

Abingdon Area Committee

Report of Head of Corporate Strategy

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To: Abingdon Area Committee

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Capital Community Grants

Recommendation

(a) that the committee approves the officer recommendations for the new capital community grant applications which have been received

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is for the committee to consider the officer recommendations for the applications received.

Strategic Objectives

2. The council has a corporate priority to offer support to local communities by offering grants to voluntary and community organisations who are delivering projects and services that support the council's own objectives or those in need.

Background

3. The committee's budget for capital community grants in 2012/13 is £26,514.
4. The capital community grant scheme opened on 23 July 2012 and closed on 28 September 2012.
5. Officers received two applications requesting a total of £6,011, a summary of these is shown below and an officer appraisal for each application is attached at *appendix 1* of this report.

Ref:	organisation	project	project cost £	total points scored	grant requested £	officer recommendation £
915	Abingdon Rowing Club	new flooring for gym	2,021	105	1,011	1,011
972	Preston Road Community Centre Association	electric lighting replacement & new tables	8,618	80	5,000	1,670
				Total	6,011	2,681

6. Officers used a scoring system¹ to help in evaluating each application. The scoring system is a fair and transparent way of evaluating applications. Details of the scoring system approved by the cabinet member are attached at *appendix 2*.
7. The recommendations from officers for all capital community grant applications are based on the scoring criteria shown below.

Approved Scoring Criteria	
Total points score	
100 or more	officers recommend that the project is a funding priority
80 or more	officers recommend that the project receives some funding
79 or less	officers recommend that the project does not receive funding

Financial Implications

The Abingdon Area Committee has £26,514 available to allocate towards capital projects in 2012-13.

These funds can only be awarded towards projects that meet the council's budgetary and audit requirements for capital expenditure.

Any revenue costs included in applications will be removed from the amount requested and their application figures revised during the officer evaluation and their workings shown in the officer's comments sections. Award recommendations will be made on the capital expenditure only.

Legal Implications

8. The area committees have delegated authority from the previous Executive to determine grant applications. There is also a delegated authority for the head of corporate strategy in consultation with the chair of the relevant area committee to determine grant awards up to £1,000.

Risks

9. There are no risk implications arising from this report.

¹ The cabinet member for grants approved the scoring system on 2 July 2012

Conclusion

10. The Abingdon Area Committee is requested to consider and determine the two grant applications received.

Background Papers

- individual cabinet member decision of 2 July 2012

Appendix 1

Vale Capital Community Grants Officer Evaluation

915		
Abingdon Rowing Club		
Gym flooring for new gym		
To provide suitable flooring for a new gym that is currently being built with the help of a Sport England grant awarded as part of the "Inspired Facilities" funding. The floor needs to be suitable for mainly circuit training, weight training and ergs (indoor rowing machines) as well as being able to withstand flooding.		
Project Information		
1	How will your project broaden the range of activities/facilities on offer to the community?	
	At the moment there are no public or membership gyms located in South Abingdon within a reasonable radius from Abingdon Rowing Club (ARC). Once complete, the facilities will be offered for use to groups (for example the Canoe Club which is housed next door to ARC) and individuals within the local community. An uncovered (bare concrete) floor would limit the potential use of the gym to ARC members as well as reducing its attractiveness to others in the community.	
Officer comments:	The project offers an extensive level of extra facilities and activities to the community. The gym will be opened up to community groups and membership will be available for non-rowers resulting in a facility becoming available to residents with nothing similar in the immediate area.	Score 15
2	How did you consult with the local community?	
	Our membership is drawn from the local community and we are in close, regular contact with neighbouring clubs and residents. Our Sports England Application required us to show that we are actively involved in the Community. We were able to demonstrate that we are actively involve in the community in a number of ways e.g. we work with local schools to encourage student to take up rowing, we run the most heavily attended public event (Abingdon head of River Race), we provide safety equipment and support to the Dragon Boat racing.	
Officer comments:	The application shows minimal levels of consultation with the community regarding the gym and specifically the type of matting required.	Score 5
3	How do you know that the community need this project?	
	The Olympics have caused a huge upturn in interest in rowing. Normally we have a regular stream of people of all ages enquiring and taking our Learn to Row courses. The upturn in interest is giving us more enquires than we can manage and it is clear that there is more than a latent interest in rowing in Abingdon. Additionally, our facilities are not comparable to our closest neighbours Oxford (c. 10 miles up the river) and Wallingford (c. 12 miles down the river). This mean that members who progress and want to compete at a high level are 'forced' to move and hence travel long distances to train. The gym and the flooring will bring us one-step closer to becoming a real alternative to Oxford or Wallingford.	
Officer comments:	The project offers a good level of local need. While there are gyms in Abingdon, they are not in South Abingdon. The new gym will be open to non-rowing members and community groups. There has been an increase in the number of enquiries and learn to row classes, should these develop into members they would require a well-equipped gym to retain them and meet their training needs.	Score 10
4	Who will benefit from your project?	
	The gym facility will contribute to retaining existing as well as attracting new members. The gym will be made available to other community groups and we will offer a gym only membership. Key	

	beneficiaries will therefore include existing rowing members, new rowing members, new gym only members and local groups who need the facility. Our membership ranges from Juniors (from age 11) to Seniors to Masters (the oldest member is 69). The equal opportunity terms of the Sport England award also require that the new gym is accessible for disabled as well as able-bodied people and we are very happy to do so.			
Officer comments: The project offers an extensive level of benefit to residents including disabled residents and young people		Score	15	
Project Viability				
1	How is your project reasonable and appropriate for the area?			
	ARC has been in existence as a community-based club since 1958. In that time it has produced national junior champions, but it has not been possible to maintain the quality of our facilities without grant and other external funding. Gym work is an essential part of training, particularly in the winter months when darkness makes river work more difficult and this upgrade will allow ARC to continue to offer the full range of rowing activity within the community.			
2	How does your project deliver best value for money?			
	The gym cannot function as a gym without the flooring. The Boat House also needs to be able to withstand flooding, which limits our options for flooring. We have looked at two different floor-covering options and the Jordan quote was the least expensive while still being able to tolerate flooding.			
3	Is your project likely to secure full funding and progress within 12 months?			
	Full funding cannot be secured but the club can meet 50% of the cost. The building work is due to start in September 2012 and finish around the end of the year. Without help from this grant, the club would have to raise a loan to complete the flooring.			
4	How will your organisation be able to manage the project now and in the future?			
	The actual building project will be managed by suitably qualified club members. Our overall Agreement with Sport England means that, every 6 months we have to report numbers for the first five years of our project. We are keen that the gym is used to its full capacity and will make gym only memberships available. Our thorough monitoring will tell us the extent to which the gym is being utilised and we will act as necessary to encourage use.			
Officer comments: The project shows potential for being viable and justifiable. The building of the new gym (funded separately) will be complete towards the beginning of 2013 and the flooring will be laid very soon after this. The project depends on 50 per cent of the funding coming from grants. They have only applied to our scheme to meet this funding need. There is a lack of gym facilities in the South Abingdon area and the facility will be available for non-rowers and community groups as well as rowing members. The gym will be accessible to disabled residents.		Score	60	
Officer scoring point system: 100 or more – officers recommend that the project is a funding priority 80 or more – officers recommend that the project receives some funding 79 or less – officers recommend that the project does not receive funding		Total	105	
Financial Details				
Amount requested	Total project cost	Town/Parish support	Secured Funding	Gap in funding
£1,011	£2,021	0	£1010 (own funds)	£1,011
Officer financial appraisal: The rowing club had an opening balance of £29,516 as at 1 April 2012. Although they will be incurring costs from a separate building project at the club, they are financially able to meet the remaining cost of the gym flooring.				

The club reported a small loss at the end of the last financial year due to the purchase of some major equipment; however the previous year showed a healthy surplus.

Comments Section

Consultation comments:

Jim Halliday - support awarding all they have requested – building is in need of upgrade and they have raised 50per cent of the funding themselves

Anthony De Vere -I can't comment about the Rowing club's application but would not object to this being granted.

Grant Officer Comments:

The project will allow the club to increase the size of their gym to nearly three times the size of the current space. Suitable matting will make the gym usable for a wide range of activities from using fixed equipment to floor exercise and will provide a safe and durable flooring that is able to withstand the high risk of flooding the building faces.

They will be able to offer the space out to non-rowers, which they have never been able to do previously and they will be able to attract and retain more members to the club rather than loose them to Oxford or Wallingford.

The club has secured funding to build the new wing separately to this flooring project; however without the gym flooring the new building will not be fully fit for purpose.

Officer recommendation, based on the scoring criteria is to that the application be viewed as a funding priority and be awarded the requested 50 per cent of the total project cost of £2,021. This will result in a grant payment of £1011.

A condition of any grant awarded should be that the gym must be opened to non-rowing members and community groups. Evidence must be provided to show this has been advertised and that the rates non-rowing members are charged are fair and reasonable.

Recommended Amount:	£1011
Approved Award:	

Vale Capital Community Grants Officer Evaluation

972		
Preston Rd Community Centre Assn		
Electric lighting replacement & new tables		
Replace 30 general use tables of which some are becoming unsafe .Replace all the lighting by a more efficient system to cut energy costs.		
Project Information		
1	How will your project broaden the range of activities/facilities on offer to the community?	
Better and more efficient lighting will cut costs and help all who use the centre to see more clearly. The tables are becoming unsafe and some can no longer be used.		
Officer comments:		
The project shows minimal evidence of extra facilities / activities.		
The project is to replace existing lighting and tables in the building, no new activities or facilities will be available after the work is completed although some improvement in lighting may benefit some groups and replacing tables, which are currently out of service, will help groups using the hall.	Score	5
The application does refer to some indirect potential to broaden the range by saving money on the lighting costs they would be able to either use the saving to help keep hire fees down and the facility accessible to more groups or potentially use the saving to help fund more facilities and improvements to the hall in the future.		
2	How did you consult with the local community?	
The community use the centre daily. The lace makers have to sit near windows and those that put tables up and take them down are particularly aware of the failing leg support mechanisms.		
Officer comments:		
The project shows minimal evidence of consultation.		
No evidence has been provided with the application to confirm the lighting of the hall is inadequate or that users have requested the lighting be improved.	Score	5
There is no energy audit included with the application to confirm the lighting needs to be upgraded or that the proposed upgrades are the best option.		
There is also no evidence supplied with the application from users of the tables declaring them as unsafe or the need for replacements.		
3	How do you know that the community need this project?	
The lights and tables are used daily and reducing energy costs will help to keep hiring fees down.		
Officer comments:		
The project shows good evidence of local need.		
The hall is reported to have a couple of hundred visitors each week from the local community and beyond. Little evidence has been given that these visitors use the tables or require the use of the hall lighting, or that they have requested for them to be improved and/or replaced.	Score	10
No evidence has been provided to show the works to the lighting will result in reduced energy consumption.		
No energy audit has been provided to show that works to the electrics are required or that the best solution has been identified.		

4	Who will benefit from your project?			
Everyone who uses the centre, currently, a few hundred each week.				
The project offers a good level of community benefit.				
While it is reported that a large number of people use the hall they do so using the existing facilities and no evidence has been provided to show more of the community would benefit from the project's completion.				
Replacing the tables that are becoming unsafe will allow current activities to continue and will ensure the safety of the users.				
Updating the lighting and making it more efficient will hopefully reduce the running costs of the centre and allow more funds to be used elsewhere to benefit the hall and its users.				
Score				
10				
Project Viability				
1	How is your project reasonable and appropriate for the area?			
The community centre serves one third of Abingdon residents and is used seven days a week. It is run mostly by volunteers and does fundraising continually to survive.				
2	How does your project deliver best value for money?			
The aim of this work is to further reduce energy costs				
3	Is your project likely to secure full funding and progress within 12 months?			
Yes.				
4	How will your organisation be able to manage the project now and in the future?			
The centre is managed by the continuing support of local volunteers and the project will be managed by the same individuals				
Officer comments:				
The project shows potential to be viable and justifiable for the area and is likely to commence in the next 12 months.				
The project is financially viable as the centre should be able to make up any shortfall in funding having reviewed their financial situation.				
The works would not be particularly time consuming so the project is likely to complete with 12 months.				
The project has not been fully justified as required in the application form.				
Officer scoring point system:				
100 or more – officers recommend that the project is a funding priority				
80 or more – officers recommend that the project receives some funding				
79 or less – officers recommend that the project does not receive funding				
Total				
80				
Financial Details				
Amount requested	Total project cost	Town/Parish support	Secured funding	Gap in funding
£5,000 (58 %)	£8,618	£1,000 (unsecured)	£2,618 (own funds)	£0 (58% award)
£2,087 (revised)	£4,174 (revised)			£0 (revised)
Officer financial appraisal:				
The cost to purchase the tables must be removed from the application, as they are revenue costs and cannot be included in any capital grant-funding award due to financial limitations on the capital grant award budget.				
Therefore the revised total project cost is £4,174. The maximum award available to the applicant would be £2,087. This would leave a gap in funding of £2,087 for the lighting project and £4,444 for the purchase of replacement tables.				
The hall has proposed to fund £2,618 from their own funds and they have applied for a grant of £1,000 from the town council, which has yet to be decided.				
No provision has been included for funding the project if either or both applications do not receive the full				

award requested however, the community hall reported a closing balance of £29,515 (restricted funds of £1000) on 30 April 2012. This should allow them to meet any shortfall in grant funding for this project.

Comments Section

Consultation comments:

Jim Halliday - This is a very worthwhile project and should be supported at the level they have requested especially as "*The community centre serves one third of Abingdon residents and is used seven days a week. It is run mostly by volunteers and does fundraising continually to survive.*"

Anthony De Vere (declared personal interest) - I would like to support the Preston Road CCA although I must declare a personal interest in that my wife Mary is involved (voluntarily) in the running of the Centre, but I do know at first hand how important their application is for tables and lighting. I regularly go in to help and use the centre as a paying customer. The tables, particularly, are getting past their sell by date and they are striving to get their electricity consumption down. The Centre is the only hall in south Abingdon to provide much needed community facilities. But I must declare a personal interest in endorsing their application.

Grant Officer Comments:

Officer recommendation would be to make it a condition of any award that an energy audit is carried out on the centre to ensure the lighting project is a suitable energy and cost saving project and to identify other areas the centre may wish to improve in the future.

Funding towards an energy audit can be requested from TOE2 via ORCC towards the cost of the energy audit and potentially towards works to make the building more secure. The grants officer would work with the applicant to achieve this.

Based on the scoring criteria the officer recommendation is to fund 40 per cent of the revised total project cost of £4,174 (lighting project only) resulting in an award of £1,670.

Recommended Amount:	£1,670
Approved Award:	

Ref no.	Organisation	Scheme	Scheme Cost £	Grant Sought	% total project cost requested	Broadening the range	Community Participation	Meeting local need	Community Benefit	Viability	Score	Recommended Award	recommended award % of total project cost	
915	Abingdon Rowing Club	New flooring for gym	£2,021	£1,011	50%	15	5	10	15	60	105	£1,011	50%	
972	Preston Road Community Centre Association	Electric lighting replacement & new tables	£8,618	£5,000	58%	5	5	10	10	50	80	£1,670	40% or revised cost as per officer comments	
Total			£6,011								Total	£2,681		
												Budget	£26,514	
												Remainder	£23,833	

100 or more	funding priority
80 or more	some funding
79 or less	no funding

Appendix 2

Capital Grant Policy and Procedure (revised April 2012)



Scoring criteria

Assessment methodology for capital grant applications

The council has a corporate objective to support local communities and their representative bodies to create opportunities to localise service delivery. It aims to offer grants to voluntary and community organisations who are delivering projects and services that support our own objectives or those identified as being in need. All applications will be assessed using the scoring system shown below.

Local issues up to 80 points

Scores of up to 20 points are available for each of the four categories shown below:

Broadening the range	<p>Is this more of the same or will the project enable new activities to take place?</p> <p>This will involve an assessment of the added value that the proposal brings. To score points a project must include evidence to show that a wider range of people will use the facility.</p>
Community participation	<p>To what extent has the relevant community been consulted and participated in putting the proposal together? Is the project identified in a local parish plan?</p> <p>A community need does not have to be geographically based and participation is not a headcount – the relevant community will vary in size dependent upon the project being proposed.</p>
Meeting a local need	<p>How well is this evidenced/detailed?</p> <p>Need and demand are different - this is about a proven lack of something that the project provides.</p>
Community benefit	<p>Who will benefit? This will go beyond a simple number count, to take account of the imbalance in size between different communities.</p> <p>Community benefit also includes wider social, economic and environmental benefits that contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and energy saving in the district.</p>

Viability of project**up to 60 points**

Scores of up to 60 points are available dependent on the viability of the project.

Viability	Is the project reasonable and appropriate for the area? Does the project deliver best value for money? Is the project likely to secure full funding and progress within 12 months? Will the organisation be able to manage the project now and in the future?
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Summary of scoring system

The maximum score is 140 made up as follows:

Assessment factor	Maximum points available
Broadening the range	20
Community participation	20
Meeting a local need	20
Community benefit	20
Viability	60
Total	140