- Immediate signing of a binding grant agreement

## **Review Process to Date**

It is recommended that there is formal and independent oversight of the project to ensure proper governance and value for money.

Separately, as request by F&G (minute FG021/25) the Clerk has prepared a Strategic Asset and Risk Review, now presented to Full Council, highlighting operational and financial risks associated with the current informal use of the Victory Hall Community Hub space. These include:

- Ongoing financial subsidies by the Council with no rental income
- Restricted community and commercial access to Victory Hall
- Lack of formal agreement with the user group
- Equity concerns among other paying community groups

## **Identified Issues**

### **Costing and Scope Concerns**

- Estimates provided have not been professionally validated
- Kitchen and contingency costs appear disproportionate
- Tendering will be required under procurement rules
- No architectural input has been obtained to define appropriate layout or future use strategy

### **Grant Agreement Risks**

- Terms prevent easy review or amendment once signed
- Requires full operational subsidy by the Parish for five years without income
- Assumes continued exclusive use by one group without formal agreement in place

### **Space and Access Strategy**

- A possible use of the existing Parish office for the GP surgery may necessitate identifying alternative space for Parish staff
- It is essential that Victory Hall continues to function as a multi-user community space accessible to all stakeholders

## **Governance Note**

Councillors who are volunteers or otherwise actively involved with the Limes Farm Community Hub or related activities may have a personal or prejudicial interest in matters relating to the Hub's use or funding. In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, councillors with any potential conflict must declare it and should not participate in discussions or votes on related decisions to maintain transparency and public confidence.

If there is any doubt about whether an interest exists, councillors are strongly advised to seek guidance from the Monitoring Officer. When assessing potential conflicts, councillors should also

apply the public perception test, considering whether a member of the public, aware of the relevant facts, might reasonably perceive the councillor's impartiality to be compromised.

This approach safeguards the integrity of the decision-making process and protects the Council's reputation.

## **Next Steps**

To ensure robust delivery of this capital project and long-term asset sustainability, the following actions are recommended:

- 1. Oversight:** Delegate project oversight to Finance & Governance Committee
- 2. Professional Input:** Engage an **architect** to prepare revised floorplans, ensuring integration of Parish needs and community access
- 3. Cost Review:** Commission a cost review to validate all estimates and inform the tender process
- 4. Grant Conditions:** Continue dialogue with EFDC to seek revisions to the grant terms to support a more equitable and financially sustainable agreement
- 5. Governance Alignment:** Consider the findings of the Strategic Review when determining future use arrangements for Victory Hall

A further report will be brought to the next Full Council including feedback from EFDC and updated recommendations for project delivery and grant agreement.

**Dated** \_\_\_\_\_ **2025**

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL (1)**

**and**

**CHIGWELL PARISH COUNCIL (2)**

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**AGREEMENT FOR THE PROVISION OF CAPITAL FUNDING AND COMMUNITY  
USE OF CHIGWELL COMMUNITY HUB AND VICTORY HALL**

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Contract Ref: MPL/214/1/3669

**THIS AGREEMENT** is dated

2025

**PARTIES**

**Epping Forest District Council** of the Civic Offices, High Street, Epping, Essex, CM16 4BZ ("EFDC"); and

**Chigwell Parish Council** of Hainault Road, Chigwell Essex, IG7 6QZ ("the Parish Council")

**1. Purpose**

- 1.1. EFDC agrees to provide capital funding to the Parish Council for the refurbishment of the Chigwell Community Hub and Victory Hall ("the Project")
- 1.2. The Parish Council agrees to contribute funding and to allow community use of the above sites as set out below.

**2. Funding**

- 2.1. EFDC will contribute £60,401.00 to the Project and the Parish Council shall contribute £15,100.00.

**3. Scope of Works**

- 3.1. The funding shall be used for the following:

- Chigwell Community Hub:
  - 3.1..1. Electrics for Kitchen & Toilet: £5,500.00 +VAT
  - 3.1..2. DDA Compliant Toilets: £10,150.00 +VAT
  - 3.1..3. Shutter for Pantry: £1,600.00
  - 3.1..4. Contingency Fund: £6,800.00
  - 3.1..5. Ramp at Front: £4,000.00
- Victory Hall:
  - 3.1..1. New Kitchen Installation: £47,000 +VAT

**4. Payment Terms**

- 4.1. EFDC will make a one-off payment of £60,401.00 upon the signing of this Agreement.

**5. Community Use**

- 5.1. The Parish Council will allow EFDC free use of the Chigwell Community Hub for community and pantry-related activities for a term of five (5) years from the date of signing of this Agreement.
- 5.2. The free use Schedule as referred to in Clause 5.1 shall be as follows:
  - Monday: 9:00am – 12:00pm
  - Tuesday: 9:00am – 4:30pm

- Wednesday (monthly): 12:30pm – 3:00pm
- Wednesday evening: 5:00pm – 10:00pm
- Thursday: 9:00am – 3:00pm
- Friday (monthly): 10:00am – 2:00pm
- Occasional weekends for special events
- Additional access for stock-taking and replenishment shall be permitted

5.3. The Parish Council shall ensure that, where reasonably practicable, the Community Hub remains open and available for public use and delivery of activities/projects during the refurbishment period. The Parish Council shall ensure that all such use is conducted in accordance with applicable health and safety regulations.

## **6. Use of Funds**

- 6.1. Funds must be used solely for the specified refurbishment works as detailed in this Agreement, any changes require prior written approval from EFDC.
- 6.2. The Parish Council must ensure that all works funded through this Agreement are completed, and all funds spent, by 31 March 2026 in accordance with the conditions of the originating central government grant to EFDC.

## **7. Monitoring and Reporting**

- 7.1. The Parish Council shall submit a final report to EFDC including expenditure details and photographic evidence.
- 7.2. EFDC reserves the right inspect works upon reasonable notice.

## **8. Clawback**

- 8.1. EFDC reserves the right to reclaim funding if works are not completed on time in accordance with Clause 6.2, if community access is not granted in accordance with this Agreement or funds are misused.

## **9. Insurance and Indemnity**

- 9.1. The Parish Council shall maintain adequate insurance throughout the works and shall indemnify EFDC against any liabilities arising from these works.

## **10. Publicity**

- 10.1. The Parish Council will acknowledge EFDC's funding contribution in all related publicity and signage.

## **11. Subsidy Control**

- 11.1. The Parish Council confirms that this funding complies with UK Subsidy Control rules.

## **12. General Provisions**

- 12.1. This Agreement remains valid for five (5) years from the date of signing.
- 12.2. Any Variation to this Agreement must be prior agreed in writing by both parties.

12.3. Disputes shall be resolved via negotiation or mediation.