

BICKLEIGH PARISH COUCIL

PUBLIC WORKS LOAN BOARD (PWLB) CONSULTATION

Paper for October 2023 COUNCIL MEETING – *available on the parish council website*

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FOR DECISION: COUNCIL TO AGREE THE METHOD OF CONSULTATION, TIMELINE AND THAT THE PROPOSAL IS TO BORROW £250,000 OVER A 17 YEAR PERIOD FOR UPGRADING AND MAINTENANCE OF THE WOOLWELL CENTRE.

Background

The Parish Council owns and is therefore responsible for the Woolwell Centre building which is now in urgent need of upgrade / maintenance. The council is considering taking out a PWLB loan (£250,000 loan over 17 years) to enable repair, maintenance and upgrading of the following:

Items for upgrade Woowell Centre	£
Windows	
Guttering	
Front Porch	
Heating Upgrade	
New Roof	
New solar PV (60KWP)	
New AHU Upgrade	
New Fire Alarm	
New Door Holders	
New Sanitaryware Doc M Pack & Fitting	
External Doors	
CCTV	
TOTAL BUDGET (inc 10% contingency)	250,000

It is not recommended that the precept is increased to afford the repayments which would be approximately £23,000 per annum. The Council has recently finished paying off 2 loans totalling £16,000 per annum and other costs will be reduced to afford the repayments (for example grant to the Woolwell Centre and staff costs).

The first stage in applying for a loan is to undertake a public consultation. Following this a resolution must be made at full council with all members present and a 'Report to Council' included which is essentially a one or two page summary of the project and borrowing approval application showing the need, the costing and the benefit of the project.

Public Consultation

The key underlying theme the PWLB looks for in every borrowing approval application is how open and transparent a council has been with their residents from the start of the project and associated borrowing application. They must see strong evidence of this throughout the application or approval may be delayed.

They also like to see evidence or confirmation that the business case information has been shared with the residents in one form or another. For example, they prefer to see it published on the website.

As there is no council tax precept increase general project consultation activities could be one or more of the following:

- Ongoing dedicated website page showing updates to the project and associated borrowing approval application as both progress.
- Monthly/quarterly newsletters giving updates on the project and application.
- Monthly/quarterly magazine articles giving updates on the project and application.
- Local press/media coverage of the project.
- Public open days and presentations to the residents on the project.
- Online or paper surveys for the residents about the project.

Within the general public consultation the PWLB must see evidence of local residents being informed of:

- The need, costs and benefits of the project
- The total amount to be borrowed by the council to finance the project
- The opportunity for residents to express their views in favour/ against
- the project and borrowing requirement (and any feedback shared with DLUHC)

All documents, materials produced for the consultation exercises should be submitted as part of the application including any results and feedback from residents.

The preferred YES/NO question to ask in the survey/consultation for the purpose of the borrowing approval application is:

- **Are you in favour of XXXXX Parish Council proceeding with the (INSERT PROJECT NAME)?
YES / NO**