
Halesowen Area Committee – 14th January 2010

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 table below summarises the current financial position on uncommitted/unspent capital budget, prior to the approval of bids set out in this report:-

	£
Total allocations 2000/01 to 2009/10	500,000
Less:	
- Spent to date	(422,937)
- Allocated to bidders, but not yet spent (see Appendix 2)	(45,262)
- Town Centre enhancements (£17k)	(17,000)
Available to spend on new bids/earmarks	14,801

3. The criteria against which allocations from the delegated capital budget should be considered are set out in Appendix 1. The Area Committee has previously agreed that contributions from the budget will be limited to £5,000 unless exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated. A copy of the applications referred to in this report are available to Members on request.

Cradley Then and Now

4. An application has been received from the Treasurer of Cradley Then and Now for capital funding to refurbish an air raid shelter, located on the Colley Lane School site for events and activities linking local schools and the community together. Work required includes re-roofing the shelter, creating a suitable accessible entrance and replacing an existing door, as well as indoor maintenance works with the help of volunteers.
5. They are seeking funding to the value of £2,102.00, and the cost of paint amounting to £200 will be provided by Cradley Then and Now.

6. The Area Community Renewal Officer fully supports their bid. He has informed me that the Group has been successful with a separate bid to Heritage Lottery aimed at capturing and preserving the history of Cradley.
7. The Group recently met and the Extended Schools Co-ordinator for the schools in the area attended. One of their topics is Cradley at War and one of the Year 6 curriculum subjects is World War 2. The shelter will help to make the subject more lifelike. Apart from running sessions for all the schools in the area, Cradley Then and Now are planning to open it up to attract other groups from the community.
8. **This seems a worthwhile project, which is fully supported by officer colleagues and given that the Group are willing to make a small contribution towards the costs, I am recommending a grant of up to £2,102 be approved.**

1st Coombs Wood Scout and Guide Group

9. An application has been received from the Group for funding towards vital refurbishment work to improve access and usability at the headquarters based in Gorsty Hill Road. They are seeking capital funding of up to £5,000 to install gas central heating costing around £5,500.
10. They currently have over 160 members and the headquarters is used every night of the week for meetings and events and occasionally on weekends. They are looking to attract other community groups to use the building.
11. The headquarters is a pre-fabricated concrete building that was opened in 1978. The Group have advised that a survey was undertaken in 2007 indicating that whilst it was fundamentally sound, there were a number of areas which required attention on the grounds of health and safety, security and environmental factors. The Group has recently secured a new 25 year lease for the ground for the headquarters.
12. A small capital grant of £881 was granted to the Group in 2005/06 towards the costs of repairing the entrance slope outside the headquarters.
13. They have also recently been financially assisted by St. Modwen who have contributed £5,000 towards the costs of running the building and also “gifted” the Group free usage of the club house for the next 25 years.
14. **This seems worthy of support and the Assistant Director of Children’s Services (Performance and Partnership) considers the application reasonable and genuine. I am recommending a grant of up to £5,000, subject to receipt of estimates/quotations omitted from their application confirming their contribution to this project.**

Women's Awareness Association

15. Members will recall that at the meeting on 11th November 2009, the application for funding from the Association was deferred pending further information regarding storage and insurance arrangements for the ICT and other equipment. The total cost of items equates to approximately £7,600 and are they are seeking a maximum capital grant of up to £5,000.
16. I requested a written assurance about the security of these items and that suitable insurance cover would be obtained and also confirmation from the Scouts Centre that they were happy to store some of the equipment.
17. I have received written confirmation from the Group Scout Leader (1st Halesowen Scout Group) that they do have a room reserved for the secure storage of equipment owned/used by the various non-scout group organisations who use the facilities on a regular basis. A lockable cabinet will be provided of suitable size to store the IT equipment, projector and sound equipment. However, the insurance element must be the responsibility of the Women's Awareness Association. I have not received any assurances so far from the Association about purchasing suitable insurance cover for these items and where the other equipment will be stored.
18. **Given the information received, I am recommending a grant of up to £5,000 be approved, subject to assurances regarding appropriate insurance cover for items stored at the Scout Centre and at the individual homes.**

Howley Grange Scout Group

19. Another application for funding has been received from the Howley Grange Scout Group towards funding for the renovation of the kitchen area costing £6,500. They are seeking a grant of up to £5,000.
20. Members will be aware that this Scout Group have received capital funding amounting to £5,000 towards the cost of installing security lights, shutters and an extruder alarm system, following a number of thefts and vandalism around the site. This funding was approved by the Halesowen Area Committee in January 2009 and was released in October 2009.
21. **Given that capital funds are now limited and that the Scout Group have only recently received capital funding from this Committee, I am recommending that they receive £2,500 (50%) from the available capital funds from this financial year.**

Finance

22. The total available to spend on new bids in 2009/10 is now £14,801. Recommendations in this report will result in the following allocations and leave a balance available of **£199** for the remainder of 2009/10:-

	£	Ward
<u>Recommended for approval:-</u>	<u>Up to:-</u>	
Cradley Then and Now	2,102	Cradley & Foxcote
1st Coombs Wood Scout and Guide Group	5,000	Halesowen North
Women's Awareness Association	5,000	Belle Vale
Howley Grange Scout Group	*2,500	Halesowen South
Total	14,602	

Law

23. The Committee may incur capital expenditure in respect of the various statutory functions of the Council. 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

24. 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

25. It is proposed that subject to satisfactory responses to officer queries the Area Committee :-
- (a) authorises a grant of up to **£2,102** to Cradley Then and Now towards the refurbishment costs of the air raid shelter located on the grounds of Colley Lane Primary School;
 - (b) authorises a grant of **up to £5,000** to 1st Coombs Wood Scout and Guide Group towards the costs of installing gas central heating at the headquarters;
 - (c) authorises a grant of up to **£5,000** to the **Women's Awareness Association** towards various items of IT equipment and sewing/overlocker machines, subject to assurances regarding the purchase of appropriate insurance cover for items stored at the Scout Centre or at individual homes;
 - (d) authorises a grant of up to **£2,500** to the **Howley Grange Scout Group** for funding towards the renovation of the kitchen area at their Headquarters.



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 Bill Baker
Area Liaison Officer

Contact Officer: Bill Baker – Ext 4800

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).
- f. Spending must be in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, and demonstrate Best Value.
- g. Approved allocation must normally be claimed within six months.