

Stourbridge Area Committee - 19th November 2007

Report of the Area Liaison Officer

Capital Allocations

Purpose of Report

1. To consider 3 applications for a capital allocation.

Background

2. The Area Committee has an unallocated capital budget of £20,711.53 for 2007/8.
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 directorates, 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);
 - (f) Spending must be in accordance with the Council’s Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, and demonstrate Best Value; and
 - (g) Approved allocations must normally be claimed within six months.

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

Application by the Caledonia Residents' Association

5. An application has been submitted by the Caledonia Residents' Association who are based at the Thorns Community College, Stockwell Avenue, in the Lye and Wollescote ward.
6. The aims of the Association include the improvements of the quality of life for all residents and protecting and enhancing the character, amenities and resources of the area.
7. The application is for an allocation of £4,535 to renovate and make safe a wall separating two levels of ground on the estate including the replacements of the original steps, adding a new disability ramp and handrail, and flagstoning the base of the wall. In addition the Association plans to renovate and make safe five sets of paved steps leading onto residential pathways including the provision of new safety handrails.
8. "Public" areas of the Caledonia estate have not been adopted by the Council and, therefore, their repair and maintenance are a private responsibility.
9. The total cost of this work is £4,735 and the balance of £200 would be provided from the funds of the Association. The latest accounts for the Association indicate that they have available funds of £365.
10. In submitting their application the Association state that the project will enable local people and other members of the public to move safely between houses and garage areas; improve the built environment especially for wheelchair and pushchair users; and improve the aesthetics of the area thereby discouraging anti-social behaviour.
11. In view of the fact that these areas are not private but are available for use by the public generally members may consider that the criteria set out in paragraph 3 above are satisfied in this case.

Application by Lye Cricket Club

12. An application for an allocation has been submitted by Lye Cricket Club, Stourbridge Road, Lye.
13. The old wooden pavilion at the Cricket Club was destroyed by fire on the 30th August 2007. The Club intend to replace it with a new brick pavilion at an estimated cost of £245,000. In addition to this application the Club is exploring a number of other possible funding opportunities.
14. The application is for a capital allocation of £5,000 towards the cost of this project but the Club have asked the Committee to consider awarding a higher level of grant particularly as the Club will be celebrating its 150th Anniversary next year.

Ideally the Club would like to open the new pavilion by August 2008, the end of the cricket season during their 150th Anniversary Year.

15. In the year ending 30th September 2006 the Club made a loss of just over £1,000 and had net current assets of just under £5,000.
16. This application appears to satisfy the criteria set out in paragraph 3 above.
17. Lye Cricket Club have had 3 previous allocations totalling £14,787 in 2003, 2006 and 2007 for new showers and changing rooms, repair of an artificial wicket and a mower.

Application by Holy Trinity Church, Amblecote

18. An application has been submitted by Councillor Liz Walker on behalf of Holy Trinity Church in Amblecote.
19. The application is for a capital allocation of £5,000 for the renovation of the Church Hall principally including the replacement of 13 windows in the hall, kitchen and toilet. The total cost of this work is £5,116 and the balance of £116 will be paid from Church funds.
20. The Church Hall is used for outreach and mission work with children and young people and various community organisations are encouraged to use the facility. For example, the hall is used by groups of young dancers and by students of Ruskin College who use the facility as a studio for their young and vulnerable students.
21. Details of the most recently audited accounts for the Church Hall will be reported verbally at the meeting.
22. This application appears to satisfy the criteria set out in paragraph 3 above.

Finance

23. 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 2007/8 is set out in paragraph 2 of this report.

Law

24. 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

25. This report complies fully with the Council's policies on equality and diversity. The project submitted by the Caledonia Residents' Association will particularly assist people with disabilities and parents with young children.

26. Lye Cricket Club has a successful Youth Development Programme which has resulted in half of the Club's players being aged under 21.
27. Many of the activities at Amblecote Church Hall focus upon children and young people.

Recommendation

28. It is recommended that the Area Committee consider the application submitted by the Caledonia Residents' Association, Lye Cricket Club and Amblecote Church Hall.

John Polychronakis

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List of Background Papers

1. Application submitted by the Caledonia Residents Association
2. Application submitted by Lye Cricket Club
3. Application submitted by Amblecote Church Hall