

North Dudley Area Committee – 23rd June 2010

Report of the Area Liaison Officer

Delegated Capital Budget

Purpose of Report

1. To confirm standing authorisations and procedures for distributing capital funds delegated to this area committee.
2. To consider applications for a capital allocation from the North Dudley Area Committee's delegated capital budget.

Background

3. Standing procedures for considering capital applications were approved at the meeting of the North Dudley Area Committee on 29th March 2010 (Minute No. 91 (1)).
4. The Area Committee has an unallocated capital budget of £90,739. Spending proposals are invited from members of the Area Committee, the public, representative organisations and Council departments, and each proposal is assessed against strict criteria as set out in the Appendix A.
5. A copy of applications referred to in this report are available to Members on request.

Standing authorisations / procedures for considering capital allocations

6. North Dudley Area Committee maintains a capital fund to be distributed for the benefit of local communities. Traditionally, and with reference to existing practice, this is currently managed thus:
 - a. capital funds to be allocated equally between the four key wards affected, namely Coseley East, Upper Gornal and Woodsetton, Gornal and Sedgley
 - b. the appointment of a 'capital budget working group' to consider, in advance, all grant applications and to make recommendations to the full area committee for ratification
 - c. all applications should be considered against a strict criteria for capital allocations as defined in the attached appendix A.
 - d. that, subject to (c) above,:
 - i. in the period between the Annual Council Meeting and the election of a Chairman at the first meeting of the Area Committee in a municipal

year, the Area Liaison Officer, in consultation with the Leaders of all political groups represented on the Committee, is authorised to determine urgent applications for capital funding.

- ii. thereafter, the Area Liaison Officer, in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee and the Opposition spokesperson(s), is authorised to determine urgent applications for capital funding.

Applications

7. Rainbow Community Centre (Coseley East)

An application in the sum of £3,007.44 was received from the above for purchase of new chairs and tables to further encourage and widen the use of the centre. The building has also recently benefited from major improvement and decorating works, undertaken by Bromford Housing Group.

The centre provides access for up to 100 users per week to social activities, learning opportunities (e.g. art classes, youth club, bingo sessions), children's parties and room hire. It also serves as a polling station and various other neighbourhood activities.

The Lead Officer, in accordance with approved delegated powers and after consultation with Members of the Committee, has approved the application.

8. Upper Gornal Voluntary Recreation Association (Upper Gornal and Woodsetton)

An application in the sum of £4,906.05 was received from the above for lighting improvements in the Community Centre's main hall. They propose to install new lights with protective 'caging' to safeguard the centre's users, in particular children of the Upper Gornal Kidz Club who play ball games at the centre. The enhanced facilities should also increase the appeal of the centre to new users.

The organisation promotes the use of the centre for all local community groups, providing a safe venue for over 100 users to access activities including sports (judo, kick boxing), dancing, children's clubs and Church groups.

Please note that the amount requested includes an estimate for VAT. The organisation propose to commission the works through the Council's own Dudley Property Consultancy; if this is approved, then there would be a saving on that element of the fee, reducing the application to £4,175.36.

The Lead Officer, in accordance with approved delegated powers and after consultation with Members of the Committee, has approved the application.

9. Woodsetton Charitable Trust (Upper Gornal and Woodsetton)

An application in the sum of £3,000 was received from the above for path improvements, drainage and hedgerow works in Swanvalley (between Rosemary Crescent and Eve Lane). This application represents a 10% contribution towards a wider development estimated to cost £30,000; this is a condition of grant from Cory Environmental Trust in Britain who will provide the balance of funding.

The Trust aim to preserve and enhance this historic green area for the enjoyment and recreation of the local community, and for the benefit of its indigenous wildlife. They estimate that over 600 families make regular use of its pathways.

The Lead Officer, in accordance with approved delegated powers and after consultation with Members of the Committee, has approved the application.

10. Time Expired Grants

The following capital allocation has exceeded the agreed timeframe within which an organisation is expected to claim the grant:

- o 1st Lower Gornal St James Rainbow; awarded £1,200 (Dec 09)

The organisation have claimed for all the approved items (various ICT equipment), totalling just £960.54. The outstanding balance of £239.46 can now be returned to the capital allocations fund.

Finance

11. The grants referred to in this report can be funded within the overall allocations for the Area Committee.

12. The following shows allocations approved to date, and the budget remaining:

	Coseley East Ward	Upper Gornal and Woodsetton Ward	Gornal Ward	Sedgley Ward	Total
Undistributed balance brought forward	<u>21,043</u>	<u>38,948</u>	<u>19,473</u>	<u>11,275</u>	<u>90,739</u>
New allocation for 10/11*					
Awarded 10/11:					
None; this is the first meeting of the new financial year					
Returned (time expired)					
Undistributed balance	<u>21,043</u>	<u>38,948</u>	<u>19,473</u>	<u>11,275</u>	<u>90,739</u>
Grants awarded but unpaid					16,261
Grants paid 10-11					-
Total					107,000
Authorised capital budget					107,000
Considered this meeting:					
Grants	(3,007)	(7,175)			(10,182)
Return – time expired etc	60	60	60	60	240

* Cabinet are yet to approve area committee capital allocations for 2010/11

13. An approved capital budget of £107,000 is currently available for 2010/11. The undistributed balance is £90,739; applications within this report, if approved, would reduce that balance by £9,942.

Law

14. Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000, enables the Council to do anything 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


15. This report takes account of the Council's Policies on equality and diversity.

Recommendation

16. That the current arrangements for considering capital applications made to this Area Committee be considered and approved, as defined in paragraph 6, for the remainder of this municipal year and up to the first meeting of the North Dudley Area Committee in the new municipal year for 2011/12.

17. That decisions set out in paragraphs 7 to 9 of this report are noted

18. That time expired grants as detailed in paragraph 10 are returned to the capital allocations fund



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NORTH DUDLEY AREA LIAISON OFFICER Contact Officer: Philip Tart

CRITERIA FOR CAPITAL BIDS/ALLOCATIONS

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.
- h) Approved allocations will be limited to a maximum of £5,000 unless exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated