

Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council

North Dudley Area Committee - 13 July 2004

Report of the Area Committee Liaison Officer

Capital Allocations

Purpose

1. To advise the Area Committee of the financial position relating to capital allocations made to the Committee.
2. To seek the Area Committee's agreement on a method to deal with sums unspent in the previous municipal year.
3. To summarise the progress made to date in respect of the approved capital allocations.
4. To advise the Area Committee of new applications.

Background

5. The balance available for allocation in 2004/05 is £131,395, made up of £91,395 brought forward from 2003/04 together with an allocation of £40,000 for 2004/05.
6. The annual allocation to the North Dudley Area Committee has been reduced by resolution of the Executive on 5 July 2004, although this has yet to be ratified by full Council. The basis of the reduction is that the number of Wards covered by the North Dudley Area Committee is four as compared with the other Area Committees, each of which cover five Wards. The reduction is not retrospective.
7. The previous basis of allocation has been that each Ward has been allocated the same amount. On that basis, the amount available, that is, uncommitted, to the four Wards at the end of the last municipal year was as follows:

Coseley East Ward	£27,219
Coseley West Ward	£31,342
Gornal Ward	£14,712
Sedgley Ward	£18,122

Total £91,395

8. The boundary changes for the recent Council elections leads to some complication in terms of carry-forward balances. The simplest way forward would be to allocate the total carry-forward balance equally among the four new Wards.
9. If this approach were taken then the sums available to each Ward in the present municipal year, including both the carry-forward balance and a quarter share of the new allocation, would be as follows:

Coseley East Ward	£32,849
Gornal Ward	£32,849
Sedgley Ward	£32,849
Upper Gornal and Woodsetton Ward	£32,849

Total £131,396

10. The Capital Allocations Working Group considers applications for funding according to criteria agreed by the Area Committee. In summary, these require that applications be made by *bona fide* community groups, that applications be for capital or one-off expenditure, and that appropriate safeguards are put in place to ensure that the funding is properly used.
11. The Capital Allocations Working Group considers representations made by Ward Councillors on applications, which may be accepted, accepted but at a reduced amount, referred back for further discussions with the applicant, or refused.
12. As will be seen from the above analysis, there has been a history of the available funding being under-utilised. Accordingly the Committee has agreed that advertisements should be placed in the local press advertising the availability of the funding and the criteria for allocation. Such advertisements are to be placed shortly.

Outstanding applications

13. Turls Hill and Swanbrook Valley Residents' Association (Sedgley Ward and Upper Gornal and Woodsetton Ward)

An application has been received for £2,800 to translate their Management Plan and produce copies of their video. The application was considered by the Working Group; a decision was deferred to allow further consideration and discussion between Ward Councillors and with the Residents' Association. This application will be reconsidered at the next meeting of the Working Group.

14. Sedgley Junior Angling Club (Sedgley Ward)

An application has been received for £3,728 for equipment for the Club. The application was considered by the Working Group; a decision was deferred pending the Area Liaison Officer writing to the Club to obtain more information on the security of the proposed storage of the equipment, and plans for expanding the membership of the club. This application will be reconsidered at the next meeting of the Working Group.

15. Wallbrook Primary School (Coseley East Ward)

An initial application has been received for £5,000 to bridge a funding gap for some building work at the school. Fuller details will be available to be considered at the next meeting of the Working Group.

16. Beacon Hill Tenants' and Residents Association (Sedgley Ward)

An application has been received for £1,535 for gardening tools to be used by old age pensioners and disabled residents to improve and maintain the Beacon Hill Estate. This application will be considered at the next meeting of the Working Group.

17. Upper Gornal Methodist Church (Upper Gornal and Woodsetton Ward)

An application has been received for £4,000 towards the total cost of £8,124 for relaying the car park at the Church. The car park is used by a number of community groups as well as the Church. This application will be considered at the next meeting of the Working Group. However it should be noted that this

work has already been carried out and the Council's policy is not to fund retrospective applications.

18. Dormston Youth Club with Sedgley Community Association (Sedgley Ward and Upper Gornal and Woodsetton Ward)

An application has been received for £11,663 towards the total cost of £26,400 for the part-demolition of the existing demountable building, the relocation of an existing demountable classroom to the site, and for the connection of services, in order to re-open the Dormston Youth Club. The existing demountable building has been closed for some time for reasons of health and safety. The new facilities will be managed by the Sedgley Community Association, and premises running costs will be met by the Council through the Youth Service budget. The remaining capital funding has been secured through a Section 106 agreement. There is no provision in the Council's capital budget for this work. This application will be considered at the next meeting of the Working Group.

19. St James the Great Parochial Church Council (Gornal Ward)

An application has been received for £1,633 for an indoor bowls mat and accessories for the St James the Great Bowls Club. The application was considered by the Working Group and a decision deferred for further consideration. This application will be reconsidered at the next meeting of the Working Group.

Finance

8. This report is concerned solely with the allocation of capital funding by the Area Committee.

Law

9. The Council's budgeting process is governed by the Local Government Act 1972, the Local Government Planning and Land Act 1980, the Local Government Finance Act 1988 and the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

Equal Opportunities Policy

10. Consideration of applications for funding by the Area Committee will take account of the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy.

Recommendation

11. It is recommended that the Area Committee consider the issues raised in this report and pass the outstanding issues to the Capital Allocations Working Group for action.
12. It is recommended that the Area Committee deal with sums unspent from the previous municipal year by equal division between the four new Wards.
13. It is recommended that the Area Committee authorise the Area Liaison Officer to make such payments as are recommended by the Capital Allocations Working Group and supported by the Ward Members for the relevant Wards without reference back to the Area Committee.



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