

Fundraising strategy report: Thame Community and Youth Centre October 2024

Claire Styles, Fundraising Consultant

1 Executive Summary

- There are good prospects for raising the necessary capital funds, although competition is steep and the relative affluence of the town limits funding options. A diversified approach across different funding streams will seek to mitigate this, although risk of not achieving the target cannot be ruled out.
- Funding routes and plans are dependent on the Business Case management Scenario selected by Full Council.
- Fundraising the full capital amount will take 12-18 months, to meet the break-ground deadline of April 2026, after which some of the Section 106 funding will be lost.
- 95% of the capital finance should be secured prior to breaking ground.
- A Project Fundraising Group should be established to steer the fundraising, reporting to the Capital Project Group. This should include community volunteers.
- A Youth Steering Group should be established to ensure the project is co-designed with young people from this point onwards, with other community focus groups to ensure the wider community is also actively involved.
- Diversified funding strategies will be adopted to source income from a variety of sources.
- This will need to be a whole-town effort.

2 Purpose of this report

This document sets out the proposed strategy and plans to fundraise for Thame Community and Youth Centre. It focuses on the capital costs of construction and fit-out, and finance scenarios set out in the Business Case Report (Cooperative Futures).

It is informed by consultation with Thame Town Council (TTC) members and officers, local organisations with an interest in using the Centre, and potential funders.

Scoping work underpinning this report includes:

- Desk research into the fundraising landscape to establish targets and likelihood of success (see section 4 below).
- A bespoke pipeline of over 300 prospective government grants, private sector and charitable trusts, foundations grant providers relevant to this project.
- Analysis of National Lottery prospects (**Appendix 1**)
- Needs analysis of Thame, South Oxfordshire, and Oxfordshire in relation to demographics, deprivation, employment, crime, and other priorities based on publicly available data (**Appendix 2**)
- National data review of selected topics (e.g. mental health) (**Appendix 3**)
- Stakeholder interviews, including with Thames Valley Police and South Oxon Target Youth Support Team (**Appendix 4**)
- Survey consultation findings review (**Appendix 5**).
- Review of Thame catchment school performance and need (**Appendix 6**)
- Initial high net-worth donor identification (confidential due to GDPR).
- Initial list of corporates identified (confidential due to GDPR).

A: CONTEXT

3 Background

3.1 Context and ambition

Thame Town Council (TTC) is ambitious and forward-looking, aiming to “in partnership with local residents...make Thame an even better place to live, work and enjoy”¹.

The need for a new youth and community centre has been raised consistently over the past decade. The town is unusual in having no central community centre, despite its size, resident and visiting population (estimated at 36,000)². It also stands out for having no dedicated youth club space where children and young people can safely meet after school and in the holidays. Thame is limited in suitably large accessible indoor community event space.

The proposed BREEAM ‘Very Good’ rated Centre will provide flexible and rentable spaces including a new 200 capacity community hall for events, health and wellbeing, fitness and arts activities, music room, kitchen, dedicated youth club, small group and 1:1 consultation spaces. It incorporates changing rooms (which we are required by Sport England to retain) and a new larger entrance to the Scout Hut. Landscaped exterior spaces will provide seating and income generating kiosk serving snacks, new play area and additional car parking. The Centre will enhance the recreation ground, with a rejuvenated play area and a place to sit with friends or colleagues. The Centre will promote access to the Cuttle Brook nature reserve, encouraging people to get active outdoors. The building will be to a high spec, well fitted out and in keeping with its surroundings. The new focus will regenerate a run-down part of the town.

The new Centre is the place where all ages will meet, stay and play. By providing this new aspirational development, TTC aims to reduce anti-social behaviour, improve emotional and physical wellbeing, give people new skills for work and life, especially those facing the greatest challenges.

The Centre will be self-sustaining through income from pre-identified potential ‘anchor tenants’, other regular and ad hoc hires, and from statutory and charitable grants. The preferred management Scenario is to be decided by Thame Town Council.

The Centre will bring the community *together for Thame*.

3.2 Needs assessment

Evidence from community consultation and desk research support the need for a new youth and community centre. A more detailed Needs Assessment report is available (see **Appendix 2**).

4 Fundraising landscape

4.1 Overview

¹ <https://www.thametowncouncil.gov.uk/>

² Marks and Spencer's retail feasibility study

The TTC Centre campaign will launch in the context of a tough but slowly improving UK fundraising climate affected by years of economic uncertainty, public sector austerity, global pandemic, and rise in the cost of living.

Whilst fundraising for the Centre will be challenging, we should be optimistic given evidence of need, local demand from existing organisations (see Cooperative Futures report), and diverse fundraising income streams. Fundraising tactics will depend largely on the Business Case Scenario selected by Thame Town Councillors. Regardless of the management Scenarios, we have a compelling story to tell prospective funders and the community.

Below is a contextual summary of the fundraising landscape which has informed our fundraising plan.

4.2 Fundraising through town and parish councils

A limited number of government grants, and Lottery funds are open to town and parish councils. There are strict rules around generating income from donations. They can:

“accept gifts from parishioners and bid for funds from grant-making bodies or Government initiatives. They may set up lotteries to raise funds locally, though they must hold a licence from the Gambling Commission under section 98 of the Gambling Act 2005³ [House of Commons Library, 2021].”

4.3 Trends in trusts and foundations and grants

TTC will need to partner with local charities who will have to take the lead in bidding for trusts and foundations grants.

For UK charities, grant-giving remains the highest source of fundraising income, followed by individual giving⁴. Austerity has increased pressure on the UK’s 8,000 trusts and foundations, which have seen a loss in their own investments, alongside a significant increase (30% or more) in the number of applications they receive. Many grant givers are taking a more selective approach in distributing funds. Campaigns targeting the most marginalised groups often have the greatest chance of success. Success rates for applications have dropped dramatically from 1:3 before Covid, to 1:8 for ‘warm’ leads, depending on the sector and project type now. This ratio is more favourable for local funds where competition is less fierce. Oxfordshire has multiple local trusts.

4.4 Trends in Individual and corporate giving

The picture for individual donations is similarly complex. According to national research, 75% of UK adults took part in at least one charitable activity in 2023 and 58% donated or sponsored (down from 75% in 2014). This raised an estimated £13.9bn in charity donations.

Fewer people are giving to charity than before the pandemic, although there are more large donations than before⁵. Henley and Thame constituency is in the 2nd highest quartile for charitable giving in England, with an estimated 67% of residents in the area donating an

³ Town and Parish Recent Issues, House of Commons Library (Sept 2021)

<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN04827/SN04827.pdf>

⁴ Blackbaud, The-Status of UK-Fundraising (2023) <https://www.blackbaud.co.uk/industry-insights/resources/the-status-of-uk-fundraising-report-2023>

⁵ CAF UK Giving: mapping generosity across the country (March 2024)

https://www.cafonline.org/docs/default-source/uk-giving-reports/uk_giving_report_2024.pdf

estimated £18.47m in 2023. This equated to an average of 1.6% of donors' income⁶. Research also shows that people give to the causes they have a connection with, either through personal experience or through friends. Most popular causes are animal welfare (28%), children and young people (23%), medical research (21%), environment (14%), older people (7%), arts (3%)⁷. The Centre addresses several of these causes.

TTC will need to agree a due diligence and ethical fundraising policy to guide decisions on accepting larger gifts from individuals or corporates whose source of wealth, personal connections or history could bring the Council or partner charities into disrepute. This includes vetting donors before accepting a gift and being willing to return it in the event of a change in donor record. This should be factored into the project risk register.

4.5 Trends in online giving

Charities are increasingly turning to AI systems of donation and volunteer stewardship, using platforms like Plinth or Nation Builder (which can cost as little as £30 per month) or other CRM type systems. This enables consistent monitoring and the opportunity to go back to a potential supporter to keep them updated and potentially give again. For larger gifts, this can be more bespoke. Investing in a fundraising CRM may not be necessary with this project, although should be considered as it will help to generate more income. A decision should be made based on what is already being used within TTC.

Platforms like JustGiving simplify promoting campaigns and ability for individuals to set up their own related fundraiser events (e.g. sponsored run). This also enables Gift Aid collection (adding an extra 25% to any charitable donation).

B CAMPAIGN TARGETS AND MANAGEMENT

5 Fundraising vision and targets

5.1 Fundraising vision

The aim for our fundraising is to secure sufficient capital funds to build and fit out Thame Community and Youth Centre. We also aim to prepare the way for ongoing revenue income for when the Centre opens.

5.2 Fundraising targets

The capital build estimate is £4,394,000. Of this, £2,986,047 is identified to build the shell and a further £1,407,953 for fit-out.

The £4.39m capital fund target excludes a further £86,100 for sundry items (EV charging, automatic doors, solar panels and vinyl flooring), which we are confident of securing through public grants and in-kind contributions.

Cooperative Futures, working the TTC Capital Project Steering Group, has developed two proposed governance and finance Scenarios for councillors to consider:

⁶ CAF Generosity levels by area checker <https://www.cafonline.org/insights/research/uk-giving-report>

⁷ Charities Aid Foundation, UK Giving Report (2023)

- **Scenario 1: TTC built and managed** either by TTC or a third party (probably charitable) management organisation. This could be an existing local charity, or a new entity created to manage the Centre and potentially other estate in the town).
- **Scenario 2: Partnership Approach**, with TTC responsible for fundraising for the shell and a management organisation fundraising for the fit-out. The management organisation will then become the operating tenant on completion.

The choice of management Scenario will determine the fundraising plan as local government is ineligible for many of the grant and donation sources that a charity can access.

The table below sets out proposed fundraising targets for each Scenario. Scenario 1 is recommended from a fundraising perspective as it provides the simplest and fastest way of securing the build cost.

Fundraising stream targets	Scenario 1 (TTC led)	Scenario 2 (charitable management org led)
Section 106	£750,000	£750,000
TTC Investments (See below option)	£300,000*	£300,000
National Lottery	£250,000	£250,000
SODC Capital Fund	£75,000	£75,000
Other trusts and foundations	£0	£400,000
Donations from high net-worth individuals	£0	£200,000
Community crowd funding	£0	£50,000
Public Works Loan finance	3,019,000*	2,369,000
TOTAL	£4,394,000	£4,394,000

*Note that the Public Works Loan amount would decrease if TTC increases their investment level. This is to be decided.

5.3 Major grant funds

The National Lottery Reaching Communities Fund represents the most significant grant opportunity open to TTC in Scenario 1 and Scenario 2. Desk research into successful community centre lottery bids in other places reveals a downward trend in grants, especially for capital build projects, and tendency to favour disadvantages areas and charities. However, they will fund town council projects that are not replacing a statutory duty. See **Appendix 1** for an analysis of Lottery allocations and rationale for £250k recommended ask level.

South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) gave capital grants of £75k in 2024 and there is good reason to expect that this will be repeated in 2025. This would be a strong prospect for the campaign.

Other funds up to £100k in value are available to charities to apply to on behalf of the project. These Scenarios have varying prospects for success, limited by the charities that will need to front them and eligible prospects available.

As is best practice with this scale of project, it is recommended that 95% of fundraising finance is secured prior to breaking ground to minimise the risk of non-completion.

Details of how we plan to fundraise against each eligible funding stream is set out below from **Sections 7-10**.

5.4 Timeline

Part of the Section 106 agreement runs out in May 2026. This means that all fundraising will need to be concluded by March 2026 (18 months) ready to break ground in April 2026.

The fundraising mix (national and government funds, grants, loan and finance and other sources) will determine the timetable for the fundraising campaign. In Scenario 2, a much more complex plan of writing grant bids, approaching corporates and individuals, and running a town crowdfunding campaign, will take longer with more resource expended. A draft timetable (incorporating Scenarios 1 and 2) is below:

Phase	Months	Key Activities
Preparation and Launch	1-3	Confirm fundraising strategy and plan based on management Scenarios
		Establish Project Fundraising Group
		Establish Youth Steering Group
		Confirm fundraising budget (for comms, CRM, events, etc)
		Start work on Public Works Loan Agreement and Section 106
		Begin identifying and engaging potential major donors and corporate sponsors.
		Develop Case for Support and gather letters of support from Thame organisations who will partner.
		Develop comms plan and messaging
		Initial contact with all priority trusts and foundations
Initial Fundraising Push	4-6	Submit Stage 1 National Lottery bid
		Launch crowdfunding campaign
		Submit initial applications to key trusts and foundations.
		Organise local fundraising events (tbc)
Community Engagement and Grants	7-12	Continue trust and foundation applications, with a focus on securing large grants.
		Begin submitting applications for government grants, with support from local MPs and councillors.
		Finalise major donor contributions and corporate sponsorships.
Securing Major Donations and Final Funding	13-18	Secure remaining funding through community efforts, additional grants, and donor appeals.
		Prepare for the start of construction, ensuring 95% of funding is in place.

Phase	Months	Key Activities
		Host a breaking-ground ceremony and commence construction.
Project Kick-Off and Construction	19-24	Maintain communication with funders, donors, and the community throughout the construction phase.
		Trusts and foundations applications for revenue and core
		Realise in-kind donations
		Soft opening and recognition of donors and supporters.

5.5 Creating a Case for Support

We will create a Case for Support to clearly articulate the purpose of the new Centre, its expected impact on the community, and how it will serve Thame's young people and wider community. This includes sector-specific foci, for example sport, music, wellbeing, environmental issues. This will help us to fund distinct parts of the build and fit-out. We will use the same approach to fundraise for ongoing support costs (e.g. resident youth worker, cross-generational mental wellbeing practitioner).

6 Governance

6.1 Co-production and consultation

Potential funders expect to see evidence of community co-production. So far, the project has focused on consulting rather than involving. This will change for the next phase, as detailed below.

6.2 Youth Steering Group

Young advisors for the project (age 12+) will be recruited from existing youth organisations (Thame Youth Projects initially). This could be a formal group, or more fluid, based on youth interests and organisation capacity. What matters however, is the voice of young people in shaping the facilities they need. They will be supported to advise on project phases, make a short fundraising video, consult their peers in the town, and plan events. Young people could be incentivised by donor-sponsored vouchers and/or accreditation (e.g. AQA or Duke of Edinburgh). Funding from the National Lottery Awards for All or an external sponsor could support associated costs.

6.2.1 Community consultation and involvement

Like the Youth Steering Group, involvement from other parts of the community is important. An adult steering group is not proposed as this would be too labour-intensive, and a more flexible approach is best. This could be achieved through periodic public meetings and focus groups to co-produce specific project elements. These meetings will create opportunities to recruit volunteers to help with the campaign or support the Centre when it opens.

6.3 Governance and reporting

We recommend that TTC convene an action-focused Project Fundraising Group. To be effective, it will need to be small (6-8 members maximum) comprising TTC officer and Thame Youth and Community Centre Fundraising Strategy - October 2024. Claire Styles

councillor representatives, a professional fundraiser, community volunteers with campaign experience and/or enthusiasm, and representative from one of the proposed 'anchor' organisations (e.g. Thame Youth Projects). The Group will need to work with the Youth Steering Group.

Focused initially on capital build fundraising, this will steer and report to the main TTC Capital Project Group. Specific roles could be established for major gifts, events planning, public relations, and grant writing. The group will meet regularly to track progress, and keep momentum, with quarterly reviews. This group will be nimble in adapting strategies based on what's working well or not, including feedback from donors, councillors, and the community.

C. FUNDRAISING STRATEGY

Below is a proposed strategy for achieving the target income from priority funding streams. These are:

- Government funds and other grants (£325,000)
- Trusts and foundations (£400k)
- High Net-worth Individuals and corporates (£200,000)
- Community fundraising (£50,000)

Individual targets may shift during the campaign depending on over/ under performance of specific areas.

Our tactic, regardless of the Scenario selected, will be to secure a few 'quick win' funds as these will generate funder confidence that the rest can be secured, and make it more likely that they will pledge their support. Having the Section 106 and TTC reserves in place at the outset will help with this.

7 Government funds and other grants

Open to: Scenario 1 (TCC owned and built) and Scenario 2 (charitable organisation led)
Target funds to raise: £325,000.

There are limited capital (or revenue) grant opportunities open to parish and town councils (business case Scenario 1). It is possible that unforeseen central government grants will become available in the next year. There are also several small (guideline £5k) funds such as the SODC and OCC Councillors Funds (currently open for 2024), which we will apply to for discrete elements in 2025.

Based on research and likelihood of success, we will focus on the following priority applications.

Funder	Application deadline	Amount	Notes
National Lottery Reaching Communities Fund	Rolling (application advised Jan25)	£250,000 advised	The suggested level of application is based on review of other similar projects. See Appendix 1 . Fund due to be reviewed Nov 2024.
SODC Capital Fund	Sept 25 deadline	£75,000	Capital build fund.

In addition, we could also approach Arts Council England for the fit-out of the music room (up to £100k), and Sport England Movement Fund (up to £30,000) for a contribution to fitness and wellbeing adaptations in the Centre.

FCC Communities Foundation (part of the Landfill Communities Fund for the cost of the play area and/or scout hut. They fund £100k towards community centres, play areas and public parks with a total project build value of under £500k, which counts them out for the main capital campaign.

Note that, as with all grant schemes, success is not guaranteed.

8. Trusts and foundations

Open to: Scenario 2 (charitable organisation led) only, except for Arts Council and Sports England which apply to both Scenarios.
Target funds to raise: £400,000.

8.1 Fundraising through 'anchor' charities

Thame Youth and Community Centre will likely be home to one or more existing (or potentially new) 'anchor' charities focused on children and young people, older people, and other groups. Through them, we can access a wider pool of funders that TTC is not eligible to apply for.

These 'anchor' charities may need fundraising support to build their capacity both to lead capital applications and to potentially take on Centre management when it opens. They will need to be able to demonstrate to potential funders that they have the capacity to scale up, with strong governance arrangements in place. An addition to a charity's constitution or articles of association may also be required to enable them to take on building management.

TTC will ask 'anchor' charities to sign a partnership agreement to commit to holding any secured capital funds in a restricted account ready for release for construction. Draft lease agreements (minimum 10 years) will be drawn up at an early stage as these will be required by capital funders.

8.2 Scoping eligible funds

The high level of competition for trust funding (see Fundraising landscape section above) and Thame's relative affluence will limit eligible funds. However, a well-researched case for support and sufficient prospects provides reasonable confidence that we can achieve our £400k target for this income stream.

A detailed analysis of 1,400 initial longlist funds has identified multiple 'strong' and 'moderate' leads, narrowed down to:

- 57 potential capital funds (combined value of £2.07m) and a further 33 that warrant further investigation.
- 47 strong revenue funding leads (combined value £2.78m) and a handful of core funds that together will support ongoing programming and operations
- 19 capital equipment funds to support disadvantaged or disabled people.
- 19 core funders.

Others will inevitably emerge in the coming 12-18 months. Many of these have specific additional requirements which will limit opportunities further, for example:

- Turnover – limited to or excluding small (under/over £100k turnover) or large (over £1m turnover) charities. Generally, charities can only apply for 50% of their annual turnover. The charities most likely to lead the Centre bids are under £50k turnover), limiting their funding income potential.
- Beneficiary scope – many funders focus on the most disadvantaged groups based on socio-economic, cultural or other protected characteristics. The charities we are likely to fundraise through will not necessarily meet all these criteria, and Thame itself has pockets, rather than blanket, disadvantage.

We will mitigate these issues with multiple bids. Once a decision on the preferred management Scenario has been made, a further refinement of identified projects can be made and built into a targeted Case for Support (see **Section 5.5**).

8.2 Trusts and foundations prospects

Our plan involves prioritising Oxfordshire trusts and foundations (e.g. Shanly, Buttell, Masawi Foundation, Oxford Masonic Foundation, Syder Foundation, and Oxfordshire Community Fund), due to the smaller pool of competitors and ability to influence through personal relationship building. We will also work closely with local funding brokers including:

- Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action (OCVA) and their Pulse Newsletter
- Oxford Community Foundation, who administer grants and have a bank of donors.
- Heart of Bucks – some of their funders may be open to projects just over the border.

A shortlist of some of the planned capital applications is below. Note that success rates on many funds is low (1:5 or more), so we will aim to submit capital funding bids to a value of £2.07m to secure the target £400k.

Funder	Application deadline	Amount recommended	Notes
Bernard Sunley Foundation	Rolling	£100,000	Capital fund for recreation, education.
Clothworkers Foundation	Rolling	£50,000	Prioritises disadvantaged communities.
Masawi Foundation	Rolling	£100,000	Prioritises community cohesion
FCC Community Foundation	Rolling	£100,000	For projects under £500k in value. Could fund playground or scout hut as separate.
Arts Council England Project Grant	Rolling	£100,000	Apply for funds to kit out the music studio and media.
Sport England Movement Fund	Rolling	£30,000	Apply for sports equipment (e.g. gym, dance, fitness)

Syder Foundation	Rolling	£15,000	Oxfordshire fund. Funds up to £50k for regional projects.
Wooden Spoon Foundation	Rolling	£25,000	Low likelihood as prioritise disability. Apply for sensory room/ play area.
Thompson Family Funds	Rolling	£300,000	Registered in Oxford. Funds a variety of local and national causes.
Lennox Hannay Trusts	Rolling	£20,000	Various capital.
Fairhive Housing Association	Rolling	£10,000	Bucks housing association with stock in Thame.
Sport England Movement Fund	Rolling	£15,000	Match fund for sports facilities
C L Loyd Charitable Trust	Unknown	£10,000	Oxfordshire based fund.

9 Major Donors (High Net-worth individuals)

Open to: Scenario 2 (charitable organisation led) only.
Target funds to raise: £200,000.

9.1 Overview

TTC cannot directly accept charitable donations from private donors. Charitable donations could, however, be held by partner charities such as the Mayor's Charity.

We will ensure that we have a donor platform and assets ready by the end of the set-up phase, before going out to anyone. This ensured a professional and focused process with reduced risks of miscommunication or delay.

9.2 Donor targets

We will aim to secure an estimated 65 donations at different target levels, as described below. This sets a realistic focus for conversation with potential donors. We will welcome any donation, small or large, and hope that some donations will be above this amount.

Target number of donations	Gift level £	Total secured at this level
30	£500	£15,000
15	£2,000	£30,000
10	£5,000	£50,000
9	£10,000	£90,000
1	£15,000	£15,000
TOTAL		£200,000

9.3 Finding donors

We will develop a donor prospectus in the set-up phase of the fundraising that can be printed or emailed out, as part of a suite of project assets that describe the project, the impact of a donation, and recognition opportunities (e.g., naming a room or the entire Centre after a major donor).

The strategy for finding donors centres on:

- known local philanthropists, businesses, and high-net-worth individuals who have previously given to other charities in Thame or in Oxfordshire and the cause they supported. Many will already be named in Charity Commission accounts or on website supporter pages.
- Businesses and business leaders with ties to Thame that might be interested in putting their name to the project.
- Potential donors with specific interests e.g. in music (to kit out the music room or provide music equipment), film (to pay for a cinema screen for the film club), sport (to provide dance mirror, flooring etc) will also be scoped where we have a realistic prospect of making contact.
- Others known to councillors, officers and others connected with the campaign, who can make an approach on our behalf.
- 'Cold' approaches to current/ past residents with potential to give. We may work with a specialist wealth screening agency (e.g. Prospecting for Gold) with access to non-public data to help identify a further pool of people.
- 'Cold' or warm approaches to a handful of celebrities with a Thame connection.

We will aim to hold at least one donor meeting or small-scale reception for prospective donors to meet anchor charities, partners and community members, view plans and a video made by young people.

9.4 Approaching a potential donor

When a potential high net-worth has been found, the Fundraising Project Group will work with project stakeholders (partner organisations, business leaders, local politicians etc) to deepen the research into interests, how they like to be contacted, who they know.

The Group nominate someone to reach out, ideally someone who already knows the potential donor, or someone of sufficient standing. No potential donor is likely to give 'cold', so several meetings and a relationship built over time, potentially face-to-face, building towards a small initial ask is more realistic.

Sometimes the ask will be for them to open their address book to other potential supporters, rather than being asked to give directly. Contact will be made transparently, in good faith, without obligation or expectation, and with the utmost respect of individuals' right to privacy.

9.5 Donor stewardship and ethics

The most important part of the process is saying thank you – by email, letter, in person as appropriate. Depending on the management Scenario selected, it may be worth establishing a Founding Donors Club for those who contribute above a certain threshold, offering exclusive benefits such as recognition on a donor plaque, invitations to special events, and permanent acknowledgment within the Centre. Relationships built in this way will be carefully stewarded to encourage future regular, or endowment, giving once the Centre opens.

We will also carry out due diligence at the research stage and prior to accepting large (£10k plus) donations to ensure that donors' personal wealth, criminal background etc cannot bring the project or TTC into disrepute.

We will follow the Institute of Fundraising's Ethical Fundraising Code of Conduct and GDPR regulations in contacting potential donors, storing and sharing personal information.

9.4. Corporate Sponsorship and Partnerships

Open to: Scenario 1 (for in-kind) and Scenario 2 (cash donations and in-kind).

Target: No separate target. This strand will contribute to the Major Donors target, and to fit out costs (some outside the core project target of £4.3m).

9.5 Finding corporates

The Centre project is a good fit to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) goals for companies based in or with operations in Thame and South Oxfordshire. An initial scoping exercise has identified 25 likely mid-sized (100+ employees) prospects (e.g. Lucy Electric, Kubota UK and Travelodge) that are locally headquartered.

A second list of much smaller organisations, including housing associations (e.g. Rectory Homes) and other local traders and associations (Rotary, etc) that regularly donate to Thame charities is in progress, although these organisations will have less capacity to give, especially where they are already donating to other Thame causes, which we do not want to undermine.

9.6 Developing corporate partnerships

We anticipate a lead-in of 6-18 months to bring some of these corporate partnerships to fruition. Most will typically want strategic, often longer-term relationships that demonstrate their social value to clients and encourage their employees to stay.

Our fundraising plan for corporate engagement focuses on:

- **Corporate sponsorship (including Charity of the Year):** perhaps of a specific element of the project (e.g. youth or older people's facilities, sports, disability). In return, corporates will usually want to be named.
- **Employee sponsorship:** Employees are often given a set amount (e.g. £5k) by their employer to donate to a local charity of their choice each year. Similarly, Charity of the Year nominations might need to come through employees. We will encourage corporates to invite us in to meet staff teams.
- **Employee Engagement:** we will create 2-3 simple employee fundraising ideas (e.g. in-house bake sale, fun run, etc) linked to online matched giving (e.g. Just Giving).
- **Volunteering and skills donation:** organisations could help lower construction or operation costs through volunteering their time and skills (e.g. in running crowd funding campaigns, free legal advice).
- **In-kind donation:** We are already scoping local suppliers who might be willing to contribute building materials or fittings (e.g. flooring, paint, scaffolding and skips and other materials, kitchen units or appliances). A targeted 'shopping list' of asks will be directed to companies prior to and during construction. Where possible, pledges will

be secured prior to securing a building contractor so that these donations can be included in tendering agreements.

- **Building contractor social value:** The main building contractors will be expected to include a social value offer as part of their tender.

9.7 Corporate stewardship

We will conduct due diligence as for the major donors' process above and maintain regular contact. We will work with them to agree how they can be recognised and involved in the opening and any ongoing involvement of their employees or ongoing communications.

10. Community Crowdfunding

<p>Open to: Scenario 2, although TTC may be able to accept some donations. Target: £50,000.</p>

10.1 Overview

Local community fundraising is unlikely to raise huge sums, but it will be central to raising awareness and support for the project in the town. Community fundraising demonstrates the demand for the new Centre to potential funders and donors, who can see how wanted it is.

This is a whole-town effort. We aim to create fast-moving campaign that values and celebrates even the smallest donation. Thame has a highly active volunteer network of people of all ages giving their time, expertise and money. We will tap into this considerable expertise that already exists including 21st Century Thame and other groups and influencers.

We will also use the Centre campaign to increase the Town's capacity and expertise in fundraising, by advising charities, skilling-up and co-designing fundraising activity with young people and involving other sections of the community in activities.

Crowdfunding is best led by a fully supported team of enthusiastic volunteers within and working with the Project Fundraising Group. Ideas should be driven by those who get involved.

10.2 Planned approaches

These include:

- **Brand identity:** E.g. Establishing a brand identity for the campaign, chosen by young people potentially. We could use the interim working title is "Thame Together".
- **Launch event or 'go' moment:** We will organise a public event, inviting media, local officials, and community leaders to generate awareness and enthusiasm. We will use this event to canvas for volunteers to help with event planning, donor networking and online campaigns. We will also contact local schools, churches, and community groups to widen awareness of the campaign.
- **Crowdfunding Campaign:** We will set up an online crowdfunding campaign (e.g., on JustGiving) as the single place where people donate smaller sums.
- **Engagement Events:** We will integrate the fundraising campaign into Thame's existing annual calendar of family-friendly events (e.g. Christmas market, fair, food

festival etc), with stalls and incentives to give. We will also support officers and volunteers to run additional events to raise money and awareness (e.g. silent disco, danceathon, movie night, talent show, quiz night). We will also provide a fundraising pack with pre-made sponsorship and Gift Aid forms to make additional fundraising challenges easier e.g. walks/runs, auctions, themed dinners, events largely to be decided with the community.

- **Community Lottery.** TTC is eligible to establish a town lottery. Other local town councils and organisations (e.g. Lord Williams's School, SODC) already operate them successfully. They are free to run, through a lottery company (e.g. Bee-ethical, Go-Inspire, SoCharitable or GatherWell) that takes a cut (usually 40-50p in every £1) with guaranteed prizes for at least one town resident each week. A lottery would need heavy promotion and, again, whilst only raising a small sum, would increase town awareness.

11. Communications and media

This will be led by TTC communications team, although expert volunteer support would increase reach and capacity. Our communications plan will include:

- **Core campaign asset development** – including campaign key messages and tone, specific targeted briefs e.g. donor prospectus, corporate packages, trusts and foundations, case for support messaging. TTC could develop a brand look and feel for the campaign (e.g. using Thame Together), although will need to keep costs down.
- **Outreach:** Project Group members will attend community meetings and events to spread the word, including visiting schools, churches and community groups to widen awareness.
- **Local Media Outreach:** Regular engagement with local newspapers (e.g. Bucks Herald, Oxford Mail), local radio stations (e.g. Red Kite Radio <https://redkiteradio.com>), and online platforms (e.g. www.thamehub.co.uk, www.thame.net, and TTC's own website). These will help to share stories about the campaign's progress, donor spotlights and community impact.
- **Social Media:** Develop a robust social media campaign with regular updates, stories, and calls to action. This includes encouraging community members to share content. Alongside regular town newsletters, we will also build and maintain an email database of local supporters who want to be kept informed.
- **Campaign Website:** Create a dedicated webpage on TTC's existing site, to serve as the campaign's information hub, featuring donation options, progress trackers, events and testimonials.

12 Conclusion

The proposed fundraising plan provides a diversified spread of streams and tactics. There will inevitably be many unsuccessful bids, as is normal for a project of this level of risk and scale. However, a balanced approach with sound governance and shared ownership gives the project a good prospect for success.