

Minutes

of a meeting of the

Abingdon Area Committee

held at 6.00 pm on Monday, 25 November 2013
at the Abbey House, Abingdon



Open to the public, including the press

Present:

Members: Councillor Jeanette Halliday, Andrew Skinner, Julia Bricknell, Pat Lonergan, Angela Lawrence, Jim Halliday, Richard Webber, Tony de Vere, Gervase Duffield, Julie Mayhew-Archer (Chair), Marilyn Badcock, Mike Badcock, Jason Fiddaman, Sandy Lovatt, Aidan Melville (Vice-Chairman) and Helen Pighills

Officers: Carole Cumming, Jayne Bolton, Susan Harbour and Sally Truman

Number of members of the public: 3

Ab.15 Apologies for absence

There were no absences.

Ab.16 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 April 2013 were approved as an accurate record and were signed by the chair.

Ab.17 Declarations of interest

There were no pecuniary disclosable interests declared.

Other Declarations

Councillor Sandy Lovatt is the council's liaison with the Bridge Project

Ab.18 Urgent business and chair's announcements

None.

Ab.19 Statements, petitions and questions from the public relating to matters affecting the area committee.

There were no public speakers for this meeting.

Ab.20 Capital community grants

Capital Community Grants update

The committee considered the head of corporate strategy's report updating on projects previously funded by the committee. This showed the amount awarded by the committee for each project and whether the project was complete.

The committee noted that from the two years 2012-13 and 2013-14:

- Five projects had been completed with a cumulative minor under spend of £189 which would be returned to the committee's balances;
- Three projects are in progress but intend to claim;
- Two projects have not started, reminders have been sent and officers are awaiting updates from the projects.

The committee requested that grants awarded by the leader of the council were included in future reports.

Capital Community Grants.

The committee considered the head of corporate strategy's report. This set out details of five applications for capital community grants. The report also set out the financial position, there being £27,439 remaining in the current year's budget,

The committee considered each application carefully, assessing it against the grants criteria and awarding grants as follows:

Applicant	Project	Grant	Comments
Northcourt Centre	New kitchen units	£3,000	<i>See comments below</i>
7 th Abingdon RAF Scout Group	Replacement flooring	£2,400	
Abbey Brass	Additional musical instruments	£1,334	Closing budget of organisation was £47,552, but this includes amounts allowed for assets such as uniforms, instruments etc, rather than just cash.
The Abingdon Bridge	Replacement ICT and chairs	£2,000	Abingdon Town Council has provided funds for the Bridge, but not for this specific project.
Headway Oxfordshire	Extend existing facilities	£1,195	This project has Vale wide benefit and therefore the allocation has been split evenly between the four area committees.

Northcourt Centre

Some members of the committee proposed giving the applicant £3,000, rather than the £2,425 recommended by the officers (the total project cost being £4,850). This would represent an exception to the normal rules of the policy on awarding grants (with a cap of 50 percent of funding in most cases), however, the committee considered that this should be treated as an exceptional case as:

- The Northcourt Centre were new to the grant application system and the process for applying;
- The building was constructed in the 1950s and 60s and needed a lot of updating. There is no bar and so their ability to raise their own funds is limited;

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- The Centre was a vital community asset;
- The quality of the catering facilities was having a negative impact on bookings and therefore of the ability of the Centre to raise its own funds.
- The committee were aware that the project had not secured other external funding, but were able to manage the shortfall in funding to ensure that the project would be viable.

The committee suggested that the applicant should be encouraged to apply for further funding rounds.

Ab.21 New Homes Bonus - Community Funding 2013/14

The committee considered the head of corporate strategy's report that set out the council's policy and procedure to allocate the new homes bonus in 2013/14. Cabinet had prepared this with help from the Scrutiny Committee.

The area committee noted that it would be considering applications for grants under this separate scheme at its next meeting on Tuesday 4 February 2014. The committee would have a budget of £19,300 to allocate for this purpose in 2013/14. The amount was a share of the council's £100,000 budget, based on the growth in the number of band "D" equivalent properties in the Abingdon area of the district. The apportionment methodology had been agreed by the Cabinet member for grants.

Although the grant may cover both revenue and capital costs, the monies are part of the council's revenue budget and therefore cannot be carried forward to future financial years.

The closing date for applications in this round is 30 November 2013.

All applications will be summarised in the Vale Information Sheet for councillors to feed back.

In future years, both the New Homes Bonus funds and the Capital Community Grants funds will be scheduled together to make applications and decision making more straightforward.

Resolved

If Abingdon Area Committee does not receive applications for grants for the full £19,300 available to it, then applications should be re-opened for a further round of awards in the current financial year.

The meeting closed at 7.10 pm