

Halesowen Area Committee – 1st July 2009

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. At the last Committee, I was asked to produce details of the current financial position on uncommitted/unspent capital budget. Prior to the approval of bids referred to in this report, the table below summarises that position:-

	£
Total allocations 2000/01 to 2008/09	450,000
Less:	
- Spent to date	(361,703)
- Allocated to bidders, but not yet spent	(42,551)
- Earmarked for Shell Corner (£20k); Town Centre enhancements (£17k); Youth Provision (£1k)	(38,341)
Sub-Total	<u>7,405</u>
Available from a review of unspent allocations (see Appendix 2)	14,513
New Capital allocation for 2009/10 *	50,000
Available to spend on new bids/earmarks	<u>71,918</u>

Note * - The Council is being recommended to agree a further capital allocation of £50,000 for 2009/10. However, at this point, that has not been agreed.

I shall bring an updated statement to each future meeting.

3. 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 (up to maximum £2,000) and this arrangement has worked well. I am recommending it should continue in 2009/10.
4. 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.

- 5. The criteria against which allocations from the delegated capital budget should be considered are set out in Appendix 1. 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.

Loaves 'n' Fishes

- 6. An application for capital funding has been received from Loaves 'n' Fishes, which is a Christian, non-judgemental organisation, **based in Sandwell**, who collect unwanted items of furniture and other household items and deliver them to people re-establishing their homes following such things as domestic violence. They advise that half of the furniture donations are to Halesowen residents through Halesowen Social Services, Children's Services and Halesowen Refuge and that last year they made 292 collections and 206 deliveries to and the forecast figures for this year are higher. The Group are not seeking funding from any other source or from Sandwell MBC.
- 7. They have requested funding towards a replacement delivery van to the value of £5,000.
- 8. **Having consulted with colleagues, I am recommending a grant, but only 50% of the costs (i.e. up to £2,500) and suggest they approach Sandwell MBC for support too, subject to a suitable van being identified.**

Huntingtree Senior's Leisure Centre

- 9. The Centre have requested funding to have electric water heaters installed in the toilet areas and also the kitchen, as they currently are without hot water. The cost of installation will be around £737.50.
- 10. **I have, using delegated authority, in consultation with the Chairman and Opposition Spokesperson, approved the Centre a grant of up to £737.50.**

Overend Methodist Mission

- 11. We have received an application from Overend Methodist Mission for funding towards the cost of replacement chairs and hanging trolleys for use in the Church Hall, regularly used by a Playgroup, Rainbows, Guides, Youth Club, Luncheon Club and a Darby and Joan Group, as well as being used for local community events and church gatherings. The cost of these items is approximately £2,878.

12. Members may recall that we have previously supported this Group in 2004/05, where £3,000 was contributed towards a major scheme of works and again in 2007/08 where £1,000 was allocated for games such as air hockey for use in the Youth Club.
13. **Given that the Committee has provided support in the past and that no other funding has been sought, having consulted colleagues, who support this application, I am recommending a grant of 50% (i.e. up to £1,439) be approved.**

Halesowen Cycling Club

14. An application has been received from Halesowen Cycling Club, amounting to £3,000 towards a Trackside Shelter. They currently have approximately 200 members and the addition of a Trackside Shelter would enable riders to rest in between rides, away from the elements. It would also benefit the Athletic membership of the Club, who train on the adjacent running track.
15. The Club are an accredited Go-Ride organisation which is British Cycling's Club Development Programme, aimed at improving both young riders and clubs. Go-Ride focuses on volunteers and young members, improving coaching standards and increasing the number of young riders with access to coaching activities.
16. The Club also provides pathways for more talented riders to progress to the elite level and Club members are involved in British Cycling Olympic programmes.
17. **Having consulted with colleagues, who support this application and given that no other source of funding has been sought, I am recommending a grant of up to £1,500 (i.e. 50%) be approved.**

Hurst Green Methodist Church

18. An application has been received from the Church towards the cost of providing a ramp to the front entrance of the premises for use by wheelchair users and people of all ages with disabilities, amounting to £5,000.
19. This forms part of a refurbishing scheme to be undertaken in Spring 2009. The internal works include removal of fixed pews and replacement with chairs, new more energy efficient and brighter lighting, a new sound system including 'T' loop and the installation of a performance platform. The interior works are estimated at almost £23,000 including VAT. The intended outcome is to adapt an existing Sunday only worship area into a flexible hall suitable for concerts, plays and other community activities.
20. **The Church has been fundraising since completion of the new kitchen and rear hall in 2006 (of which £4,000 was allocated by this Committee) and total funds raised to date amount to £19,211. The Methodist Church Birmingham District have awarded a grant of £5,000 and therefore, with the costs of the interior works and requirement for wheelchair access costs estimated to be around**

£6,440 plus VAT, there is a shortfall of just over £6,200.

21. **Having consulted with colleagues who support the application and given other funding has been sought, I am recommending a grant of up to £5,000 be approved.**

Caslon Parent and Toddler Group

22. An application has been received for funding amounting to £5,000, towards the cost of providing a secure covered area for storage of prams and buggies at both Caslon and Colley Lane Primary Schools, for use by the Toddler Group.
23. Due to the expanding Toddler Group, they have been experiencing difficulty with secure parking of buggies and under health and safety regulations, they are required to provide secure storage.
24. **Having consulted with colleagues who support their application and given no other funding has been sought, I am recommending a grant of up to £2,500 be approved (i.e. 50%).**

Caslon Community Partnership Group

25. An application for funding has been received from Caslon Community Partnership Group, for funding towards the cost of fencing off the southern perimeter of the Caslon School Garden, at the rear of Beeches View Avenue, to protect the interests of residents backing on to the site.
26. The “Community Garden Project” is something that has evolved as an idea from the school Green Team, who support the children with their own school garden. The Council land adjoining the school garden is derelict and completely overgrown and they wish to convert this into a community garden with the help of local people, who will maintain it. The patch of land is fenced off on three sides by the School, Cradley Town Football Club and the properties on Beeches View Avenue. Consultation with and support from these residents is essential to progress the project and security fencing would protect the site from misuse.
27. The Partnership Group have already commissioned an ecological survey and are ready to proceed to planning following consultation with the residents.
28. **The total estimated cost of these proposals equates to around £12,000 and, having consulted with colleagues who support this application, and given no other funding has been sought, I am recommending a grant of up to £2,500 (i.e. 50%) be approved, subject to planning permission for development of the site and funding for the balance required to be identified.**

Abbey Road Allotment Association

29. We have received an application for capital funding from the Association amounting to £5,200 towards the costs of providing allotments for use by wheelchair users and walking disabled and the funding requested would be for the conversion of the toilet for the disabled, the installation of a water supply, timber for the raised beds and also polytunnels.
30. They, along with Caslon Community Partnership, are looking at reclaiming some of the derelict land at the rear of Beeches View Avenue and putting it to good use. The Group have seen a scheme in Chesterfield where allotments are provided for disabled people and would like to do something similar here. Halas House have been approached and are keen for some of their users to be involved and the Parks Development Team are happy for them to have the extra land.
31. The Association, with the assistance of the local Area Community Renewal Officer, are also exploring other external funding avenues to lay pathways suitable for wheelchairs on part of the site.
32. The Association currently has between 50 and 60 members.
33. **Council officers are in support of this application and given the organisation is exploring other external funding, I am recommending a grant of up to £5,000.**

Stourbridge Community Radio Group

34. An application for funding has been received from the Stourbridge Radio Group amounting to £5,000, towards a full security system including CCTV which is estimated to cost almost £8,000. The Radio Group have had a spate of security incidents since their on-air launch in January 2008.
35. The Group is not based in Halesowen, but they do provide coverage within the Halesowen area. It is a non-profit limited company, applying for charitable status, which provides 102.5 The Bridge, Halesowen's local radio station operating under a community radio licence by local people, for the benefit of local people. Through this, the Group provides local community information, coverage of local community events (including supporting and providing coverage to Halesowen Town Football Club) on a level not provided by other radio stations. The Group, by way of its broadcasts, informs the community about local goings on and provides programming for the people of Halesowen and the wider area. This grant application coincides with a major technical upgrade of the station's transmitter and relocation to a new transmitter site, which will greatly improve the reception of the station throughout the Halesowen area.
36. The Group has had grant aid from us in the past to the value of £15,000 (£5,000 each from Halesowen, Brierley Hill and Stourbridge Area Committees). The Group is bidding again for £15,000 for a number of projects from the same three Area Committees and this Area Committee is being asked for its contribution of £5,000 to

cover the CCTV and security proposal (which in total is £7,946.50).

37. **The Area Committee has to consider its ability to funding bids going forward through the year and given that the Group has previously received a sizeable sum across all three Area Committees and is bidding again for significant monies and it has not indicated it is exploring funding from other sources, I am recommending that we offer only 50% of the maximum sum we would normally support of up to £2,500 which should cover an intruder alarm system and security lighting, but not a full CCTV system.**

Cornbow Hall – Indoor Bowls Group

38. We have received an application for funding via the Operations Manager at the Cornbow Hall to replace the bowls mats used by the Over 50s Indoor Bowls Group. The mats are almost 20 years old and have been transferred to the Cornbow Hall from the Halesowen Leisure Centre.
39. There are currently two groups of individuals you meet up once a week to play short mat bowls on a Tuesday and Wednesday and they currently have between 25 and 30 members. Since the short mat carpets are not permanently laid out, the continual rolling and unrolling of them has led to excessive wear, resulting in creasing of the carpets, damaged edges and the foam backing breaking away over large areas of the playing surface, which seriously detracts from the enjoyment of a good game.
40. Their application included four quotations for equipment, the lowest being almost £2,767 plus carriage.
41. **Having consulted with colleagues who support their application and whilst they are not a formally constituted club or organisation, I am recommending a grant of up to £2,800 to include the cost of carriage. The Group has not sought other funding, but as these mats will remain the property of Dudley MBC and will be stored at the Cornbow Hall, we shall be acquiring them for use by the Council and other organisations if necessary.**

Lye & Wollescote Partnership

42. An application for funding to install a 'story-telling chair' piece of community art has been received from the Partnership, to be located on the grounds of the Butterfly Children's Centre adjacent to Lye By-Pass.
43. The Butterfly Children's Centre currently has 424 members and the application states that 20% of those members live within the Halesowen area (Cradley and Foxcote Ward) with the remainder residing within the Stourbridge Area Committee wards.
44. The story-telling chair will act as a focal point of a story-telling circle for use by children and families attending the Children's Centre, helping children to listen and learn and improve their literacy and stimulate their imagination and sense of exploration.

45. The chair will additionally be a piece of community artwork, visible from Lye By-Pass and Christ Church Park. The design will incorporate ideas from families using the Children's Centre and will be unique.
46. The materials for the story-telling chair will recycle as far as possible the wood from a felled tree on the site, which gives the artwork a natural and environmentally responsible dimension.
47. The total cost of the work is £4,500 and the Partnership currently has £1,150 received from various sources and are applying for £1,000 grant from the Arts Council. The shortfall, £2,350, the Partnership are seeking from both Stourbridge Area Committee and this Committee (£1,500 and £850 respectively).
48. **I am recommending a grant of up to £850 be approved, subject to the grant of £1,500 being approved by Stourbridge Area Committee and the remaining funds being received from the Arts Council or other source in due course.**

Finance

49. The total available to spend on new bids in 2009/10 is £71,918. Recommendations in this report will result in the following allocations and leave a balance of £44,591.50 for the remainder of 2009/10 available:-

	£	Ward
<u>Recommended for approval:-</u>		
Loaves 'n' Fishes	* 2,500	All Wards
Overend Methodist Mission	* 1,439	Belle Vale
Halesowen Cycling Club	* 1,500	All Wards
Hurst Green Methodist Church	5,000	Halesowen North
Caslon Parent and Toddler Group	* 2,500	Hayley Green & Cradley South
Caslon Community Partnership Group	* 2,500	Hayley Green & Cradley South
Stourbridge Radio Group	* 2,500	All Wards
Abbey Road Allotment Association	5,000	Hayley Green & Cradley South
Over 50s Indoor Bowls Group	2800	Halesowen South
Lye & Wollescote Partnership	850	Cradley & Foxcote
<u>Grants approved through delegated arrangements:-</u>		
Huntingtree Senior's Leisure Centre	737.50	Belle Vale
Total	27,326.50	

Note * - This is only 50% of what was requested – Members of the Area Committee could increase these sums if they so wished.

Law

50. The Committee may incur capital expenditure in respect of the various statutory functions of the Council.
51. 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

52. 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

53. It is proposed that the Area Committee, subject to a further £50,000 being approved by Council :-
- (a) authorises a grant of up to £2,500 to Loaves 'n' Fishes towards a replacement delivery van;
 - (b) notes the approval of a grant of up to £737.50 to Huntingtree Senior's Leisure Centre to have electric water heaters installed in the toilet and kitchen area;
 - (c) authorises a grant of up to £1,439 to Overend Methodist Mission towards replacement chairs and hanging trolleys for use by community groups;
 - (e) authorises a grant of up to £1,500 to Halesowen Cycling Club towards a new Trackside Shelter;
 - (e) authorises a grant of up to £5,000 to Hurst Green Methodist Church for wheelchair access to the Church main hall;
 - (f) authorises a grant of up to £2,500 to Caslon Parent and Toddler Group towards the cost of installing a secure covered area for storage of prams and buggies;
 - (g) authorises a grant of up to £2,500 to Caslon Community Partnership Group towards secure fencing around the "Community Garden Project", subject to planning permission and funding to clear overgrowth;
 - (h) authorises a grant of up to £5,000 to Abbey Road Allotment Association towards the costs of converting a toilet suitable for the disabled, installation of a water supply on the site, timber to erect raised beds and polytunnels;

- (i) authorises a grant of up to £2,500 to Stourbridge Community Radio Group which should cover an intruder alarm system and security lighting, but not a full CCTV system.
- (j) authorises a grant of up to up to £2,800 for the purchase of replacement indoor bowls equipment to be stored at the Cornbow Hall, for the Over 50s Indoor Bowls Group;
- (k) authorises a grant of up to £850 towards the 'story-telling chair' community artwork for Lye & Wollescote Partnership, subject to £1,500 being approved by Stourbridge Area Committee and the £1,000 shortfall being funded in due course.
- (l) authorises the unspent allocations identified in Appendix 2 amounting to £14,513 be brought back to the central capital pot for reallocation to other groups in due course;



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Bill Baker
Area Liaison Officer

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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).
- f. Spending must be in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, and demonstrate Best Value.
- g. Approved allocation must normally be claimed within six months.