



Andover Town Council

To **consider** a grant application from:
More Education Koala Community Hub

Item No.

24a

Produced for: Full Council

By: Admin Assistant

Date of Report: 12th June 2024

Name of applicant organisation:	More Education Koala Community Hub
Amount requested:	£5,596.25
Subject of application:	Furniture for new office space housing Koala Community Hub.

Proposer: Cllr

Seconder: Cllr

The application and paperwork have been checked for completeness by the Admin Assistant & the following councillors.

Bird	Cockaday	Farren	Gregori	Gregory	Hardstaff	Hughes J	Hughes K	Hughes R	Kidd	McGarry	Meyer	Neate	Reynolds	Sangster	Waue
					✓	✓							✓		

Summary:

Location of Project / Event:	Koala Community Hub 83 The High Street
Date of project / event / purchase of asset:	July 2024 – September 2024

Project description: (copied from application form)	<p>Our project focuses on creating a permanent, specialised and dedicated community Hub in Central Andover. We have been supporting the autistic community from toddlers through to adults (and those with learning disabilities), and their families since August 2021. We run a variety of peer group sessions, both in person and online. We are research based and autistic led, with the majority of our staff and volunteers being autistic themselves or have family members who are. We find that with lived experience we offer unique insight with support and understanding that our community may not find elsewhere. We currently support our community from a temporary rented unit in Chantry House, but this contract runs out on July 1st 2024, when the lease is being taken over by new occupants. We have had planning permission approved for a permanent move to 83 The High Street. This will finally give our community a place they can call their own. We are ensuring that the fit out of the new hub is comfortable, not excessive, and meets all safety and accessibility needs of the community who will be using it. We have applied to various funds including CAF and CIL for funding the project and smaller independent funders. We have formed relationships with suppliers and developed sponsorship programmes to build bonds within the community. We are applying to ATC to support some of the final funding we need to raise to support our move. Once we have a dedicated Hub, we are looking to extend our education provision. Currently supporting 14 young people (YP) with distance learning, we are looking to expand upon the number of YP we support. We are also looking to offer our</p>
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hybrid learning programme, for which there is currently a waitlist across 3 local counties. This will not only allow us to support more YP currently not able to access mainstream education but will provide a means for the Charity to become more self-sufficient and sustainable. During 2023 we supported 762 individuals, and their families. Due to our new location being more prominent within the town, we expect this number to grow, and demand for our services to increase in line with this. Due to our strong links with the local mental health teams, and other charities, we are also receiving an unprecedented number of referrals which we cannot currently fulfil. Our move has the backing and support of several local Councillors, as well as the Andover Enablement Network. Our launch is also supported and is due to be attended by one of our current Grant Funders – Children in Need.

Information supplied on the application form.

Which groups of people will benefit	At Koala we support autistic toddlers through to adults, including those with learning difficulties, and their families. Koala is open to anyone who feels they belong, and we do not require a diagnosis to attend any of our groups. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated at Koala. As mentioned, we hope that the move to a more prominent location, and the opportunities that our own dedicated space will bring will allow us to reach more members of the community. As part of the Andover Enablement Network, we are fostering new relationships that will allow us to work collaboratively with other local Charities and Organisations.
How many people will benefit	In excess of 762 individuals and their family and friends. We have had feedback that members of our community were sometimes unable to book into our peer groups, due to them being at maximum capacity. We are hoping that the new site and expansion of our education provision will allow us to extend our current session offering to enable us to support more of those individuals seeking our community. With increased capacity, and continued evolution of our relationships with other organisations and services, we expect to see this number rise. The individuals who attend our peer groups can share the benefits of this support with family and friends, meaning that the total beneficiaries of this project are much wider reaching.
What evidence of need for the project, activity, event, equipment or service can you provide us with?	There is no other support, like Koala, currently available for autistic people and their families. Koala supports autistic adults (and those with learning disabilities) to become more independent within their community and, where applicable, support them back into work. Some of our adult attendees now volunteer at Koala youth groups,

building authentic connections with future generations, role modelling behaviours and self-advocacy. Our toddler and kids' groups provide a sensory safe and demand free environment, for children to explore and understand their neurology with peers, and staff/volunteers who are also neurodivergent. We require no diagnosis to attend Koala, so those on the pathway, or those not choosing to embark upon it are all welcome to attend. We have a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination of any kind. Through our existing groups we have supported 129 individual adults in the last year. This could be higher, but due to groups reaching maximum capacity, this has meant that 17% of adults we have recently surveyed have not been able to book a space on a session. When we asked about the impact not being able to attend had, 23% expressed that it caused them anxiety, and 18% said it had an impact on their mental health. As part of our survey, we asked our adult respondents what benefits they had found since joining the Koala Community. 74% said they felt they belonged, while 66% said they felt supported. On a scale of 1-5, 87% rated their mental health between 1-3 (with 1 being poor) before engaging with Koala. After engaging with Koala, 91% rated it between 3-5 (with 5 being the best possible mental health). We work closely with other Charities, Organisations and Healthcare providers locally. Andover PCN, Local community Mental Health Teams, Adult Services, Hampshire and IOW NHS ICB, Hampshire Hospitals Trust and local GP's all work collaboratively with us. We are constantly looking for other organisations to work with to try to support as many individuals as we can, whilst easing the burden on already overstretched services by supporting people with early intervention. We will always refer to other services if we do not have the appropriate skill set to support the individual's needs, and often facilitate bookings and meetings due to the relationships we have with our community. To support our evidence of need, I have attached five Case Studies for adults and four Case Studies for young people who have attended our support groups to demonstrate the impact doing so has had on their wellbeing. Also attached in our impact report from 2023. We are conscious of minimising costs, and as well as our environmental impact. All existing furniture at our temporary Hub will be reused and repurposed in our new location. We will also seek donations from the public via our community and social media. The furniture this grant will pay for will enable us to furnish the Hub in a way that will allow us to provide our services with efficiency and comfort, without being lavish

or excessive. These items are things that we do not currently have and feel that it would be difficult to source through donations but are key to the service we will provide, and the environment we are looking to create.

Total project amount **£ 109,430.94**

Amount applied for and as a percentage of total **£5,596.25** **5%**

Financial breakdown of costs	Item	Cost	VAT	Total
	Training, Professional and IT Costs	£9,807.00		£9,807.00
	Lift	£20,203.20		£20,203.20
	Building Works inc Flooring	£47,730.52		£47,730.52
	Electrical Works	£17,758.00		£17,758.00
	Media Lab and Library	£10,142.97		£10,142.97
	Contingency	£5,561.90		£5,561.90
	Furniture	£5,596.25		£5,596.25
	Total project cost			£116,799.84
	<u>Furniture breakdown (ATC Grant funding applicable)</u>			
	Dining Table and Chairs for Staff Room	£1,129.00		£1,129.00
	Large Storage Cupboard	£746.00		£746.00
	Chairs for main hub areas	£526.20		£526.20

	3 x folding round tables	£1,608.00		£1,608.00
	2 x Coffee Tables	£450.00		£450.00
	3 x Office Chairs	£450.00		£450.00
	3 x 1400mm Office Desks	£1,068.00		£1,068.00
	2 x Coffee tables	£482.00		£482.00
	1 x Office Desk for Reception	£281.00		£281.00
	1 x Coffee Table for Office	£241.00		£241.00
	2 x armchairs for Office	£598.00		£598.00
	Furniture total			£5,596.25
	<i>The Admin Officer has obtained more detailed information about the furniture items which exceed £1,000 for Councillors to see. This information is provided in the back up document named Furniture Follow on paper provided in this Grant Pack.</i>			
Have previous grants been awarded by ATC?	No			
Have all previous grant reports been received?	N/A			
Other Funding applied for:	Hampshire County Council £22,387.00. Outcome will be known by Mid-May 2024			
Are financial reserves and expenditure in line with ATC policy?	Yes. <i>The money in More Educations bank account is restricted grants they have been awarded for projects they are currently running.</i>			
Have all other documents been received?	Yes			
Has insurance been checked?	Yes			
Has a Risk Assessment been received?	Yes			
Are other licences / permissions required?	N/A			
Are other licences / permissions obtained?	N/A			