

Halesowen Area Committee – 9th September 2010

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. I have provided below details of the current financial position on uncommitted/unspent capital budget. Prior to the consideration of bids referred to in this report, the table below summarises that position:-

	£
Total allocations 2000/01 to 2010/11	550,000
Less:	
- Spent to date	(459,504)
- Allocated to bidders, but not yet spent (see Appendix 2)	(23,368)
- Earmarked for Town Centre enhancements	(17,000)
- Earmarked for Empty Shops Grant initiative (Cradley/Windmill Hill, Shell Corner and the Stag) (£790 each)	(2,370)
Available to spend on new bids/earmarks	47,758

3. Members will recall that at the last meeting, they agreed to defer all applications until such time as further capital funding had been approved by Council. I can confirm that Council, on 19th July 2010, approved an allocation of £50,000 to the Halesowen Area Committee. These applications are detailed in paragraphs 5 to 19 inclusive.
4. 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.

Short Cross Methodist Church

5. An application has been received from the Church for capital funding up to £5,000 towards a complete refit of the kitchen area, to include new work surfaces, cupboards, sinks and drainers etc as well as the provision of an industrial dishwasher and hot storage unit. The floor will also be re-tiled and decorated. The overall scheme also provides for a sink and storage units in other parts of the premises to aid activities such as flower arranging and craft work. The whole project has been estimated to cost £17,500 and 66% of the costs will be funded from within the Methodist Church.
6. Members may recall a grant of £2,000 was approved in 2003/04 towards the cost of building a porch on the front of the Church.
7. **This seems a worthwhile project and the Church is contributing towards the costs. However, assistance has previously been given by this Committee. I am therefore recommending that members consider approving a grant of up to £5,000.**

Air Training Corps 223 Squadron

8. An application has been received from the Squadron for assistance towards a second mini-bus. After successful recruitment in recent months, the number of young people attending has topped 35. The programme of events both on parade evenings and at weekends is now so varied there is hardly a week free of competitions, sports, camps etc. Currently the squadron is transported via the mini-bus (funded in 2008 by capital funds from this Committee) and the Squadron is now fund-raising towards a second mini-bus.
9. They have stated a second-hand mini-bus could cost anything between £5,000 to £8,000. A letter has been sent requesting how much the Squadron would be willing to contribute, but to date no response has been received.
10. **I am seeking Committee approval not to recommend a further grant, bearing in mind that capital funding is very limited for 2010/11 and that this Committee has only recently assisted the Squadron in purchasing a replacement mini-bus.**

St. Margaret's of Antioch Church

11. A request for capital funding of £5,000 has been received toward major roof repairs at the Church costing around £46,000. The repairs required include the repair of plain roof tiling, the stripping and retiling of the roof of the South Aisle and adjacent chapel, the stripping and repair of the valleys of the North and South crossing gables, various sections of re-painting and some stonework repairs and the cleaning out of all gutters and down-pipes and their redecoration.
12. **This seems a worthwhile project and given that the Church are contributing a large amount themselves towards the costs, I am recommending a grant of up to £5,000 be approved.**

Wollescote Community Association

13. A request for capital funding of up to £3,600 has been received towards a kitchen refurbishment project at the Association's meeting place. The Association is run by an all voluntary committee and caters for all ages and is open seven days a week, with approximately 200-300 users of the facilities.
14. **This seems a worthwhile project and, as the Association has limited funds of its own, I am recommending a grant of up to £3,600 be approved.**

Halesowen Athletic and Cycling Club – Tennis Section

15. A request for capital funding of £5,000 has been received towards an overall project cost of £187,050 which has already received planning permission. The Tennis Section at Manor Abbey Stadium is looking to refurbish the ageing tennis courts, including an extension to minimum Lawn Tennis Association specification and floodlighting to three courts.
16. The Club are contributing £45,000 towards the cost with a Grant and Loan from the Lawn Tennis Association of £130,000. They have applied for funding from other sources totalling £7,000 and now are seeking £5,000 from this Committee.
17. The Club provides tennis facilities and membership to all ages and abilities in the Halesowen area. They offer mini-tennis coaching, junior coaching and team coaching, adult beginners, adult teams and senior citizens sessions.
18. **This seems a worthwhile project and given that the Club are contributing a large amount themselves towards the costs, I am recommending a grant of up to £5,000 be approved.**

Howley Grange Scout Group

19. An application has been received from the Scout Group for £5,000 towards the costs of developing the community meeting rooms for further community use, estimated to be around £7,200. Funding will be required to enable the rooms to be refurbished, including putting in new doors, windows, flooring, ceilings, plastering walls etc and one room would be equipped with IT functions including projector, sound system, internet access. Both rooms would be suitable for disabled access.
20. This Committee has supported this Scout Group on a number of previous occasions. In 2008/09, a grant of £5,000 was approved towards security lighting, shutters and alarm system, following a spate of thefts and vandalism and again in 2009/10, a grant of £2,500 towards costs of renovating the kitchen area.
21. **This seems a worthwhile project and the Scout Group is contributing towards the costs. However, assistance has previously been given by this Committee. I am therefore recommending that members consider approving a grant of up to £5,000.**

Halesowen Asian Elderly Association

22. An application for capital funding has been received from the Association for a contribution of £1,000 towards the cost of £1,350 for setting up a consultation cubicle to deal with all aspects of confidential interviews, such as Citizens Advice Bureau surgeries. The cubicle would include a desk, chair and telephone sockets.
23. This Committee has supported this Association on a number of previous occasions. In 2003/04 a grant of £1,500 was approved for cooking and kitchen equipment; in 2007/08 a grant of £1,672 was approved for an LCD TV, laptop and printer and in 2009/10, a grant of £1,714 was approved towards additional seating, an air conditioning unit and a concertina screen.
24. **This seems a worthwhile project and the Association is contributing towards the costs. However, assistance has previously been given by this Committee. I am therefore recommending that members consider approving a grant of up to £1,000.**

Wesson Gardens

25. An application for funding was received from Councillor Jill Nicholls for a new black plastic litter bin for Wesson Gardens complex. The area is noted for litter problems and a new bin would serve the community at the top end of the housing complex.
26. **I have, in consultation with the Chairman and Opposition Spokesperson, approved a grant of £150 for this purpose. The bin has now been installed.**

Finance

27. The total available to spend on new bids in 2010/11 is £47,758. Recommendations in this report will result in the following allocations and would leave a balance of £23,008 for the remainder of 2010/11 available:-

	£	Ward
<u>Recommended for approval:-</u>	<u>Up to:</u>	
Short Cross Methodist Church	5,000	Belle Vale
St. Margaret's of Antioch Church	5,000	Halesowen South
Wollescote Community Association	3,600	Cradley & Foxcote
Halesowen Athletic and Cycling Club (Tennis Section)	5,000	Halesowen North and South and other Wards
Howley Grange Scouts	5,000	Halesowen South
Halesowen Asian Elderly Assoc	1,000	Halesowen North
<u>Approved under Delegation-</u>	<u>Up to:</u>	
Wesson Gardens	150	Belle Vale
Total	24,750	

Law

28. The Committee may incur capital expenditure in respect of the various statutory functions of the Council.
29. 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

30. 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

31. It is proposed that the Area Committee:
- (a) considers authorising a grant of up to £5,000 for the Short Cross Methodist Church towards a major kitchen refurbishment programme;
 - (b) authorises a grant of up to £5,000 for St. Margaret's of Antioch Church towards the major roof repairs required;

- (c) authorises a grant of up to £3,600 for Wollescote Community Association towards a kitchen refurbishment programme;
- (d) authorises a grant of up to £5,000 to Halesowen Athletic and Cycling Club (Tennis Section) towards the refurbishment of their ageing tennis courts;
- (e) considers authorising a grant of up to £5,000 to Howley Grange Scout Group towards the costs of developing the community rooms for further community use;
- (f) considers authorising a grant of up to £1,000 to Halesowen Asian Elderly Association towards the costs of setting up a consultation cubicle;
- (g) notes the grant of £150 for a new black plastic litter bin for Wesson Gardens approved under delegation.



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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.