

Brierley Hill and Brockmoor & Pensnett Community Forum – 3rd September 2018

Report of the Chief Officer Health and Wellbeing

Community Forum Funding

Purpose of Report

1. To consider the allocation of expenditure from the Community Forum Funding budget for the 2018/19 municipal year.

Background

2. The ten Community Forums are responsible for allocating expenditure from the delegated Community Forum Funding budget. The Cabinet, in March 2018, approved a new set of criteria to replace the previous guidelines against which allocations from the delegated budget should be considered, and are attached. Criteria for any remaining funding available through the High Street Innovation and Empty Shops Grant are also attached.
3. The Cabinet also agreed to the allocation of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) neighbourhood funding through community forums. This report identifies any CIL funding available to the forum and applications will begin to be assessed against CIL criteria from the January 2019 round of forums.
4. A copy of the applications referred to in this report have been e-mailed to Members prior to the meeting.

Applications for Consideration at this Meeting

St Mark's Church

5. An application has been received from St Mark's Church which is in Vicarage Lane, Pensnett.
6. The church is seeking £450.00 to provide two artificial Christmas trees to be sited in the church. The church hosts a number of community activities in the church,

such as craft groups, and holds Christmas services for a number of different audiences.

7. The group has received in the last three years £265.00 to provide food and a social activity for vulnerable and lonely people in the community in September 2015 and £500.00 as a contribution towards the cost of repair to the rose window stonework in March 2016.

Provision of Christmas trees and lights

8. Community forums have, in recent years, provided funding for the provision of Christmas trees and lights in their areas. Environmental Services have provided costs for the provision of two trees: one in the Civic Garden in Brierley Hill and one in High Oak/Bradley Street in Pensnett, replacement looms damaged through wear and tear, and associated energy costs for lighting.
9. The amount of funding requested to cover these items is £3,165.63. This includes £1,750.98 for the tree in Brierley Hill and £1,414.65 for the tree in Pensnett. The overall cost is £7,655.15. Environmental Services will cover the remaining costs from within their base budget.
10. There is the potential to dress the live tree planted in the Civic Gardens, should the community forum decide that the tree is now large enough. If the decision is made to do this, the cost of the purchase, erection and removal of one cut tree would be saved. This cost is £369.38, rather than £1,750.98.

St John's Church

11. An application has been received from St John's Church, which is in Leys Road, Brockmoor.
12. The church is seeking £5,000 to complete the fitting out of its new kitchen, which will allow the church to do more community activities such as pensioners lunch clubs, coffee mornings and school holiday clubs.
13. The kitchen re-fit is part of a much larger project to restore the building, for which other funding has been received.
14. The group has not been awarded any community forum funding in the last three years.

Urgent Application Approved Outside of Meetings

Friends of the Fens

15. An application was received from Friends of the Fens and was considered as an urgent application in August 2018. Members approved the award of £202.18 for the provision of a gate and lock to restrict vehicle access to Fens Pool to prevent fly tipping and antisocial behaviour at night.

Finance

16. Each Community Forum receives an annual allocation of £10,000 per ward.

17. The balances currently available to spend are as follows:

£	Balance Bfwd from 17/18	Annual Funding 18/19	Actual Spend 18/19	Committed	Balance to award
Brierley Hill	5,230.41	10,000.00	0	231.24	14,999.17
Brockmoor & Pensnett	10,263.93	10,000.00	202.14	6,767.94	13,293.85
Total	15,494.34	20,000.00	202.14	6,999.18	28,293.02

18. Empty Shops Grant and High Street Innovation Fund - one-off funding was made available in the 2014/15 financial year for projects which improve the appearance or economic vitality of an area, with preference to the borough's centres and high streets. The remaining value of this funding allocated to Brierley Hill, Brockmoor and Pensnett wards is £9,240.55. This is split £4,471.12 for Brierley Hill and £4,769.43 for Brockmoor and Pensnett. Guidance about the criteria to be used in making decisions about the allocation of this funding are attached to this report.

19. There is currently no CIL funding available for the Brierley Hill and Brockmoor and Pensnett wards.

Law

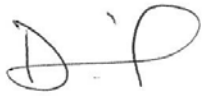
20. The Localism Act 2011 gives the Council a power of general competence to act in the interests of the Community. Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 enables the Council to do anything that is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive to or incidental to, the discharge of its statutory functions.

Equality Impact

21. The awarding of a grant to voluntary and community organisations is intended to secure general social benefits and improved well-being for members of the local community.

Recommendation

22. That the Forum considers the applications referred to in the report and makes appropriate recommendations to the Chief Officer Health and Wellbeing.



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Chief Officer Health and Wellbeing

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List of Background Papers

- The application forms on which this report is based have been emailed to Members prior to the meeting, but contain exempt information under the terms of part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.
- Criteria for considering funding applications attached.

Funding criteria for applicants – Community Forum and Community Infrastructure Levy neighbourhood funding

1. Voluntary or community organisations based in Dudley borough, or which benefit people in the borough, can apply for up to a maximum of £5,000 per year. The same project will not normally be funded more than once in every three years (see note 1).
2. Applications should be for local projects i.e. in a particular ward/small number of wards and not borough wide. Applications should be from a parent organisation rather than, for example, an individual team within a sports club.
3. Applications should demonstrate how they will contribute to Dudley Council's aim to support local people and organisations to work together to improve the local community or area and encourage local people to be active citizens.
4. Applications may be for capital and/or revenue expenditure (see note 2), but revenue costs must be one-off or strictly time-limited; ongoing revenue costs will be the applicant's responsibility and will not be funded by the council.
5. Applicants are encouraged to demonstrate match funding or efforts to obtain funding elsewhere/share resources with other organisations.
6. Applications are to be submitted at least 21 days before a forum meeting in order to be considered at that meeting. Later applications will be held over to the next available meeting. Genuinely urgent applications may be considered between meetings at the discretion of community forum members.
7. Once an application is received, where appropriate a council community development worker will arrange to meet the applicants to provide advice and support with the application before it proceeds.
8. Applications will only be considered if the application form is completed fully and the requested documents submitted (see note 3).
9. If appropriate, applications may be recommended for, or redirected to, funding from other sources.
10. Applicants will need to attend the forum meeting at which their application is considered to share what they plan to do and answer any questions.
11. A recommendation on the application will be made by the forum's elected members to the council's Chief Officer Health and Wellbeing, or for Community Infrastructure Levy neighbourhood funding, to the Chief Officer Regeneration and Enterprise.
12. A funding approval may be given with particular conditions attached e.g. equipment purchased to be shared with other organisations.

Notes:

Note 1. Individual community forums reserve the right to make exceptions depending on the circumstances of the application.

Note 2: Capital – one-off expenditure on buying equipment, vehicles, land or buildings, or carrying out improvements or new build. Revenue – expenditure on running costs of projects or activities, including staff costs and purchase of consumable items or services.

Note 3: an alternative way to apply will be available to people who may have difficulty in completing the application form because of a disability

Terms and conditions of funding

Payment will usually be made once work or an activity has been carried out and/or goods/equipment purchased and related paid invoices or receipts provided to the council.

If approved, funding will be provided on the basis that:

1. The funding is spent within nine months of approval by the community forum i.e. paid invoices/receipts are submitted to the council within this timescale. If (in exceptional circumstances) funding has been provided in advance, paid invoices/receipts must be provided to the council within three months or the money will need to be repaid to the council.
2. A representative of the organisation attends a meeting of the community forum within twelve months of the application being approved to share feedback about the difference the funding has made.
3. The organisation uses the funding only for the purpose stated, agrees to provide any extra information that the Council may require and allows Council officers to inspect goods/equipment purchased, if required.
4. Any goods/equipment funded are sufficiently insured.
5. The Council's internal and external auditors have the right to inspect documentation relating to the funding application.
6. If funding has been awarded based on misleading or inaccurate information, or the organisation receives funding for the same items from another source, the organisation will repay part or all of the allocation as required by the Council.

Elected members, when considering community forum applications:

1. should apply the funding criteria for applicants in considering applications; the council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, and the council's legal powers must be complied with in dealing with applications;
2. should declare any interests that they have in any of the applications to be considered;
3. will make recommendations on applications for community forum funding to the Chief Officer Health and Wellbeing who has delegated authority for community forum funding and to the Chief Officer Regeneration and Enterprise for Community Infrastructure Levy neighbourhood funding;
4. are free to decide whether to pool their resources across wards or to use each ward allocation only for applications relating to that ward;
5. may wish to identify with the local community some priorities for their areas on an annual or other basis and invite grant applications which relate to these;
6. should allow applicants, who will be asked to attend forum meetings, to present their applications, and successful applicants, who will be attending a future meeting, to provide feedback. This will help in establishing accountability and a clear audit trail for expenditure, as well as sharing learning and inspiration with other community groups; and
7. have discretion in dealing with applications at meetings in the absence of the applicants.

High Street Innovation/Empty Shops Grant Funding Applications

1. One-off funding has been made available in the 2014/15 financial year for projects which improve the appearance or economic vitality of an area, with preference to the Borough's Centres and High Streets.
2. The Council will decide which source of funding successful applications will use, but as guidance for applicants High Street Innovation/Empty Shops Grant funding will be considered for the following:-

Eligible proposals

- Proposals will be considered either for Capital or Revenue activities.
- Proposals are preferred for projects within the Borough's defined Principal or Local Centres, but applications may be considered in any location where benefits to the local economy or environment may be demonstrated.
- Proposals that show a partnership approach (between for example business and the Community will be preferred).

Ineligible proposals

- Proposals which create ongoing revenue costs for the Council. Proposals must demonstrate how any improvements will be maintained.
- Proposals which are required as a direct result of a planning condition, enforcement action or any other statutory consent.
- Proposals that do not have the agreement of the owner or occupier of land or property affected.
- Proposals that do not have a realistic prospect of being granted planning permission.

Suggested areas of expenditure

- Proposals to improve the appearance or condition of empty commercial or retail premises.
- Proposals to improve vacant or unsightly land.
- Match funding to support funding bids for the above.
- Activities and events to support centres economic vitality.