

Kingswinford North & Wall Heath, Kingswinford South, Wordsley Community Forum

Tuesday 1st July 2014

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 municipal year 2014/15.

Background

2. 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

4. **Samaritans Brierley Hill**

An application has been received from Samaritans Brierley Hill Branch for funding of up to £4,452 for repairs to a retaining wall (£2,652) and 3 new computers (£1,800). It is understood the application has been made to all ten of the Community Forums as the work of the Organisation reaches the whole Borough. The request before you is for £445.20.

5. Funding has previously been awarded to this group on three occasions in the last three years amounting to £8,584.57
6. *I am recommending that Members consider whether a grant of up to £445.20 should be approved which is equal to one tenth share when shared equally with the other Forums*
7. Life Centre Debt Advice
Two applications have been received from Life Centre Debt Advice, High Street Stourbridge. The first application is to Norton, Pedmore and Stourbridge East, Wollaston and Stourbridge Town Community Forum. The second application is before you and the 9 other Community Forums, and is for £1,230 (£1,010 salary, £220 stationary leafleting and advertising) to assist with the appointment of a Debt Advice Manager's post. Members will be minded that there are other Organisations that provide debt advice in the Borough.
8. The Association have not applied for funding from the Council in the last three years.
9. *I am recommending that Members consider whether a grant of up to £1,230 should be approved.*
10. Dudley Christian Fellowship
An application has been received from Dudley Christian Fellowship, Salop Street, Dudley, for £5,000 towards the costs of a building extension to provide 3 additional Consultation rooms/ areas. Two quotes have been received the lowest of which is for £45,000 March 2014. The service provides Counselling to children, youth and the elderly referred from schools, GPs and other agencies. There is concern that none of the quotes have been received within the current financial year and that page 6 from their application is missing.
11. An incomplete application means this information is not available.
12. *I am recommending that Members consider deferring this application to a date when three quotes can be submitted with a complete application.*

Finance

13. Each Community Forum has received £10,000 per ward to allocate. The total sum currently available to spend is £29,148.86. This amount includes unspent balances from the previous financial year and resources allocated to the former Area Committees.

Law

14. The Localism Act 2011 gives the Council a power of general competence to act in the interests of the Community.
15. 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

16. This report complies with the Council's policies on equality and diversity. Some of the applications include facilities, which are available to children and young people.

Recommendation

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

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Mr Jeremy Butler - Lead Officer

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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.