

AGENDA ITEM NO 16

STOURBRIDGE AREA COMMITTEE: 20TH JUNE 2005

CAPITAL ALLOCATIONS

REPORT OF THE AREA LIAISON OFFICER

1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 To consider five applications for capital allocations.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1. The Area Committee has an unallocated capital budget of £56,671.41 for 2005/6.

2.2. 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.

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

2.4. Application by Friends of Wollescote Park

2.4.1 The Friends of Wollescote Park was set up to provide a community focus for individuals, groups and organisations, who have an interest in the betterment of Wollescote Park. The Constitution of the Group states that they are established to promote community harmony without distinction of age, race, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

2.4.2 The Friends wish to set up a newsletter on a regular basis and print A3 size posters to publicise Wollescote Park and activities taking place within the Park. This will initially be for the benefit of the residents in Lye, Wollescote and Pedmore, including schools and libraries.

2.4.3 The application puts forward two options. First, the following equipment could be purchased at a total cost of £1,797.75 (including VAT):-

- HP Desk Jet 1220
- Cartridges
- HP Laser 3700 DN Printer
- Cartridges

If this is not acceptable to the Committee, an alternative lower cost option would be to purchase an OKI Printer for £330 as opposed to the HP Laser Printer costing £885, thereby saving £555 plus VAT.

2.4.4 However, the benefit of the HP Laser Printer is that it has the ability to print both sides automatically, the printing is speedier and the cost of running is cheaper.

2.4.5 The Friends has no available resource to fund this project.

2.4.6 This application appears to satisfy the criteria referred to in paragraph 2.2 above.

2.5. Application by the Norton St. Michael's Scout Group

2.5.1. The Norton St. Michael's Scout Group is based at Kempton Way, Norton, Stourbridge.

2.5.2. The application is for the purchase of replacement camp cooking equipment. The existing equipment is either 20 years old or has previously been stolen. The cost of replacement is £550 and this is the amount applied for.

2.5.3. The latest accounts for the Scout Group for 2004 shows a balance of just under £4,000.

2.5.4. The Scout Group was awarded a capital allocation of £5,000 in March 2005 towards the cost of constructing a purpose-built brick building.

2.5.5. This application appears to satisfy the criteria referred to in paragraph 2.2 above.

2.6. Application by St. Thomas's Parochial Church Council

- 2.6.1. St. Thomas's Church is located in Market Street, Stourbridge.
- 2.6.2. The Parochial Church Council administers the day-to-day affairs and finance of the Parish Church of St. Thomas, including the care of its buildings and grounds.
- 2.6.3. The applicant has spent over £1,000 in preparing a scheme to upgrade the Church grounds to create a community garden open and accessible to all. The Church grounds are currently used by all ages and sections of the community but there is a lack of seating and litter bins and full disabled access and circulation is difficult. The Church Council is also faced with the enormous financial burden of maintaining and restoring a Grade I Listed Building which is acknowledged to be one of the finest Georgian churches outside London.
- 2.6.4. The total cost of the community garden project is £54,755 (including VAT) and the application is for £5,000. The applicant has already secured £5,000 from "Awards For All" and anticipates £25,000 from "Living Spaces". An application has also been submitted to the Stevens Trust, and it is planned that the balance will be funded by grants from other charitable bodies.
- 2.6.5. This application appears to satisfy the criteria set out in paragraph 2.2 above but, in line with previous decisions, if the application is approved, no grant will be paid until we are satisfied that the balance of funding has been secured.

2.7 Application by Stourbridge in Bloom

- 2.7.1 An application has been submitted by the organisers of Stourbridge in Bloom.
- 2.7.2 The application is for £5,000 towards the total cost of £10,000 for the purchase of automatic watering systems and planters. The balance of funding will be raised through local businesses sponsorship.
- 2.7.3 Stourbridge has been entered into the Britain in Bloom awards and the judges will be visiting Stourbridge in early July.
- 2.7.4 In view of the urgency of this matter and the importance to the town of the Britain in Bloom awards, in consultation with the Chairman I have approved the application and retrospective confirmation is now requested from the Committee.
- 2.7.5 The application satisfies the criteria referred to in paragraph 2.2 above.

2.8 Application by Stourbridge Radio Group

- 2.8.1 An application has been submitted by Stourbridge Radio Group who are a not-for-profit organisation (awaiting incorporation/charitable status) that intend to set up a community radio station to broadcast to a five kilometre (3.1 mile) radius from Stourbridge Town Centre.

- 2.8.2 If the Stourbridge Radio Group is awarded a community radio licence, the expenditure prior to the radio station's launch will be in the region of £60,000. Following this they expect the outgoings for the first year of broadcasting to be around £60,000 with a subsequent annual expenditure of approximately £50,000.
- 2.8.3 The application is for a capital allocation of £5,000 towards the cost of purchasing audio and transmission equipment that will be used to provide a community radio station. The total cost of the equipment is £15,000 and the balance of funding is the subject of other applications to the Brierley Hill Area Committee, "Awards for All West Midlands", The Stevens Trust and the Sandwell Council of Voluntary Organisations.
- 2.8.4 This application satisfies the criteria referred to in paragraph 2.2 above. However, in line with previous decisions, if the application is approved, no grant will be paid until we are satisfied that the balance of funding has been secured and, in addition, the grant should not be payable until the Stourbridge Radio Group have been granted a community radio licence.

3.0 PROPOSAL

- 3.1. It is proposed that the Area Committee considers the applications submitted by The Friends of Wollescote Park, The Norton St. Michael's Scout Group, St. Thomas's Parochial Church Council and the Stourbridge Radio Group.
- 3.2. It is proposed that the Area Committee affirms the decision of the Area Liaison Officer, in consultation with the Chairman, to approve a capital allocation of £5,000 to Stourbridge in Bloom for the purchase of automatic watering systems and planters.

4.0 FINANCE

- 4.1. 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.

5. LAW

- 5.1. 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.

6.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

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

7.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1. It is recommended that the Area Committee considers the application submitted by The Friends of Wollescote Park, The Norton St. Michael's Scout Group, St. Thomas's Parochial Church Council and the Stourbridge Radio Group.
- 7.2 It is recommended that the Area Committee affirms the decision of the Area Liaison Officer, in consultation with the Chairman, to approve a capital allocation of £5,000 to Stourbridge in Bloom for the purchase of automatic watering systems and planters.

John Polychronakis

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J. POLYCHRONAKIS
AREA LIAISON OFFICER

Contact Officer: John Polychronakis, Ext: 5300.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Application submitted by The Friends of Wollescote Park
2. Application submitted by The Norton St. Michael's Scout Group
3. Application submitted by St. Thomas's Parochial Church Council
4. Application by Stourbridge in Bloom
5. Application by Stourbridge Radio Group