

Central Dudley Area Committee – 12th June 2012

Report of the Area Liaison Officer

Area Committee Grants

Purpose of Report

1. To consider the process for the allocation of expenditure from the delegated Area Committee grants budget for 2012/ 2013.

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 to apply.
4. Subject to the above, it is a matter for the Area Committee to decide on individual applications in line with any corporate guidelines and the local approach taken by individual Area Committees. It has been the practice of this Area Committee to establish a Capital Allocations Working Group to consider applications and to make recommendations to the Area Committee. This approach will be continued in 2012/13.
5. 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.

Finance

6. 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.
7. A total of £61,296.71 remains uncommitted from 2011/12 and is broken down by wards as follows:

Ward Name	Amount Carried Over
Castle and Priory	£14,139.32
Netherton Woodside and St Andrews	£2,234.28
Quarry Bank and Dudley Wood	£22,480.17
St James's	£15,540.44
St Thomas's	£6,902.50
Total	£61,296.71

8. These figures include individual reconciliations, where applicable, between the grant awarded and actual final expenditure on grants and where the actual expenditure is less than the grant offer any savings will have been returned to the appropriate ward budget.
9. These figures also include adjustments for grant awards made in previous years, which have since been declined or withdrawn.
10. This means that for 2012/13 the following amounts are available to be committed for each ward.

Ward Name	Sum Available
Castle and Priory	£24,139.32
Netherton Woodside and St Andrews	£12,234.28
Quarry Bank and Dudley Wood	£32,480.17
St James's	£25,540.44
St Thomas's	£16,902.50
Total	£111,296.71

Law

11. The Localism Act 2011 gives the Council a power of general competence to act in the interests of the community.
12. 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 functions.

Equality Impact

13. The awarding of grants to community organisations has the specific purpose of creating general benefits for the wider community.
14. 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.
15. 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.

Recommendations

16. That the process for dealing with Area Committee grants for 2012/13, as set out in this report, be noted.
17. The Area Liaison Officer be authorised to administer the Area Committee grants process in accordance with any decisions made by the Committee.



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List of other Background Papers

Report to the Council meeting – 5th March 2012