

Stourbridge Area Committee - 12th March 2007

Report of the Area Liaison Officer

Capital Allocations

Purpose of Report

1. To consider a number of applications for a capital allocation.

Background

2. Including a repayment of £5,000 by the Pedmore Fields Tenants' Association the Area Committee has an unallocated capital budget of £11,727.41 for 2006/7.
3. The Area Committee has previously agreed that contributions from the budget will be limited to £5,000 unless exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated. Spending proposals are invited from members of the Area Committee, the public, representative organisations and Council departments, and each proposal is assessed against the following criteria:-
 - (a) The allocation is 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 Plan 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 ongoing revenue cost to the Council;
 - (e) Consideration should be given to schemes which might generate external funding (i.e. using the allocation as match-funding);
 - (f) Spending must be in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, and demonstrate Best Value; and

- (g) Approved allocations must normally be claimed within six months.
4. A copy of the applications referred to in this report are available to Members on request.
 5. The aggregate of outstanding applications exceeded the unallocated capital budget for 2006/7. Accordingly, the Area Committee deferred a decision on the application by Lye Cricket Club to enable it to be considered at this meeting with other unresolved applications.

Application by Lye Cricket Club

6. An application has been submitted by Lye Cricket Club who are based at Stourbridge Road, Lye.

The Club currently has 90 members of whom 65 live within Stourbridge.

7. The original application was for a capital allocation of £4,787 to purchase a:-
 - Second-hand mower to replace the current mower which has almost finished
 - Grass seed and fertiliser spreader
 - Spiker for the cricket square
 - Loam spreader for the cricket square.
8. The latest Annual Accounts for the Club to the year ended 30th September 2005 indicates that the Club made a surplus in 2004/5 of just over £1,500 with a little over £5,000 in their Bank Account. In a letter dated the 30th January 2007, however. The Club have stated that they only have approximately £2,400 in their bank account.
9. The Club have submitted an alternative proposal in which the purchase of the second-hand mower is withdrawn thereby reducing the application to £2,863.59. The Club would then have the existing mowers and tractor repaired and serviced.
10. At the January meeting reference was made to previous financial support given to the Club by the Area Committee. In fact 2 capital allocations of £5,000 each were awarded in April 2003 and June 2006 and a grant of £5,000 was awarded by the Stevens Trust in August 2003.
11. This application appears to satisfy the criteria set out in paragraph 3 above.

Application by the New Road Stourbridge Methodist Church

12. An application has been submitted by the New Road Methodist Church, Stourbridge.
13. The application is in respect of a project to redevelop the Church and other buildings on the site including:-

- Construction of a mezzanine floor within the Church
 - An extension at the rear of the Church
 - Concentration of all existing facilities within 1 main complex
 - Provision of disabled access to front and rear of the building
 - A modern kitchen
 - An energy-efficient heating system
 - Flexible seating arrangements.
14. The scheme has been costed at £570,000 (including VAT). Fundraising has been in place for 4 years and is on-going. The Church hope to commence construction in March 2007 with completion within 6 months. The budget for the project is as follows:-
- Donations and fundraising to date £85,000
 - Promises given and expected donations £100,000
 - Sale of redundant buildings £250,000
 - Local grants and charities £135,000.
- Total £570,00.
15. Activities currently held at the Church which will enjoy the benefits of the scheme include:-
- Weekly drop-in cafe
 - Mums and toddlers group
 - Local music group
 - Bee-keepers
 - Ladies group
 - Robin Woods library
 - Art class
 - Stroke Club
16. All meetings are open to anyone in the local community.

17. The application is for an allocation of £5,000 and, if this is approved by the Committee, it would be subject to the usual condition that it would not be payable until the balance of funding had been secured.
18. This application appears to satisfy the criteria set out in paragraph 3 above.

Application by the Orchard Partnership

19. The Orchard Partnership is based at the Kids Orchard Centre, Lye By-pass, Lye, Stourbridge.
20. The Orchard Partnership provides support, information and leisure activities for children with disabilities and their families including Youth Groups, friendship and leisure groups, Saturday Club, toy libraries, family support services, summer play schools, health walks and parent support groups.
21. The application is for an allocation of £914.91 for the purchase of tables and a storage trolley to enable the alteration of facilities at the centre to accommodate the different groups and activities that are delivered. At times the setting up and removal of tables is frequent and urgent.
22. The Income Statement for the Orchard Partnership for the period 24th November 2005 – 20th October 2006 showed a net deficit of £1, 218.50 but the Balance Sheet at the 20th November 2006 showed cash at bank of £10,999.02.
23. This application appears to satisfy the criteria set out in paragraph 3 above.

Application by the Friends of Wychbury Park

24. An application has been submitted by the Friends of Wychbury Park inviting the Committee to reallocate the £5,000 returned by the Pedmore Fields Tenants' Association referred to in paragraph 5 above. The Friends have a project to purchase and install children's play equipment (5 – 12 years) in Wychbury Park
25. The application is to add £5,000 to the project cost of £25,000 with the balance to be paid as follows: -
 - £7,500 from the Transforming your Space Fund
 - £5,000 from Awards for All
 - £7,500 from the Landfill Trust
26. The applications to Awards for All and the Landfill Trust have not yet been secured and, therefore, if this application is approved by the Committee, it will be subject to the usual proviso that the allocation will not be paid until the balance of funding has been obtained.
27. This application appears to satisfy the criteria set out in paragraph 3 above.

Application by the Pedmore Fields Residents Association

28. An application has been submitted by the Pedmore Fields Residents' Association. Among other things the Association organises activities at Wychbury Park, a small enclosed park on the estate, for the benefit of local residents. The Association considers that another activity such as outdoor table tennis would enhance the wellbeing and health and residents and at the same time help to reduce anti-social behaviour.
29. The application submitted by the Association is for an allocation of £536 to purchase outdoor table tennis equipment.
30. As at the 5th November 2006 the Association had a little under £400 in its bank account.
31. This application appears to satisfy the criteria set out in paragraph 3 above.

Application by the Fantasy Dance Group

32. the Fantasy Dance Group is based at Hob Green Primary School and was founded in October 2002.
33. The main aims of the Group are to promote social inclusion for young people through dance activities and help reduce acts of anti-social behaviour by young people in the locality.
34. The application is for an allocation of £299.99 for the purchase of a micro hi-fi system to replace their current antiquated equipment.
35. The annual accounts of the Group for the year ending 31st August 2006 showed a surplus of £848.13 and their bank balance as at the 19th January 2007 was £681.25.
36. This application appears to satisfy the criteria set out in paragraph 3 above.

Options

37. The combined total of the 6 applications is £14,614.49 but the available budget is £11,727.41 i.e. a shortfall of £2887.08.
38. The Committee will obviously look at each application on its merits but in view of the shortfall in the budget, the Committee has the following 2 broad options:-
 - Allocate a reduced sum to one or more of the applications bearing in mind the financial position of each applicant
 - Defer one or more of the applications until the first meeting in 2007/8.

Finance

39. The Area Committee's delegated budget allocation is funded by the Council's mainstream capital resources. The current position with regard to available resources for 2006/7 is set out in paragraphs 2 and 27 of this report.

Law

40. Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000, enables the Council to do any thing which it considers is likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well being of the Borough or any part of it.

Equality Impact

41. This report complies fully with the Council's policies on equal opportunities and diversity. Both applications involve facilities which are available to children and young people.

Recommendation

42. It is recommended that the Area Committee consider the applications submitted by Lye Cricket Club, the New Road Stourbridge Methodist Church, the Orchard Partnership, the Friends of Wychbury Park, Pedmore Fields Residents' Association and Fantasy Dance Group.

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List of Background Papers

1. Application submitted by Lye Cricket Club
2. Application submitted by New Road Methodist Church
3. Application submitted by the Orchard Partnership
4. Application submitted by the Friends of Wychbury Park
5. Application submitted by Pedmore Fields' Residents Association
6. Application submitted by Fantasy Dance Group