

SUBJECT:	MONMOUTH SECTION 106 FUNDING – ST THOMAS CHURCH HALL
MEETING:	SINGLE MEMBER DECISION
DATE:	11th MAY 2016
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	MONMOUTH

1. PURPOSE: To consider the reallocation of part of the original Section 106 grant allocation of £50,000 to the Gateway Monmouth project.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS that

2.1 that £30,000 of the £50,000 allocated to the Monmouth Gateway project in 2014 be re-allocated to the following projects:

Project	Amount
	£
01 Upgrading and refurbishment of St Thomas Church Hall	20,000.00
02 Nelson Garden Accessible Toilet	5,000.00
03 Drybridge Park Play Area Resurfacing	5,000.00
Total	30,000.00

2.2 that £20,000 of the original grant allocation to the Gateway project be retained, in case the bid for Stage 1 funding under the Big Lottery “Create Your Space” programme is unsuccessful.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 A request has been received from the St Thomas Church Hall in Monmouth for financial assistance towards a project to completely upgrade and refurbish the Church Hall site, which is a Grade 2 listed building located in Cinderhill Street opposite the church. This is a £500,000 project and the Welsh Government has awarded a grant of £340,000 from its Community Facilities Programme towards this cost, subject to the hall confirming by 18th May that it has all of the necessary match funding in place. The hall has been successful in raising its own funds and in attracting several grants from local and national trust funds. When the original request was received there was a shortfall in funding of £80,000 but since then the hall has obtained further grant funding of £54,500, so the current shortfall is £25,500. The hall has exhausted all other funding sources and needs to confirm that it has the full funding package in place by 18th May or the Welsh Government grant offer could be withdrawn.
- 3.2 The Council does not have any spare “pockets” of unallocated capital to deal with such requests, so officers have gone through previous Section 106 allocations to identify any projects that have been allocated funding in Monmouth to identify any unused allocations.
- 3.3 When the Monmouth Section 106 funding (derived from the Croft y Bwla, Wyehsam Infants School and Almshouses sites) was allocated back in 2014, a grant of £50,000 was

allocated to the Gateway Monmouth project. At that time the total value of the scheme was just short of £2million and the County Council was the lead body for the project. However, since the award of the £50,000 grant in 2014, no progress has been made by the Council in developing the project further or in seeking grant aid from external sources. On 29 April 2015 the Central Monmouthshire Area Committee received an update report which concluded that there is no commitment within the County Council's Medium Term Financial Plan for the project and to proceed it would need to be self-funded.

- 3.4 The current position with the Gateway project is that the Monmouth Town Partnership Forum (MTPF) has made an application to the Big Lottery for Stage 1 funding of £20,000 under the "Create Your Space" programme. This programme has been developed by the Big Lottery in Wales to make a greater impact with its funding by targeting parts of Wales that have received less Big Lottery funding than other parts of Wales. Monmouthshire is one of only nine counties in Wales that are eligible to submit applications under this programme but applications can only be made by bona fide third sector organisations, which means that the MTPF can apply but the County Council cannot. The MTPF has applied for project funding of £20,000 to develop the project further, with a view to submitting a full Stage 2 application for £1.97million to enable the full Gateway project to be implemented if the Stage 1 & Stage 2 applications are successful. Match funding is not required for a Stage 1 or Stage 2 application under the Create Your Space Programme.
- 3.5 The Monmouth S106 funding has to be spent in full by 29th November 2018 and any unspent balance at that time will have to be repaid to the developers. It is clear from the above information that the full amount of £50,000 originally allocated to the Gateway project will not be required if the MTPF bids are successful and is very unlikely to be spent within the timescales available if it continues to be held in reserve.
- 3.6 When the Monmouth S106 applications were assessed a scoring matrix was used to determine which applications should be awarded grants. Those applications that scored 17 points or above were awarded a grant. There were four applications that scored 16 points and the St Thomas Church Hall application (which at the time was for fees and charges relating to design costs, planning and listed building consents – all of which are now in place) was awarded 15 points. Of the four applicants that scored 16 points two are still in a position to go ahead if the applicants can obtain the necessary funding to proceed. These are the Nelson Garden Accessible Toilet Project and the scheme to resurface the Drybridge Park play area.
- 3.7 Against this background, it is proposed to
1. offer a grant of £20,000 (4% of project costs) to the St Thomas Church Hall project (the applicant has indicated that this would be sufficient to enable it to accept the Welsh Government grant offer and proceed with the project)
 2. offer a grant of £5,000 (48% of project costs) to the Nelson Garden project
 3. offer a grant of £5,000 (33% of project costs) to the Drybridge Park play project
 4. retain £20,000 for the Gateway project, in case the bid to the Big Lottery for Stage 1 funding under the Create Your Space project is unsuccessful.

