

Castle and Priory, St. James's and St. Thomas's Community Forum

28th January 2015

Report of the Lead Officer

Community Forum – Love Your Local Community Funding

Purpose of Report

1. To consider the allocation of expenditure from the Community Forum Funding budget for the 2014/15 financial year.
2. The Community Forum is asked to consider making recommendations on the applications referred to below taking account of the corporately agreed guidelines for considering funding applications as attached to this report.

Background

3. The ten Community Forums are responsible for allocating expenditure from the delegated Community Forum Funding budget. The guidelines against which allocations from the delegated budget should be considered are set out in Appendix 1. These are corporate guidelines only and it is ultimately for each Community Forum to decide on individual applications. The guidelines have been updated to take account of the additional funding relating to the High Street Innovation and Empty Shops Grant funding.
4. This report contains only a brief summary of each application along with the amount of grant requested. Copies of the application forms referred to in this report and associated background information have been e-mailed to Members prior to the meeting.

Application Considered under Delegated Powers

Dudley MBC – Environmental Management Division (St James Ward)

5. An application was submitted to the last meeting of this Community Forum from Dudley MBC – Environmental Management Division for funding of up to £10,289.72.90 towards the purchase and erection of Christmas trees at two locations. Funding of £1289.72 for the tree to be located at Stone Street Square (St James's ward) was approved.

6. The application for a Christmas Tree at Milking Bank was deferred pending confirmation of details of the proposed location. It has since been confirmed that the tree is to be located on Dibdale Road, opposite the Meadowlark and falls into the Castle and Priory Ward. Following receipt of the information Members subsequently recommended refusal of the application.

Deferred Application for Consideration at this Meeting

Duke of Edinburgh Award Association (All Wards)

7. An application was submitted to the last meeting of this Community Forum from the Dudley Duke of Edinburgh Award Association for funding of £5,000 for ten leaders to attend Basic Expedition Leadership training at £300 per person plus an additional £110 for first aid training. Any remaining funding will go towards a higher qualification of £500 per person. Previously training was funded by the Local Authority Youth Service.
8. The application was submitted to all Community Forums for consideration and it was proposed that Members consider whether an appropriate grant contribution of up to £500 should be approved by this Community Forum in accordance with the guidelines for considering funding applications. Members of this Forum deferred the application pending further information to ascertain the direct benefit to the local Wards covered by this Forum. The outcome from other Community Forums is as set out below:-

Amblecote, Cradley and Wollescote and Lye and Stourbridge North Community Forum – Approved £500

Belle Vale, Hayley Green and Cradley South Community Forum – Approved £500

Brierley Hill and Brockmoor and Pensnett Community Forum – Approved £500

Coseley East/Sedgley Community Forum – Refused

Gornal and Upper Gornal and Woodsetton Community Forum – Not submitted

Halesowen North and Halesowen South Community Forum – Approved £500

Kingswinford North and Wall Heath, Kingswinford South and Wordsley Community Forum – Approved £500

Netherton, Woodside and St Andrews/Quarry Bank and Dudley Wood Community Forum – Not submitted

Norton, Pedmore and Stourbridge East, Wollaston and Stourbridge Town – Approved £500

9. A response has been received from the applicant stating that there are 5 groups providing The Duke of Edinburgh's Award programme in the area at the following schools or colleges:- Bishop Milner, Dormston, High Arcal, Dudley College and an Open Award group based at Merry Hill which takes participants from all over the Borough. These groups at present have 115 participants out of a Borough total of approximately 500 plus. The Forum is therefore requested to consider allocating up to £500 as a contribution to this project.

Application Considered at Previous Meeting

Arc-Aid

10. Members will recall that at the last meeting an application was considered in relation to Arc-Aid Charity Shop. The application was refused. Subsequently a letter has been received from Arc-Aid seeking reconsideration of the Forum's recommendation to refuse the applications. The letter has been circulated to Members by email and views are sought on the request.

Finance

11. Community Forums receive £10,000 per ward to allocate annually.
12. Current balance to award across wards:-

<u>Ward</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Castle and Priory	£5,591.57
St James's	£19,969.35
St Thomas's	£2,391.52
Total	£27,952.44

This amount includes unspent balances from 2013/14 and accounts for resources allocated to former Area Committees.

The High Street Innovation/Empty Shops Grant allocation is as follows:-

<u>Ward</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Castle and Priory	£6,973.38
St James's	£6,973.38
St Thomas's	£6,973.38
Total	£ 20,920.13

Law

13. The Localism Act 2011 gives the Council a power of general competence to act in the interests of the Community.
14. 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

15. The awarding of a capital grant to community and voluntary organisations is specifically intended to secure general social benefits and improved well-being across community groups.

Recommendation

16. That the Forum considers the applications referred to in the report and make recommendations to the Director of Corporate Resources on each individual application as appropriate.



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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.
- Appendix 1 – Corporate Guidelines for considering funding applications.

Community Forums Guidelines for funding applications

Every funding application will be considered on its own individual merits by community forum elected members, who will take into account the funding available and make recommendations on each application to the Council's Director of Corporate Resources.

Applications will be considered only from voluntary and community organisations that are based in the Dudley borough. Applications should be submitted through a parent organisation e.g. a sports club rather than an individual team within a club.

Applications are to be submitted at least 21 days before a community forum meeting in order to be considered at that meeting. Later applications will be considered at the next available forum meeting. Elected members can make recommendations on genuinely urgent applications between forum meetings.

A decision on an individual application will not be seen as setting a precedent for the consideration of any other applications received by the Council or another community forum.

All expenditure must be in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, be subject to the Council's legal powers and demonstrate good value for money. Quotations must be provided in line with the Council's procedure rules. Details are set out in the application form.

Guidelines for considering applications

The following guidelines are to assist elected members in considering funding applications. Individual community forums reserve the right to make exceptions to these guidelines depending on the circumstances of each individual application.

1. Funding may be spent on "capital" and/or "revenue" schemes. (**Capital:** one-off expenditure on buying, constructing or improving land, buildings, equipment or vehicles; **revenue:** expenditure on running costs of projects or activities, including staff costs and the purchase of consumables and services from third parties. Priority will be given to one-off, time-limited, or start-up spend, rather than ongoing running costs which should normally be funded by the organisation itself.)
2. Schemes should contribute to the aims of the Community Strategy and not conflict with Council policy. Schemes should be for the general benefit of the wider community, not just for the benefit of individuals or specific groups and should make a difference in the local area.

3. Funding applications may be submitted to more than one community forum depending on the area(s) of benefit. Each individual forum shall retain discretion over its own funding allocation. A recommendation made by one community forum shall not create an expectation that it will be supported by another forum.
4. Schemes should not result in any on-going revenue costs that the organisation cannot fund from its own resources e.g. running costs or repair and maintenance of buildings and equipment.
5. Individual funding applications should be for a maximum of £5,000 unless there are exceptional circumstances. Organisations will be encouraged to match fund or seek further funding through other means. Priority will be given to schemes that might generate such funding.
6. Applications will not normally be considered from organisations who have previously received funding from a community forum (or former area committee) within the previous three years.
7. Representatives of organisations submitting applications are encouraged to attend the forum meeting and to speak if they wish in support of their applications.
8. Once an application has been approved, it will be on the condition that the funding is spent within nine months, otherwise the funding will be returned to the Council. A fresh application would need to be submitted and approved in order for the funding to be released.
9. In appropriate circumstances, funding may be given on condition that certain items of equipment purchased with the funding are made available for use by other organisations.

High Street Innovation/Empty Shops Grant Funding Applications

10. 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.
11. 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 of up to £5,000 in value (including VAT where applicable).
- 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.