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**Halesowen Area Committee – 28th June 2006**

**Report of the Area Liaison Officer**

**Delegated Capital Budget**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To recommend grants from the Committee's Capital Budget Allocation and associated matters.

**Background**

2. The Council is being recommended to agree a further capital allocation of £50,000 for the Area Committee for the financial year 2006/07.
3. Together with a total of £33,700 from previous years allocations, the total amount available for allocation in 2006/07 is £83,700.
4. There is also a total of £45,000 which was earmarked in previous years for Town Centre Enhancements, Youth Facilities and Shell Corner Neighbourhood Shop, but is not yet actually committed.
5. It has been the Committee's practice to delegate authority to me, in consultation with the Chairman and a representative from the Opposition Group, to agree requests from Community and Voluntary Groups for small grants, and this arrangement has worked well. I am recommending it should continue in 2006/07.
6. The Committee has previously agreed that action should be taken to promote the availability of funding by, for example:-
  - (a) issuing media releases;
  - (b) direct mailing to a wide range of Community and Voluntary Groups, Schools and other organisations in the area;

and I am suggested that similar action is taken for the coming year.

7. **Dudley Borough Business Crime Partnership**

The Dudley Borough Business Crime Partnership has applied for funding towards the provision of an emergency signal controller unit for the new radio link systems being installed for Halesowen and Brierley Hill. The surveillance and communications equipment will help co-ordinate the collection and use of information on crime and anti-social behaviour in Halesowen town centre.

A similar application was made to the Brierley Hill Area Committee, who at their meeting held on 9th March 2006, approved an allocation of £3,000.

Having consulted with colleagues who fully support the bid I am recommending that a grant of £3,000 be allocated for this purpose.

8. Lutley Community Association

Lutley Community Association operates Lutley Community Centre and during a recent power cut, found that the emergency back up lighting was seriously insufficient. Several children had to be evacuated.

The Association has requested funding for additional emergency lighting within the Centre on the grounds of health and safety, amounting to just under £2726.00.

The Committee has previously supported bids for funding from this Centre, which is very well used by local people and I am recommending the bid is approved.

9. Victim Support (Witness Service)

An application has been received from the Chairman of the Victim Support Witness Service for funding towards furniture for the video link room at Halesowen Magistrates Court (used for vulnerable witnesses) as well as furniture for the waiting room and video link room at Dudley Magistrates Court and a laser printer for office use at Dudley Victim Support Branch, The Broadway, Dudley. Other applications have also been submitted to other Area Committees, but since the application relates directly to Dudley Magistrates' Court and Halesowen Magistrates' Court, it would be appropriate for the application to be considered by the Central Dudley and Halesowen Area Committees for 50% of the cost each.

The total cost of the scheme is £2,800 and I am recommending the Committee approves a grant of £1,400, subject to a similar approval by the Central Dudley Area Committee.

10. Dudley Lifeskills Partnership run through Barnados

A funding request has been received to purchase equipment required by the Partnership to enhance the learning engagement with young people who will be participating in the various life-long learning workshops held by the Partnership.

A previous course was run very successfully at Greenhill Youth Club and was very much appreciated by the young people who participated. The Partnership now wishes to purchase a range of equipment, including Baby Doll simulators to assist with the Teenage Pregnancy prevention programme, camcorder and camera equipment, sports equipment and banners etc to promote the programme, at a total cost of £3,850.

Having consulted colleagues, who are very supportive of the Partnership and their work, I am recommending a grant of £3,850 be approved.

11. Halesowen Chamber of Trade

A request has been received from the Halesowen Chamber of Trade for funding towards purchasing planters, first year plants and watering equipment to launch the inaugural year of Halesowen in Bloom. The total cost amounts to £5541.80.

The intention is that the funding would provide equipment for the start of the programme and that in future years, funding would be raised through local sponsorship. The Council's Green Care organisation would water and maintain the

planters.

In view of the need to make progress on this as soon as possible, I have, in consultation with the Chairman and Councillor Body, approved a grant of £5,500 to purchase these items.

12. OAP Drop in Centre, Andrew Road

We have received a request from the Town Centre Manager for painting and decorating supplies to refurbish the Centre. He has negotiated for twenty-three RAF trainees to carry out the work in the centre at weekends commencing at the end of May free of charge. Indeed they have suggested they may "adopt" the centre to assist in future repairs and upkeep.

Total funding amounts to approximately £356 and I have, therefore, in consultation with the Chairman and Opposition Spokesperson, approved them a grant of £356.00.

13. Shell Corner Improvements

At its meeting on 25th January 2006, the Committee considered a number of options for environmental and other improvements at Shell Corner and asked for further work to be done. Officers are currently formulating more detailed proposals, including a potential funding package. Although the total cost of the scheme has still to be finalised, it is likely to be in the order of £40,000 - £45,000. Some mainstream Council regeneration capital funding is available, but to enable officers to complete their work, it would be very helpful if the Committee could approve an in principle allocation towards the scheme of say £15,000, subject to the submission of further details, including the other funding package, to a future meeting.

14. Halesowen Orchestra

Halesowen Orchestra play orchestral music to a wide range of people within and around the Halesowen locality, to promote and perform programmes of orchestral music where other organisations might not be able or willing to do so.

They have requested funding to purchase a grand piano for use by the Orchestra and other local groups in the Cornbow Hall, to encourage more extensive use of the Hall as a venue for concerts, recitals and musicals etc, at a cost of £5,000.

The Council owns a grand piano, financed by Lottery grant some years ago, which is currently located at Himley Hall. It costs about £500 to move it for use at another venue. Halesowen Orchestra have been complaining for some time about not being able to use this piano on costs grounds.

Cornbow Hall is the only Borough Hall without access to a piano and having consulted appropriate colleagues, there is some support to provide one for use at the Cornbow Hall. There are, however, potential problems with storage, security, space and local management issues which would need to be addressed. I am, therefore recommending that the bid be supported in principle, subject to further consideration of these operational issues.

15. The criteria against which bids/allocations should be considered are set out in Appendix A.

## **Finance**

16. The total available for distribution in 2006/07 is £83.700 and the recommendations in this report will result in the following allocations:-

	£	£
<b><u>Recommended for approval:</u></b>		
Business Crime Partnership	3,000	
Lutley Community Association	2,726	
Victim Support (Witness Service)	1,400	
Lifeskills Partnership	3,850	10,976
<b><u>Grants approved through delegated arrangements:-</u></b>		
Halesowen in Bloom	5,500	
Drop in Centre, Andrew Road	356	5,856
<b><u>Earmarked Allocations:-</u></b>		
Shell Corner	15,000	
Halesowen Orchestra	5,000	20,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>36,832</b>

Leaving just over £46,800 available for the remainder of the year.

## **Law**

17. The Committee may incur capital expenditure in respect of the various statutory functions of the Council.
18. Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 empowers the Council to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive to, or incidental to the discharge of its functions.

## **Equality Impact**

19. This report complies fully with the Council's policies on equal opportunities and diversity. Some of the applications include facilities which are available to children and young people.

## **Recommendations**

20. It is proposed that the Area Committee:-
- (a) authorises the Area Liaison Officer, in consultation with the Chairman and a representative from the Opposition Group, to consider and agree where appropriate, requests for funding from Community and Voluntary Groups;
  - (b) authorises the Area Liaison Officer to take appropriate action to promote the availability of funding for 2006/07;
  - (c) approves a grant of 3,000 to the Dudley Borough Business Crime Partnership for funding towards the provision of an emergency signal controller unit;

- (d) approves a grant of £2,726 to Lutley Community Association for funding towards additional emergency lighting within the Centre;
- (e) approves a grant of £1,400 to the Victim Support Witness Centre for funding towards furniture for the video link room at Halesowen Magistrates Court, subject to a similar approval by the Central Dudley Area Committee;
- (f) approves a grant of £3,850 to the Dudley Lifeskills Partnership to purchase equipment required by the Partnership to be used in the various lifelong learning workshops;
- (g) notes my action, in consultation with the Chairman and Councillor Body in approving a grant of £5,500 for funding towards purchasing planters, first year plants and watering equipment to launch the inaugural year of Halesowen in Bloom;
- (h) notes my action, in consultation with the Chairman and Councillor Body in approving a grant of £356 to the Drop in Centre, Andrew Road, for decorating supplies;
- (i) agrees to earmark £15,000 for environmental and other improvements at Shell Corner, subject to the formulation of more detailed proposals, including a potential funding package and a further report to this Committee;
- (j) agrees, in principle, a grant of £5,000 to Halesowen Orchestra to purchase a grand piano for use by the Orchestra and other local groups which will be situated in the Cornbow Hall, subject to further consideration of operational issues identified.



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Mike Williams  
Area Liaison Officer

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### **Criteria for Bids/Allocations**

- a. The allocation to be spent on 'capital' schemes, as defined by legislation, i.e. one-off type expenditure on acquisition, construction, enhancement of land, roads, buildings, equipment or vehicles, which may also include the making of grants or loans for capital expenditure by others.
- b. Schemes should contribute to the Community and Council Plans and should not conflict with existing Council Policy.
- c. Schemes should be for the general benefit of the wider community, i.e. not just for the benefit of individuals or specific groups and should 'make a difference' in the local area.
- d. Schemes should not result in any on-going revenue costs.
- e. Consideration should be given to schemes that might generate external funding (*i.e. using these budgets as match funding*).