

**DUDLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> June, 2015 - Norton/Pedmore and Stourbridge East/Wollaston and Stourbridge Town Centre Community Forum**

**Report of the Lead Officer**

**Community Forum - Love Your Local Community Funding**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To consider the allocation of expenditure from the Community Forum Funding budget for the 2015/16 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. A copy of the applications referred in this report, appendix 2 have been emailed to Members prior to the meeting.

**Applications for consideration at this meeting**

**Parish of Our Lady and All Saints**

4. Funding of £5000 is requested towards the installation of a loop system, and the provision of curtains as part of a wider project to refurbish the Parish Centre at Our Lady and All Saints. The provision of a loop system will help the centre comply with the Disability Discrimination Act whilst the curtains will - amongst other things – provide privacy for groups using the centre. Three quotes have been provided for both items.
5. The total cost of the parish centre refurbishment project is £59,000 and forms part of a wider programme of repairs and redecoration to the adjoining church. The total cost will be funded through a variety of other sources including fundraising and future funding applications to other grant giving bodies.
6. The Parish Centre is currently used by a range of groups catering for a spectrum of age groups and activities.

### **Stourbridge Cricket Club**

7. Funding of £1902 is requested towards two pieces of cricketing equipment – a sight screen and a throw down net. Three quotes have been provided for both items.
8. The two pieces of equipment will enable the Club to work with more children and young people as they will be able to increase the number of training sessions including the number of grass practice sessions. This will lead to increased participation in active sport, increased levels of fitness, and improved cricketing abilities.
9. Stourbridge Cricket Club is a sports and social club which includes a youth section with more than 200 children and young people playing cricket. The club also has four adult teams.

### **Forum of Older People in Dudley – on behalf of Age Alliance in Dudley**

10. Funding of £250 is requested from each community forum to deliver 2 specific aims:
  - A street questionnaire to be carried out at five locations during summer 2015. The results from this will be used to influence services and support for older people in the Borough particularly in regard to loneliness and social isolation.
  - A one day conference to raise awareness of the theme and challenge of loneliness and social isolation and its consequences for the health and well being of individuals and the community.
11. The total cost for the project is £5,500 and funding is by sought from other sources including West Midlands Later Life Forum. No quotes have been received.
12. Age Alliance in Dudley includes 32 representatives – statutory, community and voluntary sector – from across the Borough together with the membership of the Forum of Older People in Dudley. The aim of the alliance is to further improve the quality of later life within the Borough.
13. The Forum aims to be as representative of older people in Dudley as possible, to enable local older people to feel empowered, valued and respected and to increase older peoples understanding of issues affecting them and the services available to them.

### **Black Country Festival**

14. A sum of £1000 from each ward has been allocated from the Love Your Local Community – Community Forum budget to fund activities and events in connection with the Black Country Festival.
15. The monies will be used to encourage and expand the Black Country Day celebrations during 2015/16 with a total sum of £24,000 allocated to the Black Country Festival.
16. All political group leaders have been consulted on the proposal.

## **Finance**

17. It is proposed that each Community Forum will receive £10,000 per ward to allocate each financial year.
18. The total sum currently available to spend across all wards is: £42,770.53.
19. This amount includes unspent balances for all three wards within the forum area.
20. Additional one off funding of £20,919 from the High Street Innovation / Empty Shops Grant Funding has been made available for projects which improve the appearance or economic vitality of an area, with preference to the Borough's centres and High Streets.
21. The total sum available from this funding to spend across all wards is: £18,595.60.

## **Law**

22. Pursuant to Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 the Council has the general power of competence to do anything that individuals generally may do.
23. 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 function.

## **Equality Impact**

24. This report complies with the Council's policies on equality and diversity.

## **Recommendation**

25. That the Forum members note the report.



.....  
**Andrew Leigh**  
**Head of Housing Strategy & Development**

Contact Officer:     Andrew Leigh  
                              Telephone: 01384 815007  
                              Email: andrew.leigh@dudley.gov.uk

## **List of Background Papers**

*Appendix 1 – Corporate guidelines for considering funding applications*

*Appendix 2 - The application forms on which this report is based have been emailed to Members prior to the meeting but contain exempt information under terms of part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.*

## Community Forums

### Guidelines for funding applications

Every funding application will be considered on its own individual merits by community forum elected members, who will take into account the funding available and make recommendations on each application to the Council's Director of Corporate Resources.

Applications will be considered only from voluntary and community organisations that are based in the Dudley borough. Applications should be submitted through a parent organisation e.g. a sports club rather than an individual team within a club.

Applications are to be submitted at least 21 days before a community forum meeting in order to be considered at that meeting. Later applications will be considered at the next available forum meeting. Elected members can make recommendations on genuinely urgent applications between forum meetings.

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.

All expenditure must be in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, be subject to the Council's legal powers and demonstrate good value for money. Quotations must be provided in line with the Council's procedure rules. Details are set out in the application form.

### Guidelines for considering applications

The following guidelines are to assist elected members in considering funding applications. Individual community forums reserve the right to make exceptions to these guidelines depending on the circumstances of each individual application.

1. Funding 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 which should normally be funded by the organisation itself.)
2. Schemes should contribute to the aims of the Community Strategy and not conflict with Council policy. 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.

3. 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.
4. Schemes should not result in any on-going revenue costs that the organisation cannot fund from its own resources e.g. running costs or repair and maintenance of buildings and equipment.
5. 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.
6. Applications will not normally be considered from organisations who have previously received funding from a community forum (or former area committee) within the previous three years.
7. Representatives of organisations submitting applications are encouraged to attend the forum meeting and to speak if they wish in support of their applications.
8. Once an application has been approved, it will be on the condition that the funding is spent within nine months, otherwise the funding will be returned to the Council. A fresh application would need to be submitted and approved in order for the funding to be released.
9. In appropriate circumstances, funding may be given on condition that certain items of equipment purchased with the funding are made available for use by other organisations.

### **High Street Innovation/Empty Shops Grant Funding Applications**

10. One-off funding has been made available in the 2014/15 financial year for projects which improve the appearance or economic vitality of an area, with preference to the Borough's Centres and High Streets.
11. The Council will decide which source of funding successful applications will use, but as guidance for applicants High Street Innovation/Empty Shops Grant funding will be considered for the following:-

#### **Eligible proposals**

- Proposals will be considered either for Capital or Revenue activities.
- Proposals are preferred for projects within the Borough's defined Principal or Local Centres, but applications may be considered in any location where benefits to the local economy or environment may be demonstrated.
- Proposals that show a partnership approach (between for example business and the Community will be preferred).

## **Ineligible proposals**

- Proposals which create ongoing revenue costs for the Council. Proposals must demonstrate how any improvements will be maintained.
- Proposals which are required as a direct result of a planning condition, enforcement action or any other statutory consent.
- Proposals that do not have the agreement of the owner or occupier of land or property affected.
- Proposals that do not have a realistic prospect of being granted planning permission.

## **Suggested areas of expenditure**

- Proposals to improve the appearance or condition of empty commercial or retail premises.
- Proposals to improve vacant or unsightly land.
- Match funding to support funding bids for the above.
- Activities and events to support centres economic vitality.