

## DECISION REPORT – GRANT APPLICATIONS

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### Summary

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

A total of £38,000 has been devolved to the committee to fund projects in the local community served by the LJC. At the present time, funds have been allocated to projects, totalling £2,750. This leaves £35,250 in the current year's budget.

The two applications now under consideration are for:

- £500 for publicity for the Time2PLAY Toy Library, submitted by the Pre-school Learning Alliance; and
- £6,000 for community planning activity within the LJC area, submitted on behalf of the Bowbrook, Copthorne and Radbrook Community Planning Group.

### Recommendations

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

A) The following application is approved:

- £6,000 for community planning activity within the LJC area, on behalf of the Bowbrook, Copthorne and Radbrook Community Planning Group.

B) The following application is deferred to enable alternative sources of support to be investigated:

- £500 for publicity for the Time2PLAY Toy Library.

## Background

1. From 1 April 2009, Shropshire Council has created 28 Local Joint Committees to operate across the whole of Shropshire. These LJs 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 £38,000 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.

## Purposes of the funding

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 LJs 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.

## **Decision-making procedure**

5. The LJC elected Members will decide on applications for funding and their decisions will be taken in public, following the process below:
  - A written report by the Lead Officer, setting out the details of applications received and recommending a course of action;
  - A brief verbal introduction to the applications, by the Lead Officer, at the meeting;
  - Questions by the elected Members of the officers and/or the applicants (if present);
  - Elected Members take the decision.

A slightly different process will need to be taken if there are fewer than three elected Members present, as that is the number required to form a quorum.

## **Application on behalf of the Bowbrook, Copthorne and Radbrook Community Planning Group**

6. The project is seeking funding to produce a “community plan” for the Bowbrook, Copthorne and Radbrook wards. The plan will be a statement of how the community sees itself developing in the future. It will set out the needs and aspirations of the community, based on the views and opinions of the people that live there. The plan will evolve as needs and aspirations change.
7. The need for a community plan to be developed for the area arises mainly from the issues raised at the first two meetings of the LJC about availability of community venues and sports facilities. A meeting in December 2009 identified gaps and opportunities for provision and a number of people have volunteered to form a group to take forward the issues through a community planning process. This process will help to provide evidence of community involvement to support any bids for funding. It will also assist the LJC, Shropshire Council, Shrewsbury Town Council and other service providers to understand the community’s issues and priorities.
8. At this stage, the application has been made by Gwyn Bevan, the LJC’s Community Regeneration Officer, to enable funds to be identified and made available when the Community Planning Group has been formed, which is intended to be by April. Between June and August, questionnaires would be distributed and returned by the end of August. Public consultation events are

planned at key stages with a view to having a draft plan by the end of March 2011. The £6,000 budget is intended to cover questionnaire distribution, collection and collation, the public consultation events and printing costs.

9. The application meets the criteria for funding set out in paragraph 4.

### **Application by Time2PLAY Toy Library**

10. The application has been submitted by the Pre-school Learning Alliance, a registered charity. The organisation is based at Owen House on the Radbrook College complex. It has a stock of over 2,000 quality items of play and educational equipment suitable for the 0-5 age group. This provides an environmentally-friendly (by reducing wastage of equipment) services that is able to provide parents and toddler groups with the appropriate toys for children's' developmental needs. The service is run by volunteers and charges just £12 per year membership.
11. It currently has 225 individual members and 120 toddler groups but, despite the recession, use of the service is declining (the Telford Toy Library has recently closed). The centre serves a Shropshire-wide catchment but states that local residents are currently accessing the service.
12. The application is for £300 towards printing of leaflets, £100 for printing of "small flyers" and £100 for printing and laminating of signs (total £500). It wishes to place these in nurseries, pre-schools and childcare facilities and to advertise locally. The signs are intended to be displayed by pre-school groups to indicate that they are part of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.
13. The application is for a modest amount of money and in support of an undoubtedly worthy cause and meets all of the criteria set out in paragraph 4. However, as this is a Shropshire-wide service that just happens to be located in Radbrook, it is considered that further investigation of corporate or other sources of funding should be carried out. It may be that the Council could provide more effective support in kind in order to promote the service through its information channels and networks.
14. Therefore, it is recommended that the application should be deferred. If, however, any further information is available by the date of the meeting, this will be reported verbally.

<p><b>List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)</b></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><b>Human Rights Act Appraisal</b></p>
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<p>At this stage, the recommendations are unlikely to result in any implications for the</p>
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Human Rights Act.
<b>Environmental Appraisal</b>  Both of the projects would have a positive impact on the environment.
<b>Risk Management Appraisal</b>  The Council needs to address the risk of legal challenge to decisions through procedural or other errors. This has been carefully assessed. There are no risks specifically relating to the two applications.
<b>Community / Consultations Appraisal</b>  The community Planning Project has been the subject of previous discussions at the LJC and at a specific meeting.  None has been carried out on the application from the Pre-School Learning Alliance.
<b>Cabinet Member</b>  Gwilym Butler
<b>Local Members</b>  Peter Nutting, Peter Adams, Keith Roberts
<b>Appendices</b>  Financial Rules for LJC's