

Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council

5th November 2014 - Norton/Pedmore and Stourbridge East/Wollaston and Stourbridge Town Centre Community Forum

Report of the Lead Officer

Community Forum - Love Your Local Community Funding

Purpose of Report

1. To consider the allocation of expenditure from the Community Forum Funding budget for the 2014/15 year.

Background

2. The ten 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. A copy of the application/s referred to in this report, appendix 2 has been e-mailed to Members prior to the meeting.

Applications for consideration at this meeting:

Stourbridge Choir & Orchestra

4. Funding of £3000 is requested to pay for a World War 1 commemorative concert in November. The monies would be used to pay for the hire of a venue, performance fees and a specially commissioned musical piece. It would also cover publicity, flags and bunting and a number of projects supporting the concert. No quotes have been submitted but a list of what the grant would pay for and an explanation that most of the items are expenses has been provided. A charge of up to £10 will be made for tickets. It is intended that charitable donations will be made to the Earl Haig Fund and local military charities.
5. The Choir & Orchestra have not received any funding from the council's community forums or area committees in the last three years nor do they receive any grant aid / funding from the council or any other sources. They do, however, receive non-financial support through the use of council premises for rehearsals. Other income comes from members' subscriptions.
6. The choir and orchestra consist of amateur singers and players and perform three concerts a year.

The Friends of Wollescote Park

7. Funding of £5000 is requested to contribute to a mock gateway feature constructed by local artist Luke Perry. It is intended that the feature will reflect the history of the local area and be a focal entrance point attracting people to the park. There has been engagement with the local community and positive feedback has been received on their proposals. This application was previously discussed at our March meeting but was withdrawn at the applicant's request.
8. The friends of Wollescote Park have already secured £5000 funding from the Amblecote, Cradley and Wollescote and Lye and Stourbridge North forum and have raised £1500 from open days and fun days at the park. They will also be applying for funding from the Stevens Trust towards a total project cost of £24,000 (max).
9. The aim of the friends of Wollescote Park is to increase the use of the park, making it a better and more beautiful place that people want to visit.

Lye Community Centre

10. Funding of £2500 (check with Amanda Grove) is requested to purchase 20 folding tables and 50 chairs, various IT and office accessories, and decorating materials. This will replace older equipment which is difficult to handle and will be available to the community to use / hire to support both the centre's and private activities. It is intended that the labour required to decorate the centre will be provided by Probation Services free of charge. Two quotes have been provided for the table and chairs and various IT and office accessories. No quotes for decorating materials have been provided.
11. Lye Community Centre have not received any funding from the council's community forums or area committees in the last three years. This application has also been submitted to the Amblecote, Cradley & Wollescote, Lye & Stourbridge North community forum for the remaining monies. The Lye Community Centre do, however, receive non- financial support from Dudley Council through the use of a DMBC building and they also retain the income from the use of the centre.
12. The aims and objectives of the organisation are to work with statutory and other voluntary agencies to advance education, relieve poverty and to sickness and to provide facilities to support social and the health and well being of local residents. The centre is used by a wide range of organisations and individuals.

Dudley MBC – Environmental Management Division

13. Funding of £2324.53 is requested for the provision of Christmas trees within the community forum area – Stourbridge - Chequers Public House and Oldswinford Cross. The application is for the costs to purchase, erect and remove the trees, together with associated energy costs for lighting. The total cost of the project is £5,346.35 and the additional costs associated with the installation and maintenance of the tree lights will be met from within Environmental Management's existing budgets.

14. Funding from the council's community forums and area committees has previously been received and for this year – as in previous years - funding requests have been made to the 9 other community forums for Christmas tree provision in their areas.
15. The funding of Christmas trees will help to fulfil a number of Council priorities by promoting the sense of community value and worth.

Dudley Duke of Edinburgh Award Association

16. Funding of £500 is requested from each of the community forums to train leaders to gain a NGB qualification enabling the group to increase the number of leaders allowing more young people to access the award and to ensure that the leaders qualification meets the requirements of the operating authority guidelines. The overall cost of the training is £5000 with the remainder of the cost being requested from the 9 other community forums. Three quotes have been provided.
17. The aim of the Dudley Duke of Edinburgh Association is to support volunteer leaders to deliver the Duke of Edinburgh Award in partnership with the local operating authority enabling young people from all areas and background across Dudley to access the award and develop their personal development.
18. Ward Members have been circulated with details of the applications prior to the forum.

Finance

19. It is proposed that each Community Forum will receive £10,000 per ward to allocate each financial year.
20. The total sum currently available to spend across all wards is: £17,339.92.
21. This amount includes unspent balances for all three wards within the forum area.
22. Additional one off funding of £16,736.10 (£5578.70 per ward) from the High Street Innovation / Empty Shops Grant Funding has been made available for the 2014/15 financial year for projects which improve the appearance or economic vitality of an area, with preference to the Borough's centres and High Streets.

Law

22. Pursuant to Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 the Council has the general power of competence to do anything that individuals generally may do.
23. 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 function.

Equality Impact

24. 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

25. That the Forum members consider the application/s referred to in this report and make recommendations to the Director of Corporate Resources on each individual application.

Andrew Leigh

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Andrew Leigh
Head of Housing Strategy & Development

Contact Officer: Andrew Leigh
Telephone: 01384 815007
Email: andrew.leigh@dudley.gov.uk

List of Background Papers

Appendix 1 – Corporate guidelines for considering funding applications

Appendix 2 - The application forms on which this report is based have been emailed to Members prior to the meeting but contain exempt information under terms of part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

Community Forums Guidelines for funding applications

Every funding application will be considered on its own individual merits by community forum elected members, who will take into account the funding available and make recommendations on each application to the Council's Director of Corporate Resources.

Applications will be considered only from voluntary and community organisations that are based in the Dudley borough. Applications should be submitted through a parent organisation e.g. a sports club rather than an individual team within a club.

Applications are to be submitted at least 21 days before a community forum meeting in order to be considered at that meeting. Later applications will be considered at the next available forum meeting. Elected members can make recommendations on genuinely urgent applications between forum meetings.

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.

All expenditure must be in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, be subject to the Council's legal powers and demonstrate good value for money. Quotations must be provided in line with the Council's procedure rules. Details are set out in the application form.

Guidelines for considering applications

The following guidelines are to assist elected members in considering funding applications. Individual community forums reserve the right to make exceptions to these guidelines depending on the circumstances of each individual application.

1. Funding 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 which should normally be funded by the organisation itself.)
2. Schemes should contribute to the aims of the Community Strategy and not conflict with Council policy. 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.

3. 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.
4. Schemes should not result in any on-going revenue costs that the organisation cannot fund from its own resources e.g. running costs or repair and maintenance of buildings and equipment.
5. 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.
6. Applications will not normally be considered from organisations who have previously received funding from a community forum (or former area committee) within the previous three years.
7. Representatives of organisations submitting applications are encouraged to attend the forum meeting and to speak if they wish in support of their applications.
8. Once an application has been approved, it will be on the condition that the funding is spent within nine months, otherwise the funding will be returned to the Council. A fresh application would need to be submitted and approved in order for the funding to be released.
9. In appropriate circumstances, funding may be given on condition that certain items of equipment purchased with the funding are made available for use by other organisations.

High Street Innovation/Empty Shops Grant Funding Applications

10. One-off funding has been made available in the 2014/15 financial year for projects which improve the appearance or economic vitality of an area, with preference to the Borough's Centres and High Streets.
11. The Council will decide which source of funding successful applications will use, but as guidance for applicants High Street Innovation/Empty Shops Grant funding will be considered for the following:-

Eligible proposals

- Proposals will be considered either for Capital or Revenue activities.
- Proposals of up to £5,000 in value (including VAT where applicable).
- Proposals are preferred for projects within the Borough's defined Principal or Local Centres, but applications may be considered in any location where benefits to the local economy or environment may be demonstrated.
- Proposals that show a partnership approach (between for example business and the Community will be preferred).

Ineligible proposals

- Proposals which create ongoing revenue costs for the Council. Proposals must demonstrate how any improvements will be maintained.
- Proposals which are required as a direct result of a planning condition, enforcement action or any other statutory consent.
- Proposals that do not have the agreement of the owner or occupier of land or property affected.
- Proposals that do not have a realistic prospect of being granted planning permission.

Suggested areas of expenditure

- Proposals to improve the appearance or condition of empty commercial or retail premises.
- Proposals to improve vacant or unsightly land.
- Match funding to support funding bids for the above.
- Activities and events to support centres economic vitality.