

DECISION REPORT – GRANT APPLICATIONS

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Summary

This report considers the first two applications for grant funding submitted to the Bowbrook, Copthorne and Radbrook Local Joint Committee (LJC) for 2009/10.

A total of £28,000 has been devolved to the committee to fund projects in the local community served by the LJC. At the present time, no funds have been allocated to any specific purpose. The two applications received are:

- Meole Scout and Guide Group for £800 against total project cost of £2337.95 for furniture and related equipment (application has also been made to Meole, Column and Sutton LJC).
- Bowbrook Allotment Community.

Recommendations

It is recommended to the Bowbrook, Copthorne and Radbrook Local Joint Committee that:

A) The following applications are approved:

- a. £800 towards total project costs of £2337.95 to enable the Meole Scout and Guide Group to purchase new furniture and related equipment.
- b. £1950 towards total project costs of £2438 to enable the Bowbrook Allotment Community to purchase items to develop natural areas for community use.

Report

1. From 1 April 2009 Shropshire Council has created 28 Local Joint Committees to operate across the whole of Shropshire. These LJC's are legally constituted decision making committees of Shropshire Council.
2. The LJC for Bowbrook, Copthorne and Radbrook has membership from Shropshire Council (3 members) and Shrewsbury Town Council (3 members) all with equal voting rights. Currently, 3 councillors represent the wards on both councils. In these circumstances, the 3 individuals each have 2 votes.
3. One of the main responsibilities of the LJC is to determine expenditure of the devolved budget. A budget of £28,000 has been made available to the LJC for the current financial year. Expenditure against this budget is agreed by the Committee after consideration of decision reports. Each member has 2 votes, with decisions determined by a simple majority.
4. The funding devolved to the LJC can be used for a number of different purposes over the year. At the present time, the Committee has not allocated funds to any specific purposes but has indicated that it will receive applications from local organisations for eligible purposes. Funding by the LJC must comply with the general Financial Rules for LJC's that are attached to this report. Applications must demonstrate compliance with the following criteria:
 - Expenditure must be consistent with achieving the aims, objectives and vision set out in Shropshire's Sustainable Community Strategy, the Council's Corporate Plans and local Neighbourhood or Parish Plans.
 - Expenditure must be for activity within the geographical area of the Local Joint Committee.
 - Expenditure must benefit the wider community and should not be used to fund a group which restricts membership based on views, beliefs etc. For example, it would not be appropriate to make a contribution to a religious group but a contribution to say, improvements to a church hall which is open for bookings from the wider community would be acceptable.
 - The budget must not be spent on mainstream council activities, but can be used to enhance mainstream activities.
 - The budget must not be a displacement of existing council funding. For example, a service cannot be reinstated from the local budget if the council has cut funding for it in the previous 3 years.
 - The budget should not be used to meet ongoing staffing costs of an organisation.
5. The application received from the Meole Scout and Guide Group is for a contribution to the cost of purchasing new tables and chairs. The group is run by volunteers and is self funding and serves a wide catchment that spreads across more than one LJC. Accordingly, the group has also applied for funds to the Meole, Column and Sutton LJC. That LJC is due to consider the

application on 15, October 2009. The group states that 55 members currently live in this LJC area, 31 in the Meole, Column and Sutton area and 23 live in other areas, although clearly this could change over time. The group wishes to replace heavy and dilapidated furniture which does not meet health and safety guidelines. This will allow a wider range of activities to be provided safely. The total cost of the furniture, to be purchased through West Mercia Supplies, is £2337.95. The group is seeking £800 from each LJC and intends to fund the remaining £737.95 itself.

6. The application from the Bowbrook Allotment Community is for a lawnmower, rotating compost bin, rainwater dividers, picnic tables, security and trees, as part of their 'BAC Embraces the Community' project. The group wishes to provide rest areas, nature trails, meadow walks and an orchard on surplus greenspace, to encourage wildlife and enable organised groups from the local community, such as schools, cubs and guides, to enjoy and learn from the facility. The group is newly established and has therefore had little time to build up funds whilst having to meet start-up costs. Current funds in hand are needed to pay rent to the council and cover running costs. The total cost of the items is £2438 and the full cost is requested. In reaching a decision, members will wish to consider whether all of the items proposed to be purchased are mostly for the benefit of the allotment holders themselves or for both allotment holders and the wider community; it is suggested that the compost bin and rainwater divider have limited community benefit although these are related to the improvement of the site as organic, environmentally sustainable allotments. They will also wish to take into account that the applicants state that they are not able to contribute their own funds to the project at this stage.

7. A standard Application Form has been produced for use by all LJC's across the County. A copy is attached to this report along with the Finance Procedure Rules that must be followed (Appendices A and B).

<p>List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)</p>
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| <p>1. Locality Working – Local Joint Committees Supplementary Report – Implementation Executive 19 March 2009.</p> |
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<p>Human Rights Act Appraisal</p>
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<p>At this stage the recommendations are unlikely to result in any implications for the Human Rights Act.</p>

<p>Environmental Appraisal</p>

<p>The Meole Scout and Guide Group application is neutral in its impact on the environment. The Bowbrook Allotment Community would have appositve impact on the environment.</p>
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Risk Management Appraisal
The Council needs to address the risk of legal challenge to decisions through procedural or other errors. This has been carefully assessed.
Community / Consultations Appraisal
None has been carried out on these applications.
Cabinet Member
Gwilym Butler
Local Members
Peter Nutting, Peter Adams, Keith Roberts
Appendices
A Application Form B Finance Procedure Notes