

Halesowen Area Committee – 2nd July 2008

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 Council is being recommended to agree a further capital allocation of £50,000 for the Area Committee for the financial year 2008/09.
3. Together with a total of just over £10,000 from previous year's allocations, the total amount available for allocation in 2008/09 is £60,000.
4. There is also a total of £48,000 earmarked in previous years for Town Centre Enhancements, Youth Facilities, Shell Corner Neighbourhood Shop, but not yet actually committed.
5. It has been the Committee's practice to delegate authority to me, in consultation with the Chairman and a representative from the Opposition Group, to agree requests from Community and Voluntary Groups for small grants, and this arrangement has worked well. I am recommending it should continue in 2008/09.
6. The Committee has previously agreed that action should be taken to promote the availability of funding by, for example:-
 - (a) issuing media releases;
 - (b) direct mailing to a wide range of Community and Voluntary Groups, Schools and other organisations in the area;

and I am suggesting that similar action is taken for the coming year.

7. The criteria against which allocations from the delegated capital budget should be considered are set out in the Appendix. 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.

Heritage Boards

8. The Committee may recall that at the meeting held on 6th September 2007, a sum of £5,000 was earmarked for heritage boards. Two applications were subsequently received from the Lye and Wollescote Historical Society and the Cradley Then and Now Historical Society, requesting a grant of £2,000 each. After taking into account the costs of obtaining the relevant planning permissions, cheques amounting to £1,910 have now been released, which leaves us £1,000 from the earmarked £5,000.

Walton Allotment Association

9. The Association's main aim is to promote an interest in gardening and horticulture through encouraging members to share advice and practical help and providing opportunities for spreading a wider understanding of the social and health benefits of gardening.
10. The Association has applied for funding for a Mantis 4 Stroke Garden Cultivator amounting to £350.00.
11. Having consulted with colleagues, who support the application, I have, in consultation with the Chairman and Opposition Spokesperson, approved a grant of £350.00.

Friends of Homer Hill Park

12. An application has been received from the Friends of the Park for funding of a Business Inkjet printer costing just under £634.00.
13. The main aim of the Friends of Homer Hill Park is to consult with the community and to improve the Park and its facilities for the benefit of all age ranges.
14. The approval of this grant by the Committee would enable the organisation to produce large posters, newsletters and leaflets for displaying in local shops, the library etc to attract new members and promote the use of the Park as well as improve the day to day running and management of the organisation.
15. I have, therefore, in consultation with the Chairman, approved them a grant of £634.00.

Halesowen/Dudley Yemeni Community Association

16. The Association has requested funding amounting to £6,000 for funding to improve the appearance of the Yemeni Centre at Highfield Lane, both internally and externally, which currently is in a poor state of repair.
17. I have consulted with colleagues, who fully support their application and have confirmed that the new committee at the Association are working hard to make the service more effective and inclusive.
18. I am, therefore, recommending a grant of £6,000 be approved.

West Midlands Fire Service

19. West Midlands Fire Service has submitted an application to each of the five Area Committees.

20. The request is for funding for personal protective equipment, drill yard equipment and a PA system amounting to £8,065. The request is that the cost be divided across the five Area Committees and amounts to £1,613 per Area Committee.
21. The West Midlands Fire Service has developed youth facilities for the disadvantaged and young offenders in Birmingham, which has proved extremely successful and has led to a long waiting list for courses. They now wish to launch a similar scheme in Dudley, by using the three stations and local volunteers.
22. The F.I.R.E. project is designed as a means of increasing self-esteem, communication and social skills in a disciplined environment and is accredited by the Open College Network, which means that the young people attending and completing the course will receive a qualification. The course is a mixture of classroom based interaction and practical fire-fighting training exercises working on the Fire Station drill yard.
23. They have secured £30,000 from Children and Young Peoples Group and have agreed to match the total sum allocated from the five Area Committees (£8,065).
24. I believe this is a worthwhile venture and am recommending a grant of £1,613 be approved, subject to similar amounts being approved from the other four Area Committees.

Access in Dudley

25. Access in Dudley, a group whose aims are to improve people's access to buildings, services and information in the Councils area by helping service providers make their service available to all members of the community and to raise public awareness in all matters relating to people with disabilities, have applied for funding of £830 for the purchase of a new laptop computer and printer. The Group currently receives an annual revenue grant of £1,000 towards running costs from the Directorate of Urban Environment for assistance and advice in the planning process.
26. Although the Group's work covers the whole of the Borough, the application has been referred to me because the Group is based in Halesowen and the request for funding is relatively small. Having consulted colleagues, I am recommending the Committee approves a grant of £830.00

Lye and Wollescote United Communities

27. An application has been submitted by the Lye and Wollescote United Communities Group. The group has been developed from members of the former "Lye Carnival" group, local friends of the parks groups, local individuals and service providers. The aim of the group is to re-establish the Lye Carnival to be held at Stevens Park, Wollescote, on the 17th August 2008, and to hold at least one other community event later in the year. As these events serve residents in wards of both Stourbridge and Halesowen, they have submitted an application to the Halesowen and Stourbridge Area Committees.
28. The application is for a capital allocation of £299-88 to purchase a party/event tent which is required for many purposes such as shade, shelter, changing, various activities and as a focal point for the organisers of the event. The tent will be also available for use by other local groups at a nominal cost in order to cover damage.

29. As a new organisation, the group do not have completed accounts for this year but they have produced the 2007 accounts for the Lye Carnival which made a small surplus of £15-00.

30. I believe this is a worthwhile venture and am recommending a grant of £300.00 be approved, subject to a similar amount being approved by the Stourbridge Area Committee.

Halesowen Youth Centre

31. An application has been received from the Youth Centre for funding to purchase computer room furniture and a video conference screen and a pool table and table tennis table for the main hall, amounting to £2,000.

32. The purchase of these items will further provide opportunities for young people to learn new skills, gain confidence, stay safe, socialise and have fun. I am, therefore, recommending a grant of £2,000 for these items.

33. Applications for funding have also been received from the following organisations, where for the reasons given, it has not been possible, at this stage, to make a recommendation:-

- (a) Arab Women's and Children's Community Association – whose aim is to promote any charitable purpose for the benefit of the community in Colley Gate and surrounding areas and in particular, but not exclusively, the Arab Women's community, by the advancement of education, the relief of poverty and sickness, the preservation and protection of good health and the provision of facilities for recreation and other leisure-time occupation in the interests of social welfare and with the object of improving the conditions of life of the said community, have requested just under £2,000 for a number of items. As this Group is not known to the Council, I have asked for further information. This request could be dealt with under delegated authority.
- (b) Halesowen Community Rangers – whose aims are to bring young people from different backgrounds and communities in the Halesowen area, together to combat racism, foster integration, build friendships and promote diversity through a football based fitness and training programme and also increase well being, better health, build confidence, self esteem, have applied for £2,400 to purchase training equipment, a laptop and camera. The Group have only recently been formed and I have asked for further information and suggested that they may wish to apply for funding to both Awards for All or the Football Foundation who may be able to help with funding for items which do not meet the Area Committee's funding criteria.
- (c) Cradley Town Cobras – A request for funding has been received to assist with the setting up of a new Under 8's football team. Again, I have asked for further information and since part of the request relates to revenue funding, I have also suggested that they may also wish to apply for funding from Awards for All or the Football Foundation.
- (d) Cradley Town Football Club – A request for funding has been received towards the building of a disabled toilet in the interests of the local community and health and safety amounting to £4,920. I have made arrangements to visit the site and will report back to the next meeting with my findings.

Finance

34. The total available for distribution in 2008/09 is £60,000. Recommendations in this report will result in the following allocations:-

	£	Ward
<u>Recommended for approval:-</u>		
Halesowen/Dudley Yemeni Community Association	6,000	Belle Vale
West Midlands Fire Service	1,613	All Wards
Access in Dudley	830	Halesowen South
Lye and Wollescote United Communities Group	300	Cradley and Foxcote
Halesowen Youth Centre	2,000	Belle Vale
<u>Grants approved through delegated arrangements:-</u>		
Walton Allotment Association	350	Belle Vale
Friends of Homer Hill Park	634	Cradley and Foxcote
Total	11,727	

Law

35. The Committee may incur capital expenditure in respect of the various statutory functions of the Council.
36. 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

37. 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

38. It is proposed that the Area Committee:-
- notes that a total of £60,000 is available for distribution in 2008/09;
 - authorises the Lead Officer to promote the availability of funding;
 - notes the allocations released to Lye and Wollescote Historical Society and also Cradley Then and Now Historical Society amounting to £2,000 each, including the costs of planning permission;
 - notes the approval of a grant of £350 to Walton Allotment Association (Halesowen) towards a Mantis 4 Stroke Garden Cultivator;

- (e) notes the approval of a grant of £634 to Friends of Homer Hill Park towards the cost of a new Business Inkjet printer;
- (f) approves a grant of £6,000 to Halesowen/Dudley Yemeni Community Association for funding to improve the appearance of the Yemeni Centre at Highfield Lane, both internally and externally, which currently is in a poor state of repair;
- (g) approves a grant of £1,613 to the West Midlands Fire Service, towards their F.I.R.E. project courses, subject to a similar amount being approved by the other four Area Committees;
- (i) approves a grant of £830 to Access in Dudley towards the purchase of a laptop and printer;
- (j) approves a grant of £300 to Lye and Wollescote United Communities Group towards the purchase of a tent, subject to a similar amount being approved by the Stourbridge Area Committee;
- (k) approves a grant of £2,000 to Halesowen Youth Centre to purchase furniture, a video conference screen, pool table and table tennis table for use at the Centre;
- (l) notes the actions detailed in paragraph 33 and authorises the release of funds under delegated authority, subject to satisfactory information being received.



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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*).