

Abingdon and North East Area Committee



Report of Head of Corporate Strategy
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To: Abingdon and North East Area Committee
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New Homes Bonus and Capital Grants 2016/17

Recommendations:

- (a) that the Abingdon and North East area committee considers the application for a new homes bonus grant and makes an award in line with the approved policy (2015).
- (b) that the Abingdon and North East area committee considers the two applications for capital grants and makes awards in line with the approved policy (2015).

Purpose of report

1. To give the committee the information needed to award a new homes bonus grant (NHB) and capital grants (CG) for their area.

Strategic objectives

2. Under the 'sustainable communities and well-being' corporate priority in our 2016-2020 corporate plan we commit to support community groups through our grant schemes.

Background

1. We opened the NHB and CG scheme between 6 June and 28 July 2016.
2. We received one district-wide NHB application whose request we have split between all three area committees proportionately using the same rationale used to distribute the budget.
3. The total NHB grant requested from this area committee during round two is £1,365, against a budget of £1,386.

4. We received two CG applications requesting a total of £8,090 against a budget of £20,703.
5. Officers have evaluated the applications using the scoring matrices in the agreed policies, approved in August 2015. See appendix one for the NHB evaluation and appendix two for the CG evaluations.
6. In line with the policies, officers have suggested scores for the committee to consider and amend as necessary. The final score for each project dictates the priority level when considering award decisions.

Financial implications

7. In February 2016 the council set a 2016/17 NHB budget of £100,000 and the Abingdon and North East area committee was allocated 30.33 per cent of this (£30,330) for the year. Their available budget for this round of funding is £1,386. As per the agreed policy these grants can fund either revenue or capital projects.
8. At the same meeting, the council set a 2016/17 CG budget of £100,000 for capital grants. The total remaining budget for this scheme is currently £48,759. As per the policy, the Abingdon and North East area committee receives 42.46 per cent of the available budget during each round, giving them a budget of £20,703 for this round of funding.
9. If the committee awards the NHB grant in line with the officer's scores their remaining budget (£21) is not enough to open for a further round of funding during this financial year. This underspend will return to the council's general reserves at the end of the financial year.

Legal implications

10. The council's legal powers to award these grants are contained in section one of the Localism Act 2011 that gives a general power of competence for local authorities.
11. In May 2016 full council delegated authority to three area committees to determine NHB and CG applications within the parameters of each grant policy.

Risks

12. There are no overarching risks of awarding these grants. Officers have highlighted any risks to a particular project in their evaluation reports.

Conclusion

13. That the committee awards NHB and CG in line with the approved policies.

Background papers

Cabinet approval of the new homes bonus and capital grant policies (Aug 2015)

APPENDIX ONE – Abingdon and North East area NHB 16/17 round two officer evaluation

Scoring summary

Ref no.	Organisation	Scheme	Total cost	Amount requested	% of cost requested	Suggested score	Suggested award
VN1R\22	Community First Oxfordshire	Village hall and community buildings support officer	£9,000	£1,365 from this committee (£4,500 in total)	15.17% from this committee 50.00% in total	12 (high priority)	£1,365 50% of total cost (100% of request)
			TOTAL (this committee)	£1,365		Total (this committee)	£1,365
						Budget	£1,386
						Balance	£21

Officer recommended award levels (budget permitting)

10-15 points	High priority – award as requested (up to 50 per cent of total cost)
6-9 points	Medium priority – award between 50 and 75 per cent of requested amount
0-5 points	Low priority - no funding

Scoring and award matrices

Scoring matrix:

Criteria	0 points	1 point	2 points	3 points
% of additional occupied homes in the parish where the project will take place?	None	1-10 per cent	11-50 per cent	51 per cent or more
New facilities or activities	The project offers very little if any new activities or facilities	The project replaces existing facilities or allows existing activities to continue	The project improves an existing facility or activity	The project will provide a new facility or will allow new activities to take place
Community benefit	The project offers little if any benefit to the community	A single sport or special interest group will benefit	More than two community groups or a minority group will benefit from the project	The whole community will benefit/the project will help to integrate new and existing communities
Funding the project	They haven't secured much if any of the other funding needed for the project	They've secured some of the other funding needed but still have some to find	They've secured most of their other funding and have a plan in place for raising the rest	They've secured all the other funding needed for the project
Organisation's contribution	They aren't contributing to the project	They're contributing less than 25% of the project cost	They're contributing between 25 and 50% of the project cost	They're contributing over 50% of the project cost

Award matrix:

10-15 points	High priority – award as requested (up to 50 per cent of total cost)
5-9 points	Medium priority – award between 50 and 75 per cent of requested amount
0-4 points	Low priority - no funding

Community First Oxfordshire	Ref	VN1R\22
Village hall and community buildings support officer		

Total project cost	£9,000	
Amount requested	£1,365 from this committee (£4,500 from all committees)	(Other committees: £1,792 from Wantage and £1,343 from Faringdon)
Organisation's contribution	£4,500	Organisation's latest bank balance £382,687

Previous grants

We give the organisation a partnership grant each year of £8,250 towards their Village Shop Officer (£4,000) co-ordinator and for Community Led Planning support (£4,250).

Scoring

% of the Abingdon area's total additional occupied homes seen in the parish where the project will take place		
As the post will cover the whole district, officers awarded it full marks in this area.	Score	3/3
New facilities or activities		
The grant will fund a village halls officer to work in our district one day each week. Because this grant will enable an existing post to continue officers limited their score to one point.	Score	1/3
Community benefit		
Any community building (and their users) in the district will benefit. It's also likely their advice will encourage more community hall organisations to apply to our grant schemes.	Score	3/3
Funding the project		
The application is for a support officer to cover all of the district, so officers split the request between the three committees using the same percentage we use to split the NHB grant budget. The £9,000 total cost is a proportionate annual cost to provide the post one day a week in our district although the intention is that the post will be full time, covering the whole county (at a cost of £45,000 over the year). They are funding the rest of the cost of the Vale proportion from their reserves and it appears they could potentially fund more (or all) of the post without external funding. Their bank balance was £382,000 when they applied (with £284,000 in unrestricted funds), although some of this will go towards their annual running costs (for example unrestricted expenditure in 2015 was £122,000).	Score	3/3
Organisation's contribution		
They are funding 50 per cent of the cost to provide the post one day a week in Vale.	Score	2/3
Consultation		
They've not included any evidence of consultation to support the need for the post but report over 300 enquires from community halls each year (across the whole county).		
Project completion within timeframe		
The grant will fund the post for a year between November 2016 and October 2017, which works with the time limits for our scheme.		
Financial and project management plans		
Not provided with this application.		
OFFICER RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS Based on the officer score this is a high priority for funding and could receive up to 50 per cent of the total cost (of the Vale post), capped to £4,500 across all the committees. This is 100 per cent of the amount requested and would mean a grant of £1,365 for this committee.	Total score	12/15
	Recommended Grant	This area £1,365 Total £4,500

Applicant responses (taken directly from their application form)

Details of the project	Community First Oxfordshire support and advice community buildings to run efficiently, so that the whole community can benefit from the community space. There are 60 community buildings in the Vale, all of which can benefit from advice on energy saving, DDA advice, business advice, insurance, legal issues and specific training events. We would like to offer expert support and advice work in the Vale district, where we do not receive direct funding for the service.
Financial statement from the organisation	We have a limited budget to carry out our community development support services, as most of our funds are ring fenced for reserves. However, we can utilise some funding from Defra and the community building affiliation scheme, which enables us to contribute financially to the community building support service.
Statement about town/parish support	We have not directly asked town or parish councils to fund this project, however, we do operate a CFO membership which over half of the local councils are members of, and a community building affiliation scheme. This helps us match fund the grant funding we receive to carry out this support service.
Community benefit	
Who will benefit from your project?	There are 60 community halls in the Vale district. CFO will support and advise the hall committee members. There are on average 6 volunteer members to each committee, which is an estimated total number of 600 committee members in the Vale area. We will offer operational and professional advice on: energy saving, getting the best price for insurance, legislation, marketing your hall and reducing community hall hire costs - benefiting all local communities.
How did you identify a need in the community for your project or service?	CFO carry out a community building service for the rest of the county and we receive over 300 enquiries from halls a year, which is clear evidence of need. We have not proactively supported halls in the Vale for a number of years. Many of the village halls in the Vale (41%) have not carried out energy audits or reviewed their running costs. We will actively advise on why and how to do this.
What sustainable and/or energy saving measures does your project include or offer?	We will, as part of the support service, contact the community halls that have not carried out an energy audit and we will offer advice on energy audits and generally how to make the hall as energy efficient as possible. This will help halls reduce their running costs and these savings will benefit the communities that the halls serve.
Consultation	
What consultation have you carried out with the community or professional advisors?	N/A
New facilities/Activities	
What extra facilities (or equipment) will the project provide?	The community hall advice and support service does not directly create new facilities, though the service does provide legislation advice and guidance on obtaining and running facilities for the community. This includes new build and ways to market your hall facilities to attract more bookings.
What new activities will take place because of this project?	Funding will allow CFO to provide a proactive advice and support service for the 60 village and community halls in the Vale district. This will increase our capacity to help ensure community halls run as businesses, to enable them to run the community space as efficiently as possible in order to keep hire costs at a reasonable rate, so everyone can afford to use it. This benefits all the local communities.

APPENDIX TWO Abingdon and North East Area Capital Grants 16/17 (round two) Officer Evaluations

Scoring summary

Ref no.	Organisation	Scheme	Total cost	Amount requested	% of cost requested	Suggested score	Suggested award
VC1R\62	South Oxfordshire Food and Education Academy (SOFEA)	New refrigeration unit	£10,554	£5,000	47.38%	11 (high priority)	£5,000 47.38% of total cost (100% of request)
VC1R\78	Long Furlong Community Centre (Abingdon)	Replacement furniture	£6,182	£3,091	50%	9 (high priority)	£3,091 50% of total cost (100% of request)
			TOTAL	£8,091		Total	£8,091
						Budget	£20,703
						Balance for redistribution between the committees in round three	£12,612

Officer recommended award levels (budget permitting)

9-12 points	High priority – award as requested (up to 50% of total cost)
5-8 points	Medium priority – award between 50 and 75% of requested amount
0-4 points	Low priority - no funding

Scoring and award matrices

Scoring matrix:

Criteria	0 points	1 point	2 points	3 points
New facilities or activities	The project offers very little if any new activities or facilities	The project replaces existing facilities or allows existing activities to continue	The project improves an existing facility or activity	The project will provide a new facility or will allow new activities to take place
Community benefit	The project offers little if any benefit to the community	A single sport or special interest group will benefit	More than two community groups or a minority group will benefit from the project	The whole community will benefit/the project will help to integrate new and existing communities
Funding the project	They haven't secured much if any of the other funding needed for the project	They've secured some of the other funding needed but still have some to find	They've secured most of their other funding and have a plan in place for raising the rest	They've secured all the other funding needed for the project
Organisation's contribution	They aren't contributing to the project	They're contributing less than 25% of the project cost	They're contributing between 25 and 50% of the project cost	They're contributing over 50% of the project cost

Award matrix:

9-12 points	High priority – award as requested (up to 50% of total cost)
5-8 points	Medium priority – award between 50 and 75% of requested amount
0-4 points	Low priority - no funding

South Oxfordshire Food and Education Academy (SOFEA)	Ref	VC1R\62
New refrigeration unit		

Total project cost	£10,554	
Amount requested	£5,000	
Organisation's contribution	£5,554	Organisation's latest bank balance £25,380

Previous grants

2015/16 NHB £8,000 'Futures Placed' employment support programme

2014/15 NHB £4,000 'Get to Work' training programme

Scoring

New facilities or activities		
The project will provide an additional refrigeration unit, increasing their existing capacity to store chilled foods rather than creating a new facility, so their score is limited to two points.	Score	2/3
Community benefit		
Numerous non-profit organisations (and their users) around the district and county benefit from the food delivery service SOFEA offer, not to mention the individuals going through their training programme as well.	Score	3/3
Funding the project		
They are funding the rest of the cost from their reserves and based on the financial information provided could potentially contribute more.	Score	3/3
Their bank balance when they applied was £25,380 and they didn't specify how much they require to meet their other financial commitments in their financial statement.		
Organisation's contribution		
They are contributing 52.62 per cent of the cost and could potentially contribute more based on the financial statement provided.	Score	3/3
Consultation		
They didn't provide any evidence of consultation around the purchase with the application.		
Project completion within timeframe		
Their intended purchase dates work with the time limits for our scheme.		
Financial and project management plans		
They will include the ongoing maintenance of the unit in their annual budget and work plan.		
OFFICER RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS Based on the officer score this is a high priority for funding and could receive up to 47.38 per cent of the total cost (capped to £5,000), which is 100 per cent of the amount requested.	Total score	11/12
	Recommended Grant	£5,000 47.38% of total cost

Applicant responses (taken directly from their application form)

Details of the project	SOFEA redistributes 300 tonnes of high quality food to those in need each year. To continue to grow we need to purchase new refrigeration facilities, which will allow us to receive, store and make available fresh food to those in need across the Vale.
Financial statement from the organisation	We currently have £25000 in the bank, this is sufficient to ensure we can continue to cover our costs and to provide the requisite contribution to this project. We are about to publish our annual accounts to the year ending June 2016, they show £300000 of income over the year and a small operating surplus.
Statement about town/parish support	Didcot Town Council have provided funding for a parallel project this year, so we have decided not to ask again. The benefit of this project will be across a much wider area than the Parish, so we have decided not to approach Sutton Courtenay PC.
Community benefit	
Who will benefit from your project?	All the beneficiaries of this project will be from vulnerable groups. The refrigeration unit will massively increase our capacity to offer high quality food to those in need across the Vale, from breakfast clubs to elderly lunch clubs, disability centres, day centres and more. Having this facility will also improve the quality and efficiency of our training operation for young people from across the Vale who are gaining employability skills on our programme.
How did you identify a need in the community for your project or service?	Since we began in September 2014 we have worked hard to identify groups who would benefit from the high quality food we can offer. We are now at the stage where there are over 25+ projects in the Vale who would benefit from the food, but we are unable to supply because of a lack of capacity.
What sustainable and/or energy saving measures does your project include or offer?	The food we redistribute is in date high quality food that would have gone to landfill had it not been rescued by us. The projects we redistribute the food to save considerable amounts on their food bills making them more sustainable.
Consultation	
What consultation have you carried out with the community or professional advisors?	We have discussed the benefits of the programme with many representatives of other organisations, including Age UK which operates a number of lunch clubs and many schools for their breakfast club provision
New facilities/Activities	
What extra facilities (or equipment) will the project provide?	The extra facilities will enable us to build capacity to reach many more projects with surplus food than we currently are able to. This in turn will lead to a busier working environment, which means that the skills that disadvantaged young people who work with us will gain are closer to real working environments.
What new activities will take place because of this project?	The increase in capacity will lead to a busier working environment, which means that the skills that disadvantaged young people who work with us will gain are closer to real working environments. The increased access to food should lead to more activity in the recipient organisations.

**Long Furlong Community Association,
Boulter Drive, North Abingdon**

Ref VC1R\78

Replacement furniture

Total project cost	£6,182	
Amount requested	£3,091	
Organisation's contribution	£3,091	Organisation's latest bank balance £21,050

Previous grants

None

Scoring

New facilities or activities		
The project will replace the existing tables and chairs at the centre, limiting their score to one point.	Score	1/3
Community benefit		
Anyone using the community centre, which is open to the whole community could benefit.	Score	3/3
Funding the project		
The organisation is funding the rest of the project themselves and has the funds available in its reserves.	Score	3/3
Their bank balance at the time of application was over £21,000 and their financial statement about their other commitments does not make it clear how much is required for their general running costs and they might be able to contribute more to this project.		
Organisation's contribution		
They are contributing 50 per cent themselves and have reserves to cover this and possibly more.	Score	2/3
Consultation		
They've not carried out any consultation on the project, as it doesn't lend itself to public consultation.		
Project completion within timeframe		
Their intended purchase dates work with the time limits for our scheme.		
Financial and project management plans		
They'll cover ongoing maintenance of the new furniture in their annual budget and work plan.		
OFFICER RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS	Total score	9/12
Based on the officer score this is a high priority for funding and could receive up to 50 per cent of the total cost (capped to £3,091), which is 100 per cent of the amount requested.	Recommended Grant	£3,091 50% of total cost

Applicant responses (taken directly from their application form)

Details of the project	The tables and chairs in the Long Furlong Community Centre have been well used for many years and are now showing considerable signs of wear and tear. This does not reflect well on the appearance of the centre and is possibly discouraging potential hirers from using the facility. The Committee has decided to replace the furniture.
Financial statement from the organisation	The Community Association is responsible for the general upkeep of the Community Centre. On a month to month basis, the Centre breaks even. It is not thought desirable in the current economic climate to increase hire charges and therefore major capital outlay must be funded from reserves. The full cost will be met from reserves if necessary, but a successful grant application will help to preserve funds for any future unexpected major outlay.
Statement about town/parish support	No other applications made.
Community benefit	
Who will benefit from your project?	Current regular users of the Community Centre include Rainbows, Brownies, Guides; local Church clubs such as Friendly Cuppa and Singing Circle; fitness activities such as Life Stride, Yoga, Pilates, Irish Dancing, Line Dancing, Boogie Beat, Zumba, Slimming World; family-related activities including Buggy Club, Mother & Baby Yoga; other local clubs including Puppy Training and Embroidery Club. The Centre is also frequently hired by individuals for birthday parties, weddings, etc.
How did you identify a need in the community for your project or service?	No specific consultation.
What sustainable and/or energy saving measures does your project include or offer?	Not applicable.
Consultation	
What consultation have you carried out with the community or professional advisors?	Not applicable.
New facilities/Activities	
What extra facilities (or equipment) will the project provide?	Replacements for existing furniture, which will improve the appearance and potential of the Community Centre.
What new activities will take place because of this project?	Existing activities will continue.