

Halesowen Area Committee – 25th January 2006

Report of the Area Liaison Officer

Delegated Capital Budget

Purpose of Report

1. To consider requests for funding from the Delegated Capital Budget.

Background

2. The criteria against which allocations from the delegated capital budget should be considered are set out in the Appendix. 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 application referred to in this report is available to Members on request.
3. **Stourbridge Radio Group**
Stourbridge Radio Group is a not for profit organisation (awaiting incorporation/charitable status), planning to set up a community radio station to broadcast from Stourbridge Town Centre, serving areas as far apart as Brierley Hill, Hagley, Halesowen and Kinver. The Group has submitted a detailed application for funding, addressing how their project will deliver Council Plan priorities. It is anticipated that the scheme will benefit the wider community by offering a broadcasting service, tailor made to suit local people. By offering shows that appeal to all ages and culture, the station intends to encourage opinionative discussion and give local people a voice to speak out for what they want for the future. By being a presence in the local area, they intend to serve local people and give everyone the opportunity to put forward ideas and opinions.

The Group has requested funding towards the cost of computer hardware and software, the total cost of which is estimated to be £8,000. The total set-up costs of the Radio Station's launch are estimated to be in the region of £40,000. They have now successfully made applications to both the Stourbridge and Brierley Hill Area Committees, who have awarded grants of £5,000 each for the purchase of radio studio equipment and the fitting out of premises and buildings respectively. The Group also advise that they are submitting requests for funding to "Awards for All" West Midlands, the Stevens Trust and the Sandwell Council and Voluntary Organisations.

This is a request which seems worthy of the Committee's support and I am recommending the approval of a grant of £5,000 subject to the Group identifying

funding sources to cover the full set-up costs and a review of the business plan to ensure that ongoing revenue costs are covered.

4. Leasowes Park – Visitor Facilities

An outline request for funding has been received from the Friends of the Leasowes Park to renovate and improve existing visitor facilities in the Park. The Committee has, of course, received regular reports on the improvement project for Leasowes Park, which is now progressing.

This is clearly a request which warrants Area Committee support and a contribution from the Delegated Capital Budget would enhance existing approved funding streams (from Liveability Funding and “Transforming your Space”), and I am recommending approval in principle to the request, but subject to the submission of further details and consideration by officers who are progressing the overall improvement programme for the Park.

5. James Grove Recreation and Sports Ground Trust

At its meeting on 17th November 2004, the Area Committee agreed a grant of £3,250 (being 50% of the notified total cost) towards the cost of replacing the gates and ornamental ironwork on the Stourbridge Road, Halesowen site. The work has now been completed and the Trust have written to say that, unfortunately, the original quote for the work (against which the Committee agreed its contribution), did not make it clear that it excluded VAT and they have now had to find an additional £1,312, which would otherwise could have been used to fund grants to Halesowen based young sportsmen and women who compete an regional, national and international level. In the circumstances, therefore, it would seem appropriate for the Committee to meet half of the cost of the VAT and I am, therefore, recommending an additional grant of £650.

6. 1st Coombs Wood Scout and Guide Group

A request was received from the 1st Coombs Wood Scout and Guide Group for funding towards the repair of the entrance slope outside of the Headquarters which had become a health and safety issue. The amount requested was £881.00

I have, in consultation with the Chairman and Opposition Spokesperson, approved a grant of £881.00

Finance

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

Law

8. The Committee may incur capital expenditure in respect of the various statutory functions of the Council.
9. 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

10. This report takes account of the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy.

Recommendation

11. It is recommended that the Area Committee:-

- (a) approves a grant of £5,000 to the Stourbridge Radio Station, subject to the Group identifying funding sources to cover the full set-up costs and a review of the business plan to ensure that ongoing revenue costs are covered;
- (b) approves, in principle, the request for funding from the Friends of Leasowes Park, subject to the submission of further details and consideration by officers who are progressing the overall improvement programme for the Park.
- (c) approves an additional grant of £650 to the James Grove Recreation and Sports Ground Trust as a contribution towards the VAT excluded from their original request for funding which was approved by the Area Committee in November 2004;
- (d) notes my action, in consultation with the Chairman and Councillor Body, in approving a grant of £881.00 to the 1st Coombs Wood Scout and Guide Group, for funding towards the repair of the entrance slope outside the Headquarters at Coombs Hill.



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Mike Williams
Area Liaison Officer

Contact Officer: Mike Williams
Telephone: 01384 814800
Email: mike.s.williams@dudley.gov.uk

List of Background papers

Requests for funding

CRITERIA FOR CAPITAL BIDS/ALLOCATIONS

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.