

Abingdon Area Committee



Report of Head of Corporate Strategy

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To: Abingdon Area Committee

DATE: 28 April 2014

Capital Community Grants

Recommendation

that the committee approves the officer's recommendations for the four capital community grant applications referred to in paragraph 5 of this report.

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to ask the committee to consider the officer's recommendations for the four applications received for capital funding.

Strategic Objectives

2. The council has a corporate priority to offer support to local communities through grants to organisations delivering projects or services that support its own objectives or those in need.

Background

3. The budget for 2014/15 is £44,024 which includes £17,510 of unallocated budget from 2013/14 and under spends from completed projects.
 4. The capital community grant scheme opened on 7 January 2014 and closed on the 28 February 2014.
 5. The council received four valid applications requesting a total of £13,673. These are attached (see appendix one of this report) along with a summary of the officer's evaluations. A fifth application from Oxfordshire Playbus was rejected as the mandatory information was not provided.
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6. To ensure the applications were evaluated in a fair and transparent way the officer used the scoring system approved by the leader of the council, which is attached at appendix two.
7. The officer did not receive any feedback from councillors on any of the applications following their publication in the Vale Information Sheet.
8. The officer's recommendations for the four applications are based on the following scoring criteria.

Approved Scoring Criteria	
Total points score	
100 to 140	officers recommend the project is a funding priority
80 to 99	officers recommend the project receives some funding
79 or less	officers recommend the project does not receive funding

Financial Implications

9. The council can only award funding towards projects that meet its budget and audit requirements for capital expenditure. The officer has removed any revenue costs included in the applications and used the revised figures in their evaluations.
10. The budget remaining from this round will be available for a second one for the area committee to consider in November 2014. Any unallocated budget at the end of the financial year will automatically be carried forward to the area committee's budget for 2015/16.

Legal Implications

11. In July 2012 the leader of the council delegated authority to the four area committees to determine capital community grant applications and to the head of corporate strategy in consultation with the chair of the relevant area committee to determine grants up to £1,000.

Risks

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

Conclusion

13. The Abingdon Area Committee is asked to consider and determine the four grant applications received for capital funding.
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Appendix 1 - Capital Community Grants Officer Evaluation

Scoring summary

Ref no.	Organisation	Scheme	Scheme cost £	Amount requested	% total project cost requested	Broadening the range	Community participation	Meeting local need	Community benefit	Viability	Score	Recommended award	recommended award % of total project cost
1292	Abingdon Camera Club	Upgrading IT equipment	£3,695	£1,847	49.99%	10	10	10	10	60	100	£1,847	49.99%
1294	Abingdon Rugby Club	Replacement patio doors and shutters	£7,605	£3,800	49.97%	10	10	10	10	60	100	£3,800	49.97%
1297	Drayton Village Hall	Kitchen refurbishment, replacement windows and fire doors	£31,209	£5,000	16.02%	15	10	10	20	50	105	£5,000	16.02%
1299	St Nicolas Preschool Abingdon	Replacement of the outdoor play surface	£6,052	£3,026	50.00%	10	10	10	10	60	100	£3,026	50.00%
Total			£13,673								Total	£13,673	
100 to 140			funding priority								Budget	£44,024	
80 to 99			some funding								Remainder	£30,351	
79 or less			no funding										

Vale Capital Community Grants

Officer Evaluation

1292		
Abingdon Camera Club		
Upgrading IT equipment		
For many of the club's activities we use a laptop and data projector. With the increase in sophistication of digital cameras, these are both quite old and getting to be inadequate for our needs and now need to be replaced.		
Comments Section		
Consultation comments:		
None		
Grant officer comments and recommendation: The organisation reported a cash balance of £3,274 at the time of application and in its interim accounts for the period ending June 2013 also reported current cash reserves of £3,274. The organisation has not approached any other funding bodies for this project. Based on the total score officers recommend awarding 49.99 per cent of the total project cost to a maximum value of £1,847, (the amount requested).	Recommended award	£1,847
	Recommended %	49.99%
	Amount requested	£1,847
	% requested	49.99%
	Total project cost	£3,695
	Organisation's contribution	£1,848
	Organisation's bank balance at application	£3,274
	Town or parish contribution	£0
	Other secured funding	£0
Other unsecured funding	£0	
Project Information		
1	How will your project broaden the range of activities/facilities on offer to the community?	
Club meetings frequently involve the projection of digital images. Several meetings each year involve other local camera clubs. With our current equipment, the projection of images is now considered to be at a resolution which does not reflect the capabilities of the latest cameras and does not compare well with the equipment that is now common in other clubs. The purchase of a higher specification projector and laptop will display images at their best and should attract and retain more members.	Score	10/20
2	How did you consult with the local community?	
We currently have over 30 members and have active links with other local clubs whose memberships total the mid hundreds. In recent months our members have made negative comments about the quality of our equipment, but it is through conversations with these wider links, and guest speakers who visit clubs across the country, that we realise that our equipment compares badly and is no longer fit for purpose.	Score	10/20

3	How do you know that the community need this project?		
	Our members and visitors comment on problems concerning our 8 year old projector. Images are darker than they should be and the projector often needs to be recalibrated. For members and visitors it is de-motivating to see the image that looks superb on your home PC to be projected poorly. Also, when we have joint meetings with other clubs, the difference in resolution between equipment causes other problems in trying to match resolutions to produce fair comparisons between images.	Score	10/20
4	Who will benefit from your project?		
	The club is forward-looking, eg. running a public photography competition, and exhibition in the community shop last summer. It has increased in size over the last year and there are now significantly more women members, up to about 50%, and a greater number of younger people. If we can upgrade our equipment we will be able to offer a much better provision for viewing photographs and are likely to increase our appeal to the wider public and further develop photography appreciation and skills.	Score	10/20
Project Viability			
1	How is your project reasonable and appropriate for the area?		
	This IT equipment will stand us in good stead for several years. It will allow us to project images at their best and help make photography more attractive to our members and an increasing number of visitors and prospective members. It will put us in a comparable situation to other local clubs.		
2	How does your project deliver best value for money?		
	The price of IT equipment varies from day to day. We have researched our needs carefully and sought the best prices from a good range of suppliers. As we pay half the price we are also looking for best value and believe this is it.		
3	Is your project likely to secure full funding and progress within 12 months?		
	Yes, we have the money already allocated to pay the balance of this bid while having reserves to pay for other expenses.		
4	How will your organisation be able to manage the project now and in the future?		
	Several of our members are very IT competent and keen to use better equipment. Managing it will not be a problem!	Score	60 /60
	Officer scoring point system: 100 to 140 – officers recommend that the project is a funding priority 80 to 99 – officers recommend that the project receives some funding 79 or less – officers recommend that the project does not receive funding	Total Score	100/140

Vale Capital Community Grants

Officer Evaluation

1294			
Abingdon Rugby Club			
Replacement patio doors and shutters			
Replacement of two sets of patios doors and steel shutters. The original equipment has been in situ since the clubhouse opened in 1988 and are in need of change. The patio doors are now very difficult to open and jump off the runners causing significant issues for the staff in the club. This is the main entrance to the club from the pitch side.			
Comments Section			
Consultation comments:			
None			
Grant officer comments and recommendation: The organisation reported a cash balance of £25,000 at the time of application and in its accounts for the year ending August 2013 a total cash reserve of £25,772. It also reported unrestricted and capital reserves of £342,791, most of which are relating to fixed assets such as the club house and equipment. The organisation was awarded £8,000 of New Homes Bonus funding in November 2013 towards a project to bring its training pitch back into use. Based on the total score officers recommend awarding 49.97 per cent of the total project cost up to a maximum value of £3,800 (the amount requested).	Recommended award	£3,800	
	Recommended %	49.97%	
	Amount requested	£3,800	
	% requested	49.97%	
	Total project cost	£7,605	
	Organisation's contribution	£3,805	
	Organisation's bank balance at application	£25,000	
	Town or parish contribution	£0	
	Other secured funding	£0	
Other unsecured funding	£0		
Project Information			
1	How will your project broaden the range of activities/facilities on offer to the community?		
The patio doors are the main entrance to the club from pitch side. The access is important and needs to allow safe entry and exit to the club for all members of the club and the public who use it on a regular basis. The club is now been hired out for local functions (parties, weddings and events), for both members of the club and the local community. The club is used by the Football and American Football clubs. The shutters also need to be replaced to provide the security for the club.		Score	10/20
2	How did you consult with the local community?		
The club has over 300 members and the project is one of many to improve the facilities for all users of the clubhouse. The original equipment which was installed in the club in 1988 and is needed to be replaced. The clubhouse is used by local societies and clubs and is rented out to club members and members of the public for events and functions.		Score	10/20
3	How do you know that the community need this project?		
The club must provide safe and up to date facilities as part of its responsibilities to		Score	10/20

the club members and the members of the public. We have found over the last few years as we have improved our facilities the club has become a focal point of the local community and the club is used on a very regular basis in the evenings and during weekends.			
4	Who will benefit from your project?		
All members of the club and local community. All those who use the club facilities.		Score	10/20
Project Viability			
1	How is your project reasonable and appropriate for the area?		
	Replacement of 25/26 year old equipment		
2	How does your project deliver best value for money?		
	Allow the club to be used safely and to provide good meeting facilities for clubs and societies in the local area		
3	Is your project likely to secure full funding and progress within 12 months?		
	No, we do not have sufficient funds ourselves to pay for these repairs		
4	How will your organisation be able to manage the project now and in the future?		
We will seek funding where possible and work hard to provide safe facilities for all members of the club and users of the club		Score	60/60
Officer scoring point system: 100 to 140 – officers recommend that the project is a funding priority 80 to 99 – officers recommend that the project receives some funding 79 or less – officers recommend that the project does not receive funding		Total Score	100/140

Vale Capital Community Grants

Officer Evaluation

1297		
Drayton Village Hall		
Kitchen refurbishment, replacement windows & fire doors		
Major refurbishment of kitchen, some of which dates back to the hall (1975). Replacement windows, double-glazed for vastly improved energy efficiency and sound deadening. Replacement fire doors, as existing ones failing.		
<u>Comments Section</u>		
Consultation comments:		
None		
Grant officer comments and recommendation: The organisation reported a cash balance of £9,300 at the time of application and in its accounts for the year ending 31 March 2013 total cash reserves of £29,302. The organisation was awarded a new homes bonus grant of £1,000 in November 2013 towards this project. The viability score reflects the large amount of unsecured funding for the project. There is a small gap in funding of £359 identified in the breakdown of costs. Based on the total score officers recommend awarding 16.02 per cent of the total project cost to a maximum value of £5,000 as requested by the applicant.	Recommended award	£5,000
	Recommended %	16.02%
	Amount requested	£5,000
	% requested	16.02%
	Total project cost	£31,209
	Organisation's contribution	£350
	Organisation's bank balance at application	£9,300
	Town or parish contribution	£3,000
	Other secured funding	£9,000
	Other unsecured funding	£13,500
Project Information		
1	How will your project broaden the range of activities/facilities on offer to the community?	
It will make more likely bookings that are presently being lost, as caterers are sometimes unwilling to use the present kitchen. This due to capacity, and certain failings making the top hygiene rating unlikely to be obtained. Poor or worn-out equipment means certain users cannot always use the kitchen for some functions.		Score 15/20
2	How did you consult with the local community?	
We asked the community user groups, most of whom are Drayton-based, and there is a Neighbourhood Plan, which has been substantially written after a massive survey in the village (over 60% response, thought to be a record) - improvements to the hall were a frequent mention.		Score 10/20
3	How do you know that the community need this project?	
See the answer at C2, also if we can improve these Hall features, it will make it more attractive to outside hirers, improving the accounts situation & making future appeals to the parish council for funds less likely.		Score 10/20
4	Who will benefit from your project?	
Most of our local community user groups use the kitchen to some extent, outside commercial hirers too. Improving the windows will reduce energy loss, so an environmental gain too. If we can improve hall finances, through increasing		Score 20/20

outside hires (weddings, parties), then we may be able to offer some extra facilities like getting the players going again - they once had a flourishing youth section. There is a youth club, but getting more teenagers involved with drama can only be good?			
Project Viability			
1	How is your project reasonable and appropriate for the area?		
	Existing village hall, functional and well-used, but ageing and needs increasing maintenance. This project will give the relevant areas a new lease of life for the next decade.		
2	How does your project deliver best value for money?		
	By using separate suppliers of base units, and having them fitted by a contractor, far more economic than a bespoke solution.		
3	Is your project likely to secure full funding and progress within 12 months?		
	Depends on the Wren (Biffa) application - which incidentally is for £15K, but 10% of any grant from them would be given over to 'match funding', hence the figure quoted in the grants section.		
4	How will your organisation be able to manage the project now and in the future?		
By co-ordinating the contractor elements involved, and minimising disruption to our users (who do understand the work is necessary).		Score	50/60
Officer scoring point system: 100 to 140 – officers recommend that the project is a funding priority 80 to 99 – officers recommend that the project receives some funding 79 or less – officers recommend that the project does not receive funding		Total Score	105/140

Vale Capital Community Grants

Officer Evaluation

1299			
St Nicolas Preschool & Playgroup			
Replacement of the outdoor play surface			
The replacement of an outdoor safety play surface to the garden area of the preschool. The surface will be extended to cover a larger area of the garden (65.5m2) and will feature a coloured surface and roadway markings to stimulate the children's play. The surface will be of safety grade to ensure compliance with health and safety requirements.			
Comments Section			
Consultation comments:			
None.			
Grant officer comments and recommendation: The organisation reported a cash balance of £74,583 at the time of application and in its accounts for the year ending August 2013 unrestricted cash reserves of £50,784. When officers queried the need for this funding given the organisation's high cash reserves the organisation explained that they keep sufficient reserves to cover the costs if the pre-school was to close. Funds have also been allocated in its operating budget to complete a number of maintenance projects this year. Based on the total score officers recommend awarding 50 per cent of the total project cost up to a maximum value of £3,026 (the amount requested).		Recommended award	£3,026
		Recommended %	50.00%
		Amount requested	£3,026
		% requested	50.00%
		Total project cost	£6,052
		Organisation's contribution	£2,226
		Organisation's bank balance at application	£74,583
		Town or parish contribution	£0
		Other secured funding	£0
Other unsecured funding	£800		
Project Information			
1	How will your project broaden the range of activities/facilities on offer to the community?		
The new outdoor play surface will replace the current surface which is no longer fit for purpose. The area will be increased to enable greater participation in safe outdoor play. It will feature coloured areas and a roadway to encourage role-play. Children will be able to engage in a greater number and variety of outdoor activities which require the preschool to meet strict health and safety rules. It will enable the preschool to meet the statutory framework for the early years foundation stage.		Score	10/20
2	How did you consult with the local community?		
Parents/carers are consulted on an ongoing basis regarding how the preschool could be improved. The need for a new, improved outdoor play surface has become apparent through parent comments, children's own use and staff assessment of the outdoor space. The preschool is run by a parent-elected committee. This project has been agreed at committee meetings and support sought from the wider preschool community via a sign-up sheet (46 signatures).		Score	10/20
3	How do you know that the community need this project?		
The preschool serves the local community in Abingdon and places are available to		Score	10/20

children aged 3 and 4. There is an increasing need for high-quality preschool settings in the town. The preschool needs to provide safe, stimulating outdoor space in order to meet the requirements of the statutory framework for the early years foundation stage. The outdoor space also needs to be accessible to children with disabilities. The increased area of the play surface will ensure this is the case.			
4	Who will benefit from your project?		
This project will benefit the children who currently attend the preschool. They will enjoy a larger, more stimulating and safer outdoor area. This will enable staff to increase time spent outdoors and will broaden the range/scope of learning activities. The preschool welcomes a new intake each year (up to 50 children) and this project will benefit many hundreds of local children in the coming years. The increased usable space will make it far more accessible to children with disabilities.		Score	10/20
Project Viability			
1	How is your project reasonable and appropriate for the area?		
	The outdoor play area is vital for the learning environment of the preschool. The current surface is no longer fit for purpose and a new, extended safety surface will provide adequate outdoor space for all children to engage in a variety of activities in a safe and enjoyable way.		
2	How does your project deliver best value for money?		
	We sought quotes from 3 suppliers of safety surfaces. All understood our requirements and gave detailed quotes. All meet the health and safety and learning requirements as set out in the statutory framework. The middle quotation delivers best value for money as it covers all aspects of workmanship.		
3	Is your project likely to secure full funding and progress within 12 months?		
	We have a number of fundraising activities planned including: a cake stall in Abingdon Market Place; Easter hamper raffle; annual May fair. We have sought a community donation from Schlumberger. Funds to cover the remaining cost of the project are in place and work will begin in 2014.		
4	How will your organisation be able to manage the project now and in the future?		
Work to the play area will be undertaken during summer 2014 and will be overseen by staff and named committee members. The project will be used all year round for children enrolled at the preschool. We have a full waiting list for 2014/15. The preschool has been in operation for over 30 years.		Score	60/60
Officer scoring point system: 100 to 140 – officers recommend that the project is a funding priority 80 to 99 – officers recommend that the project receives some funding 79 or less – officers recommend that the project does not receive funding		Total Score	100/140

Appendix 2

Capital Grant Policy and Procedure (revised April 2012)



Introduction

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 the council's own corporate objectives or those in need.

The council has a recurring annual capital allocation of £100,000 in its capital programme funded from its capital receipts reserve to offer in capital grants to local community projects.

The scoring criteria and policy and procedure rules will be determined from time to time by the cabinet. Details of the application procedure will be included in the application forms held by the head of corporate strategy.

What type of project will the scheme fund?

The council seeks to support a variety of community initiatives. Applications for funding towards a wide variety of different community projects can be made. Only capital expenditure, such as spending on buildings, extensions or equipment will be considered under this scheme. Repairs and maintenance work does not fall within capital expenditure. Applications for revenue funding to cover such things as salary costs, heating or rent cannot be considered under this scheme. Retrospective projects will not be considered.

Who can apply to the scheme?

Any constituted community-based organisation, including not for profit businesses, parish and town councils, may apply. The council will not fund large public sector bodies, such as Oxfordshire County Council or Primary Care Trusts.

The council is committed to promoting equality and diversity and welcomes applications from all sectors of the community, regardless of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age, status, religion or belief.

Schemes initiated by Area Committees

As well as receiving applications from eligible groups, Area Committees may also choose to initiate their own projects. Each area would have to fund its own projects

from its overall budget and any consultants costs would have to be drawn from the same budget.

What is the maximum award from the scheme?

In most cases any grant awarded by the scheme will be up to 50 per cent of the total cost of the project capped to a maximum of £5,000 for any individual project. All grant awards will be offered as a percentage of the total cost of the project, capped with a maximum grant amount. In this way, the council will share 50% of any saving if a project under spends, but does not share the cost if the project overspends.

Scheme eligibility criteria

Applications will normally be considered if organisations/projects meet the following eligibility criteria:

- are a properly constituted charitable or non profit making organisation
- has secured all appropriate planning and listed building consents
- provides two years audited accounts (six months of bank statements for new organisations)
- provides a minimum of two quotations for all work, equipment and fees relating to the costs of the project
- the project has not already commenced

Opening and closing dates

The scheme will generally have one funding round each year; subject to budget availability a second round will be held. The first round will open for applications in July (unless an election has taken place when it will be September) each year and close at the end of September). Decisions will generally be made by the end of November.

If a second round is required it will generally open for applications in October each year and close at the end of December and decisions will be made in February.

Decision making

Grant applications will be determined by the relevant area committee; Abingdon, South East, North East and West. The area committees will meet in November and February (if required) each year.

Allocation of budgets to area committees

The funds will be allocated to each committee as follows:

- for each parish within the area committee's boundary excluding Abingdon, Faringdon and Wantage: £500
- for Abingdon, Faringdon and Wantage: £500 per district councillor, noting that for Faringdon only two of the three councillors are included reflecting that it is a mixed urban/rural ward
- £0.60 per elector, using the June 2012 electorate figures.

Area	Abingdon	North East	South East	West	Total
Parishes (exc towns)	3	15	23	25	
Cllrs per town	14	0	5	2*	
Electors	30024	21553	26507	16672	94756
£500 per parish/cllr	£ 8,500.00	£ 7,500.00	£14,000.00	£13,500.00	
60p per elector	£18,014.40	£12,931.80	£15,904.20	£10,003.20	
Total	£26,514.40	£20,431.80	£29,904.20	£23,503.20	£100,353.60
Percentage	26.4%	20.4%	29.8%	23.4%	

* noting that the Faringdon and Coxwells ward is a mix of urban and rural (2 councillors are allocated to the town in this formula).

Delegated decisions

The head of corporate strategy will make decisions on awards for grants from the scheme of between £1 and up to a maximum of £1,000 in consultation with the relevant area committee chairman (if required) in all instances the scoring criteria will be applied. Any project that fails or which cannot meet the grant conditions will not receive its grant award and the grant will be cancelled. These decisions will be taken by the head of corporate strategy. The funds will be available to award grants to other applicants. The head of corporate strategy will also determine any requests for extensions of time when a grant is due to expire.

If any officer of the council has a pecuniary interest in any application being determined under this delegation the decision will be referred to a strategic director or the chief executive. These decisions will be published to all councillors and an update provided to the next area committee meeting.

Area Committees

Each area committee will consist of all councillors (elected in the appropriate area) who will consider a detailed evaluation report and receive a presentation from officers including a recommendation, based on the approved scoring criteria (appendix 1) for each application to the scheme.

Each area committee will determine the applications taking into account the budget availability.

Procedure at meetings of each Area Committee

Meetings of the area committees will be conducted in accordance with the Rules of Procedure set out in Parts 4 and 5 of the council's Constitution.

Declaration of interests

Declarations of interests by councillors and officers will be conducted in accordance with the Rules of Procedure set out in Parts 4 and 5 of the council's Constitution.

If any officer of the council has a pecuniary interest in any application being determined under this scheme they will take no part in the process and register their interest as required by the employee's code of conduct policy.

Standard conditions of all grant awards

- grants will not be payable towards any costs incurred before the grant award decision date
- projects must commence within one year of the date of the grant being awarded
- evidence that a contract of works is in place is required before any grants are advanced
- evidence that all funding is in place to **complete** the project must be provided to the grants team prior to commencement of work and the release of any part of the grant award
- council staff must be allowed to enter and inspect the work being carried out, by arrangement, subject to them abiding by any necessary health and safety requirements
- grants will be paid on completion of the project by returning a grant claim form attaching evidence of expenditure
- grants (or part of) will not be paid in relation to any spend that does not comply with the definition of 'capital expenditure'
- requests for information to assist us in monitoring the success of the project must be supplied to the grants team as required
- A plaque, supplied by the council, must be displayed in a prominent position to acknowledge grant awards of over £2,000

Breaches of one or more of the above grant conditions may result in the head of corporate strategy repealing the grant.

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