

STOURBRIDGE AREA COMMITTEE: 12TH SEPTEMBER 2005

REPORT OF THE AREA LIAISON OFFICER

CAPITAL ALLOCATIONS

Purpose of Report

1. To consider three applications for capital allocations.

Background

2. The Area Committee has an unallocated capital budget of £39,323.66 for 2005/6.
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 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.

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

Application by The Friends of Mary Stevens Park

5. The Friends of Mary Stevens Park, in consultation with the Directorate of the Urban Environment, have developed a project for a playground extension at Mary Stevens Park, which will incorporate teenage play equipment (8 years – 16 years) and two additional swings.
6. The cost of the project is £45,000 (including VAT) and the Area Committee is being asked to make a capital allocation of £5,000. At its last meeting, the Committee approved a grant of £2,500 from the Stevens Trust and the Friends hope to secure the balance of funding from applications to the Livability Fund and Awards for All.
7. This application appears to meet the criteria set out in paragraph 2.2 above.
8. If approved, no allocation will be paid until the balance of funding has been secured.

Application by the Neighbourhood Manager for Enville Street and Stepping Stones

9. The Neighbourhood Manager for Enville Street and Stepping Stones, has submitted an application for a capital allocation of £5,000 towards the cost of supplying and fitting 15 additional double sockets in the Community Room at the Beauty Bank Primary School, and to provide an internet link to the computers to enable residents and their children to participate in more advanced and alternative IT training courses which will improve basic skills and knowledge. The latter will enable users to become ready with added confidence to apply for jobs. Two people have already successfully obtained jobs as a direct result of the current basic training.
10. The total cost of the project is £23,074. The balance of funding has been secured from other bodies, particularly Stourbridge College who have supplied 12 computers.
11. This application appears to satisfy the criteria set out in paragraph 2.2 above.

Application by The What? Centre

12. The What? Centre, which is situated in Coventry Street, Stourbridge, has submitted an application for £1,539 for electrical work needed at the Centre. The applicant states that the building is an old building which is very cold in winter, and with unsatisfactory supplementary heating. In addition, there has been no hot water for many months for washing up and for the sinks in the toilets. The lighting in the Centre has also been poor.

13. The major items of the electrical work that will be undertaken are the replacement of heaters and the installation of a new hot water storage heater to provide hot water.
14. The balance sheet for The What? Centre as at 31st March 2004, shows available unrestricted assets of £2,609.
15. The application appears to satisfy the criteria set out in paragraph 2.2.

Finance

16. 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.

Law

17. 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

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

Recommendation

19. It is recommended that the Area Committee considers the applications submitted by The Friends of Mary Stevens Park, The Neighbourhood Manager for Enville Street and Stepping Stones, and The What? Centre.

John Polychronakis

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List of Background Papers

1. Application submitted by The Friends of Mary Stevens Park
2. Application submitted by The Neighbourhood Manager for Enville Street and Stepping Stones
3. Application submitted by The What? Centre