

HALESOWEN AREA COMMITTEE – 22ND JUNE 2005

REPORT OF THE AREA LIAISON OFFICER

DELEGATED CAPITAL BUDGET

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To update the Committee on the latest position with regard to the Capital Budget Allocation and to suggest outline allocation for 2004/05.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council has agreed a further capital allocation of £50,000 for the Area Committee for the financial year 2005/06.
- 2.2 From a total of £56,215 available for allocation in 2004/05, the Committee approved expenditure/earmarked a total of £34,361, leaving a balance to carry forward to 2005/06 of £21,854.
- 2.3 The total amount available for allocation in 2005/06 is therefore:-

	£
• 2005/06 Allocation	50,000
• Unspent Balance	21,854
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	71,854
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There is also a total of £40,000 which was earmarked in previous years for Town Centre Enhancements and Youth Facilities, but is not yet actually committed. I have asked officers to bring forward proposals as soon as possible.

- 2.4 For planning purposes, it would be helpful if the Committee could again approve outline allocations for 2005/06, and following discussions, I suggest the following for consideration:-

	£'000
• Allocation for local initiatives	20
• Environmental Improvements	25 *
• Community and Voluntary Groups	15
• Unallocated Contingency	12
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	72
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* Reference has been made at previous meetings of the Committee about the need for improvement work at Shell Corner and Windmill Hill and further consideration is being given to this by your officers.

2.5 It has been the Committee's practice to delegate authority to me, in consultation with the Chairman and a representative from the Opposition Group, to agree requests from Community and Voluntary Groups for small grants, and this arrangement has worked well. I am recommending it should continue in 2005/06.

2.6 The Committee has previously agreed that action should be taken to promote the availability of funding by, for example:-

- (a) issuing media releases;
- (b) direct mailing to a wide range of Community and Voluntary Groups, Schools and other organisations in the area;

and I am suggested that similar action is taken for the coming year.

2.7 Lutley Community Association

2.7.1 Lutley Community Association operates Lutley Community Centre and the Centre contains a dedicated area used by young pre-school age children. In this area, the toilets were in excess of 40 years old and in need of renovation.

2.7.2 Having consulted with colleagues on this matter, I have, in consultation with the Chairman and Councillor Body, approved a grant of £1,600.00 towards the upgrading of the children's toilets at the Lutley Community Centre.

2.8 2nd Cradley (St. Peters) Scout Group, Foxcote Lane, Cradley

2.8.1 The premises at Foxcote Lane are owned by the Council and have recently been subject to extensive vandal attack, resulting in approximately £30,000 cost of structural repairs. The scouts are proposing to renovate the interior, but have requested funding towards security fencing around the site prior to the renovation taking place.

2.8.2 I have, therefore, in consultation with the Chairman and Councillor Body approved an allocation of £2,000 towards the cost of the security fencing.

2.9 Beech Tree Miners Welfare Institute

2.9.1 At the last meeting, the Committee deferred consideration of a request for this organisation for retrospective funding towards the cost of providing disabled facilities pending further information and discussions regarding the budget implications.

2.9.2 The aims of the organisation are to promote and improve the health and social well being of people. They also provide a base for other local organisations ranging from the local pigeon fanciers club and local children and pensioners groups. Current membership is 800 people mainly from the Lye & Wollescote area.

2.9.3 A similar application for support from the Stevens Trust was considered by the Stourbridge Area Committee on 21st March 2005, which, whilst expressing concern about the retrospective nature of the application, agreed to award, from the Trust, a grant of 50% (i.e. £2,500) of the sum requested.

2.9.4 I have not received any further information from the Institute, but I have given further consideration to the budgetary and other implications. The Institute provides facilities for a range of local organisations and groups, and has a large membership. Retrospective applications for public funding are generally not accepted, but the Stevens Trust has agreed a contribution. The Committee does have unallocated funds available from 2004/05 and has supported similar applications from community groups for improved disabled facilities. On balance, it would not, in my opinion, be unreasonable for the Committee to agree a contribution, for example, to match that from the Stevens Trust.

2.10 The criteria against which bids/allocations should be considered are set out in Appendix A.

3.0 PROPOSALS

3.1 It is proposed that the Area Committee:-

- (a) considers the proposed outline allocations as set out in paragraph 2.4;
- (b) authorises the Area Liaison Officer, in consultation with the Chairman and a representative from the Opposition Group, to consider and agree where appropriate, requests for funding from Community and Voluntary Groups;
- (c) authorises the Area Liaison Officer to take appropriate action to promote the availability of funding for 2005/06;
- (d) notes the actions of the Lead Officer, in consultation with the Chairman and Councillor Body, in approving the grant of £1,600 to the Lutley Community Association and £2,000 to the 2nd Cradley (St. Peters) Scout Group;
- (e) reconsiders the applications from the Beech Tree Miners Welfare Institute on the basis of the comments in section 2.9.

4.0 FINANCE

4.1 The total available for distribution in 2005/06 is £72,000.

5.0 LEGAL

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

5.2 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.

6.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

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

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 It is recommended that the Area Committee approves the proposals set out in Section 3 of this report.

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

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Mike S Williams
Area Liaison Officer

Contact Officer: Mike S Williams
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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*).