
Stourbridge Area Committee - 30th January 2006

Report of the Area Liaison Officer

Capital Allocations

Purpose of Report

1. To consider various matters regarding capital allocations.

Background

2. The Area Committee has an unallocated capital budget of £20,102.43 for 2005/6.
3. The Area Committee has previously agreed that contributions from the budget will be limited to £5,000 unless exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated. Spending proposals are invited from members of the Area Committee, the public, representative organisations and Council departments, and each proposal is assessed against the following criteria:-
 - (a) The allocation is 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 Plan 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 ongoing revenue cost to the Council;
 - (e) Consideration should be given to schemes which might generate external funding (i.e. using the allocation as match-funding); and
 - (f) Spending must be in accordance with the Council’s Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, and demonstrate Best Value.
 - (g) Approved allocations must normally be claimed within six months.

4. Copies of the applications referred to in this report are available to Members on request.

Application by the Neighbourhood Manager for Enville Street and Steppingstones

5. The Neighbourhood Manager for Enville Street and Steppingstones submitted an application that was considered by the Area Committee at its meeting on the 12th September 2005. The application was for a capital allocation of £5,000 towards the cost of supplying and fitting 15 additional double sockets in the Community Room at the Beauty Bank Primary School, and to provide an internet link to the computers to enable residents and their children to participate in more advanced and alternative IT training courses which will improve basic skills and knowledge. The latter will enable users to become ready to apply for jobs with added confidence. Two people have already successfully obtained jobs as a direct result of the current base of training.
6. The total cost of the project is £23,074. The balance of funding has been secured from other bodies, particularly Stourbridge College who have supplied 12 computers.
7. This application appears to satisfy the criteria set out in paragraph 3 above.
8. When this matter was considered by the Area Committee in September, members resolved to defer a decision until the future of Beauty Bank Primary School had been determined under the Primary School Review.
9. The published proposals recently approved by the Cabinet are that Beauty Bank Primary School will be closed with effect from August 2006, but that its buildings and site will remain open as an annexe of Greenfield Primary School for an initial period before consolidation on a single site. These proposals will be considered in January 2006 by the Schools Organisation Committee who will make the final decision on the future of the School.

Application by Age Concern Stourbridge

10. Age Concern Stourbridge occupy the Stevens Centre at the rear of the Mary Stevens Hospice, Hagley Road, Oldswinford.
11. Age Concern has submitted an application for a capital allocation of up to £5,000 to enable them to provide a Flotex floor covering for the Day Care Lounge Room. On balance, this could be regarded as capital expenditure, and the application appears to satisfy the criteria set out in paragraph 3 above.

Applications previously approved for Stourbridge Radio Group and St. Thomas's Parochial Church Council

12. At the June 2005 meeting of the Area Committee, capital allocations of £5,000 were awarded to Stourbridge Radio Group for the purchase of audio and transmission equipment, and St. Thomas's Parochial Church Council for the development of a Community Garden in Church grounds.

13. Both allocations were subject to the usual condition that they must be claimed within six months. However, these are significant projects which have required detailed planning and, in the case of Stourbridge Radio, was dependent upon an award of a community radio licence which was only approved in the Autumn 2005.
14. In the circumstances, the Area Committee is asked to consider extending the period for claiming both allocations to the 31st March 2006.

Finance

15. The Area Committee's delegated budget allocation is funded by the Council's mainstream capital resources. The current position with regard to available resources for 2005/6 is set out in paragraph 2.1 of this report.

Law


16. Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000, enables the Council to do any thing which it considers is likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well being of the Borough or any part of it.

Equality Impact

17. This report complies fully with the Council's policies on equal opportunities and diversity.

Recommendation

18. It is recommended that the Area Committee consider the applications submitted by the Neighbourhood Manager for Enville Street and Steppingstones, and Age Concern Stourbridge, and the application for an extension requested by the Stourbridge Radio Group and St. Thomas's Parochial Church Council to claim their capital allocation.



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List of Background Papers

1. Application submitted by the Neighbourhood Manager for Enville Street and Steppingstones.
2. Application submitted by Age Concern Stourbridge.
3. Correspondence with the Stourbridge Radio Group and St. Thomas's Parochial Church Council.