

**Halesowen Area Committee – 11th November 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. The table below summarises the current financial position on uncommitted/unspent capital budget, prior to the approval of bids set out in this report:-

	£
Total allocations 2000/01 to 2009/10	500,000
Less:	
- Spent to date	(388,956)
- Allocated to bidders, but not yet spent (see Appendix 2)	(50,212)
- Town Centre enhancements	(17,000)
<b>Available to spend on new bids/earmarks</b>	<b>43,832</b>

I shall bring an updated statement to each future meeting.

3. 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.

**Lye & Wollescote Partnership**

4. Members will recall that a grant of up to £850 was approved at the meeting in July 2009 towards the 'story-telling chair' community artwork. This was subject to approval by Stourbridge Area Committee of the balance of £1,500.
5. Stourbridge Area Committee has subsequently declined their bid on the grounds of the location of the artwork project in an urban location, adjacent to Lye By-Pass.

6. The Partnership has now supplied a further letter for Members attention and this is appended as Appendix 3. They have to date successfully secured funding totalling £2,624 towards the overall cost of £4,500.
7. **In the light of Stourbridge Area Committee's concerns, I am therefore seeking Committee guidance as to whether it is happy to support the original decision of a grant of up to £850, subject to the remaining shortfall of funds being raised.**

Halesowen Asian Elderly Association

8. An application for funding from the Association has been received, seeking funding towards the costs of additional seating, an air conditioning unit and a concertina screen amounting to just over £1,714 to improve the seating capacity at Vicarage Road and also provide privacy for lady members for exercise and other cultural activities.
9. Members may recall that we have supported this Association in the past, namely £1,500 in 2003/04 for cooking and kitchen equipment and a further £1,627 in 2007/08 for an LCD TV, laptop and printer.
10. Officer colleagues are supportive of their application due to increasing demand from the diverse communities in Halesowen.
11. They have supplied an Income and Expenditure Account to year ended 31st March 2009 which shows they have reserves available, however, no indication has been given that these will be used towards the costs.
12. **Given that the Committee has provided support in the past and that no other funding has been sought and that they have reserves, I am recommending a grant of up to £900 (i.e. 50%) be approved.**

Zion Christian Centre

13. The Zion Christian Centre are planning to run a Food Bank, where emergency provision of food is distributed via vouchers which will be held by local support services – e.g. Social Services, Citizens Advice Bureaux, Children's Services, Housing Offices and Dudley Council Plus.
14. The funding will be to equip an office/distribution point for the storage of food and administration. They would also like to house a warehouse facility large enough to store food for those in need in the wider Borough. Both would be manned by volunteers from the town's churches and local community. A similar Bank was set up in Stourbridge which proved very successful.
15. They have raised funds in support of this application amounting to £1,700 and are seeking capital funding from the Committee of £1,250.

16. **This seems a very worthwhile project, which is fully supported by officer colleagues and given that the Centre is providing some match-funding, I am recommending a grant of up to £1,250 be approved.**

Holy Trinity Church Old Hill

17. We have received 3 bids for capital funding from Holy Trinity Church Old Hill, who are actually based within Sandwell MBC.
- Bid 1 - 42" plasma display screen, speakers, trolley and security kit, a cabinet and rack mount, installation costs and also a 10 megapixel camera. The equipment the Church did have has recently broken and they say the camera would be used by their youth workers to evidence the positive youth work done with young people – cost just under £2,280.
  - Bid 2 – relaying of the central aisle tiles which are loose – cost £2,475.
  - Bid 3 – repair to exterior wall of the North Transept Gable End – cost £5,925 of which they are seeking support of £5,000 from Halesowen Area Committee.
18. In their application, they state they provide a range of activities throughout the week with an open door facility every morning from 9:00am to 1:00pm. They also provide four sessions per week for Moms and Tots and have a badminton group that meet weekly. They state that approximately 28% of their congregation live in the Dudley area.
19. Following further requests for information, they inform me that they have recently received £3,000 from Sandwell MBC to take young people on a weekend away, £1,000 from Sandwell Homes Community Chest towards their Midweek Lunch Club and a new initiative called Art to Heart and £760 from Rowley Regis Town Team towards the Midweek Lunch Club.
20. They have been fundraising as a church for a number of years with ongoing events and have raised just over £12,789. They have another five events planned for the rest of the year that will be bringing in revenue towards their regeneration project.
21. **Had the Church not been based in Sandwell MBC, I would be recommending a grant of up to £5,000, but as the Church is not in the Borough and does have some reserves. I am seeking Committee guidance as to whether it wishes to support a grant of any kind and, if so, to what level.**

## TOTSAREUS

22. This Group meets three times a week at the Holy Trinity Church, Old Hill and are therefore not based in the Dudley Borough. They currently have 80 members, which includes children from birth to 4 years old. They state that the group attracts members from the Dudley area as well as Sandwell as the boundary is very close.
23. They are seeking funding of up to £1,182 towards the cost of six lightweight play mats, for the baby area, story-time and singing-time and ten small folding tables.
24. Again, I have written to the group asking for evidence of numbers of people from the Halesowen area who benefit and whether funding has been or will be sought from Sandwell MBC. No response has been received to date.
25. **Had the Group not been based in Sandwell MBC, I would be recommending a grant of up to £591 (i.e. 50%), but as the Group is not in the Borough and does not have reserves. I am seeking Committee guidance as to whether it wishes to support a grant of any kind and, if so, to what level.**

## Community Transport

26. Community Transport Dudley (CTD) presently generate some of its income by providing low cost re-use furniture to those who cannot afford new furnishing and income generated from furniture removals, furniture storage, training and a minibus contract helps to maintain group work and pay staff wages and volunteer expenses. They currently have 15 minibuses, many of which are old. Maintenance costs are extremely high and in order to sustain the scheme they will need to update the fleet of minibuses. Four new/nearly new minibuses are currently required urgently to replace old vehicles. The Council already accepts CTD as a preferred partner when giving out contracts for children and adult services, but in order to get more contracts, CTD will need to update its fleet of minibuses.
27. A one-off capital allocation would purchase a second hand minibus for £5,000 and CTD would welcome any donation to the scheme at Dudley. Currently 130 groups are affiliated to CTD throughout the Borough.
28. CTD started in 1990 and was previously managed by Dudley Council for Volunteers Service. In 2003 CTD was passed to Community Transport's Charity. A one-off grant of £200,000 was provided by Dudley Council through the local transport plan, but no other funding has since been given to help purchase new minibuses. CTD receive about £63,000 a year from the Council to help with administration of the scheme at Dudley. Age Concern use CTD minibuses at least 4 days a week and CTD provide transport for Black Carers, The Hindu Temple Dudley, Lye Asian Ladies, British Polio, Halesowen Blind, Stourbridge Blind, Parkinsons Disease Society, Fit Folk, Beacon Blind and many others.
29. The CTD scheme is not specifically a local project, but covers the whole of the Borough and as such, each Area Committee is being asked to consider making a

£1,000 contribution towards the overall £5,000 total.

So far, the responses from other Area Committees has been mixed:-

- > North Dudley Area Committee (NDAC) have refused the application on the basis that they thought it was a weak business case, as the Council already supports the organisation significantly and NDAC should not need to make regular capital investment to keep this private organisation alive re. fleet renewal. The Committee felt that, if the organisation could not afford to keep itself afloat without the need for grants, they needed to look elsewhere for funding, and if they could not provide a service that the Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services (DACHS) wanted, then DACHS may need to seek alternative transport arrangements. However, if significant further information were forthcoming, the Committee could at a later date reconsider.
- > Brierley Hill Area Committee has deferred the application and requested further information and that such information include details of their replacement strategy in relation to other buses and information regarding their accounts and cash-flow.
- > Central Dudley Area Committee has accepted, provided that if one (or more) of the other Area Committees decides not to award their £1,000, then the application cannot proceed.

30. **I am seeking Members' guidance on this issue. On the basis that the Group would welcome any donation, my recommendation would be to await the information requested by Brierley Hill Area Committee and if this is acceptable and Brierley Hill Area Committee support the application, then Members of this Committee agree to too.**

Lutley Community Association

31. An application has been received for capital funding towards a project to upgrade facilities at the centre as well as essential health and safety works - a new non-slip floor and the replacement of the fire door.
32. Members may recall the Committee has supported the Association in the past and currently they have over 1,000 members.
33. The total cost of the works amounts to just over £6,112 and the Association is seeking funding of just short of £3,913, providing £2,200 themselves.
34. Some of the works will be undertaken by the Children's Services Directorate.
35. **Given that the Committee has provided support in the past and that match-funding has been provided, I am recommending a grant of up to £3,913 be approved.**

#### Women's Awareness Association

36. The Association provides support for the benefit of women, children and young people. They currently meet at the Scout Centre, Elizabeth Road in Halesowen and have approximately 85 members.
37. They are seeking funding for ICT equipment, microphones and speakers to support presentations and also to develop members' IT skills. They also require a camera and a camcorder to capture evidence of the activities held within the group and a printer/copier/scanner/fax facility to assist with the running of the group. They have also requested funding for sewing machines and overlocker machines which will help develop members' skills and increase their self esteem.
38. The total cost of these items amounts to just over £7,600.
39. The Association have advised us that some of these items will be placed in a secured area at the Scouts Centre, subject to their approval. However, the IT equipment will be stored at the home of the Chairperson and transported accordingly when required.
40. **Officer colleagues support their application and given that the group have limited reserves available, I am recommending a grant of up to £5,000 be approved.**

#### Hasbury Scout Group

41. An application has been received from the Scout Group leader for funding towards the cost of replacing their existing, outdated and inefficient heating system in their Meeting Room, which is over 30 years old. The Group has already recently funded itself increased insulation in the loft space.
42. The total cost of the project is almost £2,800 and they are seeking funding of £2,500 from this Committee. The Group currently have 60 members.
43. **Given that officer colleagues are in support of their application and that some match-funding has been provided, I am recommending a grant of up to £2,500 be approved.**

#### Arab Women and Children Association

44. An application has been received from the Arab Women and Children Association for funding towards various items of equipment and have requested the maximum amount of £5,000.
45. The items requested include a shed, filing cabinets and suspension files, along with other IT equipment, cameras, games, a TV and other items. They are proposing to keep all the items in the shed and transport them when required to different venues.
46. They have informed me that they have applied for other funding from Awards for All to cover hire of hall costs, tutor costs and some equipment and I have requested further

information from them regarding this grant and where their 100 members meet.

47. **It appears that this Association is not known to the Council. I am unhappy with their proposals, particularly for security of ICT equipment and the questionable arrangements for members meetings and am recommending that we decline this application.**

The Cyber Bus Project

48. An application has been received from the Co-ordinator of The Cyber Bus Project for capital funding towards the cost of refitting and equipping a replacement Cyber Bus costing around £18,500. They are seeking funding of up to £2,000 from this Committee and they are also seeking the same amount from Central Dudley Area Committee.
49. The Cyber Bus Project was established in 2001 as a charity involving the Police, Dudley Youth Service and the voluntary sector. It provides a mobile youth facility for young people using IT and traditional methods of learning. The Bus now serves some of the most deprived wards in the West Midlands and reach young people aged 11-19 who have been excluded from or would otherwise not have access to centre-based youth provision. A three year project with traveller families within Dudley MBC started in September 2009.
50. The Co-ordinator has advised that the Cyber Bus visited The Lighthouse Project at the Highfields Centre, Halesbury Special School in Feldon Lane and also Olive Hill Primary School in Springfield Road, Halesowen on 20th October as part of the Family Learning Festival. A PCSO from Halesowen Police Station is currently using the bus for anti-social behaviour sessions. They plan to visit the skateboard park, Highfields Lane on 3rd and 17th November and it is hoped that further bookings will be made in due course.
51. **I am therefore recommending a grant of up to £2,000 be approved, subject to the remainder of the funds being raised, or invoices/receipts to the value of up to £2,000 being supplied for the purchase of specific items.**

Caslon Community Partnership Group

52. Members will recall that at the meeting held on 1st July 2009, a grant of £2,500 was approved for the above Group towards the costs of fencing off the southern perimeter of the Caslon School Garden at the rear of Beeches View Avenue. This was 50% of the total amount requested on their application, because no other funding had been sought at that time.
53. However, I have received a further request from the Group that this 50% grant be reconsidered as since their application was originally submitted in March 2009 they have now progressed to Stage 2 of the Big Lottery's People's Millions Scheme for £50,000 and been placed on the reserve list. They have contingency plans in place to apply for alternative funding if they do not make the People's Millions final list. A

further development has been that part of the site has been selected for inclusion in the Council's Play Pathfinder scheme. Final ecological survey results are awaited and if clear, this will progress to final consultation, planning permission and completion by March 2010.

54. They wish to see the garden/allotment scheme move on with the Play Pathfinder scheme and are seeking the support of the Area Committee to increase their support to the full £5,000 originally requested.
55. **Officers support this application and I am recommending that we agree a further £2,500, subject to planning and the external funding being agreed.**

St. Paul's Blackheath Parish Church

56. A request for funding was received from the Church, who are based in Long Lane, Halesowen, for part funding for double glazing, cavity wall insulation and new light fittings amounting to just over £15,000. The Church are planning to further improve the facilities which the hall provides as a venue for local community groups, following the replacement of the hall floor, which this Committee supported in 2007/08 to the amount of £2,796.
57. The Church is also applying for a grant from Awards for All Scheme to replace the heating system, estimated to cost almost £10,000.
58. The Committee has supported the Church previously. Funding of £3,800 was approved in October 2003 towards the cost of installing disabled toilet facilities in the Church.
59. **This is a request which seems worthy of support and given that they are seeking funding elsewhere, I am recommending a grant of up to the maximum £5,000 be made available to the Church.**

Hope Street Park Friends Group

60. A request for capital funding has been received on behalf of the Friends Group to provide two additional pieces of play equipment, aimed towards 0-8 years of age. They are seeking a capital grant of £10,000.
61. The Park has received Play Pathfinder funding of £55,000 for play equipment, however this funding can only be used for 8-13 year olds.
62. **This is a request which seems worthy of support and given that a part of the Scheme has obtained Play Pathfinder funding, I am recommending that the Committee's maximum grant of £5,000 be approved.**



Rotary Club of Halesowen and Rowley Regis

63. A request has been received for capital funding amounting to £4,513.75 for the supply and construction of a purpose built promotional display trailer for static and street collections raising finance for charitable community needs.
64. The Rotary Club have requested that this bid be considered as a non-profit making organisation and have requested 100% funding. The members of the Rotary Club devote much time and energy to funding raising activities throughout the year, the entire proceeds from which are distributed widely to charitable organisations and community projects within the area.
65. **In normal circumstances as no match funding has been identified, I would only recommend a 50% grant (£2,257). However, this is a request which seems worthy of support and given that the Club is a non-profit making organisation, I am recommending that a full grant of £4,513.75 be considered.**

Finance

66. The total available to spend on new bids in 2009/10 is now £43,832. Recommendations in this report will result in the following allocations and leave a balance available of **£12,755.25** for the remainder of 2009/10.

	£	Ward
<u>Recommended for approval:-</u>	<u>Up to:-</u>	
Halesowen Asian Elderly Assoc	* 900	Halesowen North
Zion Christian Centre	1,250	Halesowen South
Community Transport	1,000	All wards
Lutley Community Association	3,913	Hayley Green & Cradley South
Women's Awareness Association	5,000	Belle Vale
Hasbury Scout Group	2,500	Belle Vale
The Cyber Bus Project	2,000	Halesowen North & Belle Vale
St Paul's Blackheath Parish Church	5,000	Halesowen North
Hope Street Park Friends Group	* 5,000	Halesowen North and South
Rotary Club of Halesowen & Rowley Regis	4,513.75	All wards
<b>Total</b>	<b>31,076.75</b>	

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

**In addition, decisions also need to be made about whether the Committee wishes to continue its support of up to £850 for Lye & Wollescote Partnership (previously approved in July 2009), whether it wishes to support Holy Trinity Church Old Hill with up to £5,000, TOTSAREUS with up to £591 and the additional £2,500 requested by Caslon Community Partnership Group.**

**If the decision is taken to support these organisations, then our remaining available balance for the rest of the year falls to only £4,664.25, bringing us close to exhausting our available budget.**

## **Law**

67. The Committee may incur capital expenditure in respect of the various statutory functions of the Council. 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**

68. 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**

69. It is proposed that subject to satisfactory responses to officer queries the Area Committee :-
- (a) considers whether it is happy to support the original decision for a grant of up to **£850 to Lye & Wollescote Partnership** (approved in July 2009) towards the 'story-telling chair' community artwork, following refusal of a grant by Stourbridge Area Committee, subject to the remaining shortfall being raised;
  - (b) authorises a grant of up to **£900** to the **Halesowen Asian Elderly Association** towards the cost of additional seating, an air conditioning unit and a concertina screen;
  - (c) authorises a grant of up to **£1,250** to the **Zion Christian Centre** towards the setting up of a Food Bank;
  - (d) considers whether it wishes to support any of the bids from **Holy Trinity Church, Old Hill** as the Church is based in Sandwell MBC;
  - (e) considers whether it wishes to support **TOTSAREUS** as the Group are based in Sandwell MBC;
  - (f) authorises a grant of up to **£1,000** to **Community Transport**, towards a replacement minibus, subject to the further information requested by Brierley Hill Area Committee being received and acceptable;
  - (g) authorises a grant of up to **£3,913** to **Lutley Community Association** towards a project to upgrade facilities at the Centre;

- (h) authorises a grant of up to **£5,000** to the **Women's Awareness Association** towards various items of IT equipment and sewing/overlocker machines;
- (i) authorises a grant of up to **£2,500** to **Hasbury Scout Group** towards the cost of replacing their existing heating system;
- (j) refuses a grant to the **Arab Women and Children Association** towards the cost of a various items, including IT equipment, cameras, TV and others, due to the questionable arrangements for members meetings and the lack of security proposed for the requested items;
- (k) authorises a grant of up to **£2,000** to **The Cyber Bus Project**, subject to the remainder of the funds being raised, or invoices/receipts to the value of up to £2,000 being supplied for the purchase of specific items, towards refitting and equipping a replacement Cyber Bus.
- (l) considers whether it wishes to authorise an additional **£2,500** to **Caslon Community Partnership** towards the cost of fencing off the southern perimeter of the site to the rear of Beeches View Avenue which will be turned into a community garden, following receipt of additional information regarding further match-funding bids;
- (m) authorises a grant of up to **£5,000** to **St. Paul's Blackheath Parish Church**, towards the cost of double glazing, cavity wall insulation and light fittings to further improve the facilities available for community use;
- (n) authorises a grant of up to **£5,000** to **Hope Street Park Friends Group** towards two additional pieces of play equipment aimed at 0-8 year olds;
- (o) considers authorising a grant of up to **£4,513.75** to **The Rotary Club of Halesowen and Rowley Regis** to enable them to arrange for the supply and construction of a purpose built promotional display trailer for static and street collections raising finance for charitable community needs.



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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.