
Stourbridge Area Committee – Capital and Revenue allocations

25th June 2012

Report of the Area Liaison Officer

Purpose of Report

1. To consider the applications for Area Committee capital allocations.

Background

2. The five Area Committees are responsible for allocating expenditure from the delegated Area Committee grants budget. In the past, this has been restricted to capital allocations.
3. As part of the revenue budget strategy and setting of the Council Tax for 2012/13, the Council agreed, on 5th March 2012, that Area Committee allocations (totalling £240,000) are to be met from revenue resources and no longer restricted to funding capital projects alone. This gives additional flexibility in respect of the schemes that can be funded, and will also enable groups to bid for funding that have previously been excluded because their activities are primarily of a revenue nature. All other criteria for allocation of these resources will continue apply.
4. The Area Committee has an unallocated capital budget of £47,989.96 and a revenue budget of £50,000 for 2012/13.
5. The unallocated budget is after £10,000 has been set aside in 2012/13 towards the cost of the repair of the gates at Mary Stevens Park. This was agreed at this meeting on 17th November 2008 and currently the total amount set aside is £50,000.
6. A Working Group has been established to consider the applications and bring recommendations to this Committee. The Group consists of:
 - a. The Chairman and Vice Chairman of this Committee and
 - b. One member from each Ward.
7. 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 directorates, and each proposal is assessed against the following criteria:-
 - a. The allocation can be spent on revenue or capital schemes. Capital is 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. For projects with a value of over £1,500 applications will only be approved if the applicant can demonstrate that they will secure at least 50% of the cost of the project either from their own resources or from some other funding.
- c. The applicant has not been awarded an allocation by the Committee or a grant from the Stevens Trust within the preceding two years.

Except, in either point (b) or (c), in the opinion of the Area Committee, there are special circumstances which would warrant the approval of the application in the public interest.

- d. Schemes should contribute to the Community Plan and should not conflict with existing Council policy;
 - e. 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;
 - f. Schemes should not result in any ongoing revenue cost to the Council;
 - g. Consideration should be given to schemes which might generate external funding (i.e. using the allocation as match-funding);
 - h. Spending must be in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, and demonstrate Best Value; and
 - i. Approved allocations must normally be claimed within six months.
 - j. Application forms and supporting documents can be viewed by Members on request to the Area Liaison Officer
8. The Council has also approved a process for dealing with matters of urgency generally and particularly in the period between Annual Council and the first cycle of meetings. This procedure is included in the Constitution as follows:-
- The Area Liaison Officer, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair (and the relevant Ward Members as appropriate), is authorised to determine any matters of urgency that cannot reasonably be delayed until the next ordinary meeting of the Area Committee subject to details of the action being reported back to the next available meeting of the Area Committee for information
 - In the period between the Annual Council Meeting and the election of a Chair at the first meeting of the Area Committee in the new municipal year, the Area Liaison Officer, in consultation with at least two Members of the Area Committee (being the appointed spokespersons of the political groups represented on the Committee and the relevant Ward Members as appropriate), be authorised to consider and determine any urgent matters. Details of any decisions made will be reported to the first meeting of the Area Committee in the municipal year.

Applications

9. 4th Stourbridge Wollaston Scouts Group

The applicant is part of the Scout Association and is based at The Guide Hut, Wollaston Recreation Grounds. Currently there are 109 members who as part of the activities are trained or train in traditional camping methods, and participate in weekend and summer camps.

The group request a grant of £1,974 towards a total project cost £3,948 to replace and repair tents. The main purchase will be for a marquee for joint activities and briefings costing £1,740.

Accounts for the year to 31st March 2010 have been submitted which show a surplus of £3409 and cash/bank balances of £24604. However a significant amount of the funds are for future use on buildings and transport projects.

The group has not received any grants in the last 2 years.

10. Wollescote & St Andrews Scout Group

The applicant is part of the Scout Association and is based at 26, Queensway, Wollescote and currently has 250 members.

The group request a grant of £1440 to replace the gas boiler. The group has been advised that the current boiler is in a dangerous condition and needs to be replaced.

Accounts for the year to 31st December 2010 have been submitted which show a deficit of £464 and cash/bank balances of £1,349.

A grant for £895 was awarded in September 2010 from the capital allocations budget.

11. DIYYA (means “light”)

The group aims to improve the quality of life of women and their families in Lye and the surrounding area by;

- reducing isolation, especially amongst older ladies and young girls
- improving health
- improving community cohesion

The group has requested a grant to purchase toys and laptops which are to be used by the group. The total cost of equipment is £4,242.45 and the group has requested the full cost.

The applicant has supplied a copy of its constitution adopted on 16th November 2011 and a copy bank statement dated 16th January 2012 showing an opening entry of £50.

The group has not received any grants in the last 2 years.

12. Amblecote Church Hall Committee

The committee are responsible for the Church Hall in Vicarage Rd, Amblecote and aims to provide a building to the best possible standard for use by the local community. Currently it is the base for 9 local groups and hosts regular events, parties and functions.

The group has requested a grant of £2,195.48 towards refurbishing and improving the stage area including a new ceiling, stage curtains and installing a staircase. The total project cost is £4,390.96.

Accounts for 31st Dec 2011 have been submitted which show a surplus of £2,176 after £6,000 has been transferred from capital reserves to fund repairs. The group has reserves £10,261. The group has submitted a copy bank statement dated 13th January 2012 showing a balance of £3,701.

A grant for £2,500 was awarded in June 2011 from the capital allocations budget.

13. Stourbridge Quakers

The applicant is based in Scotts Road and has around 40 members and attendees who meet weekly for worship. The building is also used to host events for school children, Churches Together in Stourbridge, Heritage Open Days, Quaker drama performances and non Quaker groups.

The building has considerable historical significance. It was built by the Crowley family after the Toleration Act in 1689 and is thought to be the oldest building in Stourbridge still used for its original purpose.

Recently a number of structural defects have been identified and the total cost of the project will be £40,000. Therefore the group request £5,000 towards the cost of the project.

Accounts for 2011 have been submitted which show a deficit of £1,904 after £7,100 has been transferred to other funds. The group has net assets of £17,068, with £8,625 in general fund and £8,443 in other funds.

The group has not submitted a formal application form; the grant was requested via letter.

The group has not received any grants in the last 2 years.

14. Youth4em

An application has been received for a grant for Youth4em. This is a youth group run by West Midlands Police for 10-18 year olds in the Norton area of Stourbridge. The aim is to reduce anti social behaviour and for the local youth to engage with and get to know their local Neighbourhood Policing Team.

The application is for a grant of £750 to replace a pool table. The group has not received any grants in the last 2 years.

15. Saturday Special-Amblecote Christian Centre

The applicant is a group based at the Amblecote Christian Centre, Brettle Lane and currently has 19 members. The group aims to provide activities e.g. days out, bowling, pub lunches for members of the local community with learning disabilities. These activities allow the adults to be part of the community and provide respite for their carers.

The group would like to organise a Saturday Special Olympics and request a grant of £200 as a contribution towards the purchase of flags, hats, prizes, medals, T shirts and picnic lunches.

The group collects funds from members and spends this on the activities. Annual income is estimated at £240 and expenditure £250.

The group has not received any grants in the last 2 years.

16. Gig Mill Methodist Church

The applicant is based in Glebe Lane, Norton and currently has 80 members and a further 130 people from groups that use the church buildings including; nursery, martial arts, Morris dancing and U3A groups.

In 2009 a scheme was approved to improve the church facilities to enhance the community use. The cost of the renovations in the church was £82,000 and the hall renovations will cost £62,000. The improvements will be completed in the summer 2012 and all the funds for this have been raised or secured.

However to complete the refurbishment of the hall the church would like to replace 50 year old chairs, purchased second hand, with new chairs, tables and storage trolleys and vertical blinds.

A grant of £5,000 is requested towards the total cost of the items £5,248.76.

Accounts for 31st August 2011 have been submitted which show a surplus of £8116 (2010 deficit £34,352 because of renovation costs). The group has net assets of £18,197 and Trust Fund balance £14,575. However it has a circuit loan of £30,000 which will start to be repaid in 2013.

The group has not received any grants in the last 2 years.

17. Ruskin Mill Trust

The applicant is Ruskin Mill Trust Ltd, a charity and company limited by guarantee.

The Glasshouse College and the Ruskin Glass Centre are subsidiaries of the applicant and are based in Wollaston on the former Royal Doulton Glassworks site.

The college is a specialist college for young people aged 16-25 with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Currently there are 80 pupils, with 67 residing within the borough.

The Ruskin Glass Centre is within the Stourbridge Glass Quarter and hosts 15 businesses both start up and established glassmakers and other creative industry

businesses.

The applicant organises and facilitates activities for The International Festival of Glass is held every two years throughout the Stourbridge Glass Quarter and attracts 13,000 visitors from all over the UK and internationally. There are 2 Festival Directors, one from the Glasshouse College and one independent and a Festival committee of other nominated parties.

The applicant requests for a grant of £2,600 to purchase 4 gazebos for the Glasshouse College. These would be used to enable the College to organise outside glass demonstrations within Ruskin Glass Centre, Stourbridge and outside the area to promote the area's glass businesses and heritage. The gazebos could also be used at other local community events. The total cost of the gazebos is £3700, with the balance being found from the Glasshouse College's own budget.

The Council will contribute £18,000 towards the International Glass Festival 2012 together with support from Tourism, Arts Development and Museum teams.

Finance

18. The Area Committee allocations were agreed by the Council on 5th March, 2012. This Area Committee is receiving an allocation of £50,000 for the 2012/13 municipal year. The area committee also has unspent capital resources as detailed in paragraph 2 of this report.

Law

19. The Localism Act 2011 gives the Council a power of general competence to act in the interests of the community.
20. Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 enables the Council to do anything that is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive to or incidental to, the discharge of its statutory

Equality Impact

21. The awarding of grants to community organisations has the specific purpose of creating general benefits in the wider community.
22. Many of the organisations applying represent groups within the community who have particular needs e.g. black and ethnic minority communities, older people, young people and disabled people. Any grants awarded will help these groups and promote equality where appropriate.
23. Children and young people are often the direct beneficiaries of grant awards. There has been no specific consultation in developing the proposals in this report.

Recommendation

24. The Committee are informed that the applications in paragraphs 9 and 10 were approved using the urgency procedures. It is recommended that the Committee consider the applications as detailed in paragraphs 11-17 above.
25. The Area Liaison Officer be authorised to administer the Area Committee grants

process in accordance with any decisions made by the Committee.

26. The Committee approve the continuation of the Working Group as detailed in paragraph 6 and consider the appointments to this Group.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jane Porter', with a horizontal line underneath.

Area Liaison Officer

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