Amenities Committee

DATE: 22 October 2025 ITEM 8

Transfer of Highcliffe Residents Association Community Centre

1. Purpose of Report

To present an updated roadmap for the proposed transfer of ownership of the Highcliffe Residents Association Community Centre (minus cottage) to Highcliffe & Walkford Parish Council, incorporating extended public consultation and revised loan processing timelines.

2. Purpose of Report

That the **Amenities Committee** recommends to **Full Council** that it:

1. **Notes** the updated project roadmap and key milestones for the proposed transfer of the Highcliffe Residents Association Community Centre (excluding the cottage).
2. **Approves** the transfer of the Old School to the Council in principle.
3. **Approves** the commencement of a two-month **public consultation** and associated **stakeholder engagement** process
4. **Authorises** the Clerk to begin preparation of loan documentation and submit it for **DAPTC review** in advance of a Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) application.
5. **Requests** that a further detailed report be presented to Council following completion of the consultation and DAPTC review, prior to a final decision on proceeding with the transfer and loan application.

3. Background

The Highcliffe Residents Association currently manages the community centre at 254 Lymington Road. The Parish Council is exploring ownership transfer to ensure long-term sustainability, address structural issues, and integrate the centre into council-managed assets. Funding for repairs is proposed via a Public Works Loan.

There has been an issue of the transfer which the Clerk has identified as the Council currently has no power to act as a housing landlord. After consultation with HRA it was agreed to exclude the cottage from the transfer of the Old School.

4. Updated Project Roadmap

Step	Activity	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
1	Council Decision (in principle)	X											
2	Due Diligence (surveys, reports)		X										
3	Financial Planning (costs, grants, loan)		X	X									
4	Public Consultation			X	X								
5	Stakeholder Engagement			X	X								
6	Council Decision (to proceed)				X								
7	Loan Application Prep (DAPTC review)					X	X						
8	DAPTC Approval						X	X					
9	PWLB Loan Application							X					
10	PWLB Loan Approval (6 months)								X	X	X	X	X
11	Council Final Decision										X		
12	Property Transfer											X	
13	Structural Repairs											X	X
14	Operational Handover												X

4. Key Milestones

- Nov: Initial council resolution.
- Dec–Jan: Due diligence and financial planning.
- Jan–Feb: Public consultation and stakeholder engagement.
- Feb: Council decision to proceed.
- Mar–Apr: Loan application preparation.
- Apr–May: DAPTC review and approval.
- May: PWLB loan application submitted.
- Jun–Nov: PWLB loan approval process.
- Oct: Final council decision.

- Nov: Legal property transfer.
- Nov–Dec: Structural repairs.
- Dec: Operational handover.

5. Implications

Equalities
The transfer will ensure continued access to community facilities for all residents. Future use of the centre will promote inclusivity, accessibility, and broad community benefit.

Environment
Structural improvements will offer an opportunity to incorporate energy-efficient upgrades and environmentally sustainable materials. Ongoing management under the Parish Council may enhance waste management and reduce environmental impact.

Crime and Disorder
The centre provides a valuable community hub that supports social cohesion and positive local engagement, reducing the potential for antisocial behaviour in the area.

Financial
Funding for repairs is expected to be met via a Public Works Loan, subject to approval. Detailed financial planning will be undertaken to ensure affordability and sustainability, including potential external grants or community funding.

Resources
The Clerk and Assistant Clerk will manage the due diligence, consultation, and loan application process. Administrative capacity will be required for legal transfer and transition to operational management.

Legal
The property transfer will require formal conveyancing and due diligence to ensure clear title and liability arrangements. The Council must also comply with borrowing regulations under the Public Works Loan Board and meet all audit and governance requirements.

Risk Management
Key risks include unforeseen repair costs, loan delays, or public opposition. These are mitigated through a contingency budget, early application scheduling, and a transparent two-month public consultation process.

6. Conclusion

The proposed transfer of the Highcliffe Residents Association Community Centre represents a significant opportunity to secure a long-term community asset under Parish Council ownership. The updated roadmap provides a structured approach with extended timelines to allow thorough due diligence, public consultation, and financial planning.

Members are asked to:

1. Note the proposed roadmap and milestones.
2. Approve the initiation of public consultation and stakeholder engagement.
3. Authorise the Clerk to prepare loan documentation and proceed with DAPTC review.