

Castle and Priory, St. James's and St. Thomas's Community Forum
4th November 2013

Report of the Lead Officer

Community Forum Funding

Purpose of Report

1. To consider the allocation of expenditure from the Community Forum Funding budget for the remainder of the 2013/14 municipal year.

Background

2. The ten Community Forums are responsible for allocating expenditure from the delegated Community Forum Funding budget. The guidelines against which allocations from the delegated budget should be considered are set out in Appendix 1. These are corporate guidelines only and it is ultimately for each Community Forum to decide on individual applications.
3. Copies of the applications referred to in this report have been e-mailed to Members prior to the meeting.

Applications for Consideration at this Meeting

Fast + Aid

4. Fast + Aid is a registered charity based in Aldridge that provides a voluntary team supporting the West Midlands Ambulance Service to respond to 999 emergency calls.
5. An application by Fast + Aid was considered by Gornal /Upper Gornal and Woodsetton Community Forum in September requesting a grant to fund the purchase of a second support vehicle to be used in the Dudley area; enabling faster responses to emergency calls from the ambulance service.
6. Members noted Community First Responders have to travel to Aldridge to collect the response vehicle. Clearly securing a second vehicle, expected to be kept in the Dudley area, would clearly result in a more responsive service. The cost of the vehicle is **£10,000**.
7. The Gornal /Upper Gornal and Woodsetton Community Forum agreed to recommend approval of the grant application with the caveat of a borough-wide referral; with the particular aim of attaining equal contributions across the 10 Forums.

8. As such, it is proposed that Members consider approving the application on the basis of **£1,000** contribution from this Community Forum; and corresponding commitments across the remaining Forums.

Wrens Nest Community Centre

9. An application has been received from Wrens Nest Community Centre for funding of up to **£2,500**. The specific purpose for which funding is requested is to carry out a number of internal improvements and enhancements across the site including: main central heating repairs; replacement lighting; and toilet sink water heaters in attaining more custom across community groups and statutory/voluntary sector agencies.
10. It is proposed that Members consider whether a grant should be approved - in accordance with the guidelines for considering funding applications - attached to this report.

St Edmund King & Martyr Church

11. An application has been received from St Edmund King & Martyr Church (held by Church of England) Castle Street, Dudley for funding of up to **£250**. The specific purpose for which funding is requested is to replace lighting for the Church tower clock.
12. It is proposed that Members consider whether a grant should be approved - in accord with the guidelines for considering funding applications - attached to this report.

Dudley MBC - Environmental Management Division – Christmas Trees

13. An application has been received from the Authority's Environmental Management Division for funding of up to **£2,536.94**.
14. The funding is requested for the provision of Christmas trees at the 2 locations identified for the Community Forum area (see Appendix 1 of application circulated to Members). The application is for the costs to purchase, erect and remove the trees, together with associated energy costs for lighting. The costs associated with the installation and maintenance of the tree lights will be met from within Environmental Management's existing budgets.
15. It merits noting that a programme is being developed to plant live Christmas trees at different locations across the Borough. The cost and operational implications of planting live trees prohibits the purchase of trees at the height required for immediate decoration, and smaller trees need a number of years to establish before they can be decorated with lights. This is therefore a long-term project.
16. Sponsorship options are being sought, as last year, through the Council's Communications team, however, interest levels remain low.
17. Requests have been made to the 9 other Community Forums for Christmas tree provision in their areas for 2013. Moreover, members may recall approval of funding across the 5 Area Committees in October 2012.

18. It is proposed that Members consider whether a grant should be approved - in accord with the guidelines for considering funding applications - attached to this report.

Old Park Farm Tenants Residents Association

19. An application has been received from Old Park Farm Tenants Residents Association – a group of tenants, leaseholders and owner occupiers who work together to improve the area they live in - for funding of up to **£2,000**. The specific purpose for which funding is requested is to provide for a community ‘fun day’ particularly for children, families and members of the Sycamore pensioners club.
20. The pensioners club is expected to contribute to additional costs.
21. It is proposed that Members consider whether a grant should be approved - in accord with the guidelines for considering funding applications - attached to this report.

Other Updates

Whole Child Foundation

22. At September’s Forum the Lead Officer was authorised, in consultation with other members, to make a recommendation on the application received from the Whole Child Foundation CIC to provide a pilot extended project session for young people at St Thomas’s Network during the October, 2013 half-term school holidays. Members should note that key financial information has not been received from the lead applicant in order to advance this application.

Finance

23. It is proposed that each Community Forum will receive £10,000 per ward to allocate annually.
24. Current resources available across each ward for **2013/14**:-

<u>Ward</u>	<u>Amount (£)</u>
Castle & Priory	18,762.67
St. James's	27,135.82
St. Thomas's	16,454.83
Total	62,353.33

25. This amount includes unspent balances from 2012/13 and accounts for resources allocated to the former Area Committees.

Law

26. The Localism Act 2011 gives the Council a power of general competence to act in the interests of the Community.

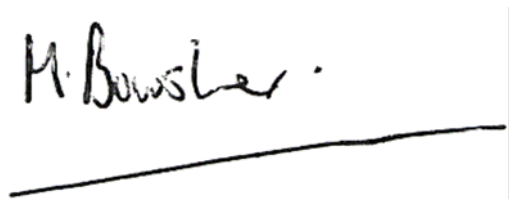
27. Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 enables the Council to do anything that is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive to or incidental to, the discharge of its statutory functions.

Equality Impact

28. The awarding of a capital grant to community and voluntary organisations is specifically intended to lever improved well being; and create general social benefits across community groups.

Recommendation

29. That the Forum considers the applications referred to in the report and make recommendations to the Director of Corporate Resources on each individual application as appropriate.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "M. Bowsher", is positioned above a horizontal line. A vertical line extends upwards from the right end of the horizontal line.

Matt Bowsher

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List of Background Papers

- The application forms on which this report is based have been emailed to Members prior to the meeting, but contain exempt information under the terms of part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.
- Appendix 1 – Corporate Guidelines for considering funding applications.

Community Forums

Guidelines for considering funding applications

Community Forums will consider every funding application on its own individual merits.

Community Forums have discretion to make recommendations on each application taking account of the funding available.

A decision on an individual application will not be seen as setting a precedent for the consideration of any other applications received by the Council or another Community Forum.

Guidelines

The following guidelines are to assist Community Forums in considering funding applications.

Community Forums reserve the right to make exceptions to these guidelines depending on the circumstances of each individual application.

1. The funding allocation may be spent on “capital” and/or “revenue” schemes:

Capital: one-off expenditure on buying, constructing or improving land, buildings, equipment or vehicles;

Revenue: expenditure on running costs of projects or activities, including staff costs and the purchase of consumables and services from third parties. Priority will be given to one-off, time-limited, or start-up spend, rather than ongoing running costs. The latter should normally be funded by the organisation itself.

2. Schemes should contribute to the Community Strategy and should not conflict with Council policy. Consideration will be given to how a scheme fits with wider community initiatives.
3. Schemes should be for the general benefit of the wider community, not just for the benefit of individuals or specific groups and should make a difference in the local area.

4. Funding applications may be submitted to more than one Community Forum depending on the area(s) of benefit. Each individual Forum shall retain discretion over its own funding allocation. A recommendation made by one Community Forum shall not create an expectation that it will be supported by another Forum.
5. Schemes should not result in any on-going revenue costs that the organisation cannot fund from its own resources – e.g. running costs and repair and maintenance of new/improved buildings and equipment.
6. All expenditure must be in accordance with Council Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, be subject to the Council's legal powers and demonstrate good value for money.
7. Individual funding applications should be for a maximum of £5,000 unless there are exceptional circumstances. Organisations will be encouraged to match fund or seek further funding through other means. Priority will be given to schemes that might generate such funding.
8. Applications will not normally be considered from organisations who have previously applied for funding to the Community Forums (or former Area Committees) within the previous three years.
9. Once an application has been approved, it will be on the condition that the commitment is spent within nine months; otherwise the allocation will be returned back into the available budget and a fresh application would be required.
10. In appropriate circumstances, it may be required that certain items of equipment funded by these allocations are to be made available for use by other organisations.