

## **CABINET – 11TH JUNE 2009**

### **Report of the Director of Governance and Procurement**

#### **ITEM 11      CHARNWOOD GRANTS – ROUND 3 COMMUNITY FACILITIES GRANTS**

##### Purpose of Report

To determine applications for Community Facilities Grants applications from local organisations that exceed £20,000 in value.

##### Recommendations

1. That the application for a Community Facilities Grants of £30,000 by the Gorse Covert Community Association for the renovation of the Community Centre be approved.
2. That the application for a Community Facilities Grants of £30,000 by the Trinity Methodist Church, Loughborough for redeveloping the building be refused.

##### Reasons

1. To provide financial support for a project that meets the criteria for an award and the aims of the scheme.
2. To decline to provide financial support for a project that does not meet the criteria for an award and the aims of the scheme.

##### Policy Context

The Council's Corporate Plan includes a priority of Place Matters which seeks to make Charnwood a safe, cohesive Borough in which to live and work in part by promoting community involvement and common purpose through strong and cohesive communities. In September 2007 the Council's grants schemes were brought together as Charnwood Grants to enable the Council to more effectively support organisations that help deliver the Council's objectives.

##### Background

Community Facilities Grants form part of the Charnwood Grants Scheme. The grants help local organisations develop their asset base by providing up to 50% of the cost of one-off capital investment. There is a maximum grant of £30,000 and the determination of any individual grant application of £20,000 or above is referred to Cabinet for a decision.

Community Facilities Grants can only support investment in capital items and the grants fall into three broad types:

- renovation, improvement and provision of community buildings;
- small scale environmental improvement schemes
- purchase of IT equipment to assist public access to public services (in which case the upper limit for a grant is £3,000).

All applications for the second round of Community Facilities Grants were referred to the relevant Area Forum. This included applications for grant assistance of less than £20,000, as well as the applications covered by this report. Consulting with the Area Forums provides an opportunity for there to be a clear expression of the strength of local support for the project. In addition the applications are assessed by professional officers and considered by the Charnwood Grants Panel which has delegated authority to determine any application below £20,000 in value.

Schemes are scored using an assessment matrix which looks for:

- Well prepared schemes, with a realistic costing of the work, and projects that are well targeted, have good local support and a strong input from volunteers.
- Projects that link well into the Council's Corporate Plan and can achieve wider community benefits.
- Applications from organisations with a strong local base and full accessibility to the community.
- The need of the community for the facility and the need of the organisation for the funding.

The assessment matrix produces a maximum score of 100. A scheme scoring below 30 on the matrix is recommended for refusal and the Grants Panel will provide feedback to the community organisation on the reasons why it was not successful. Where a scheme scores between 30 and 40 on the first assessment the Grants Panel will work with the community organisation to see whether the bid can be improved and strengthened. Schemes scoring 40 and above are normally recommended for approval. However applicants seeking a large grant which scores only just over 40 are advised that they may only receive part of the money they have applied for.

The Community Facilities Grants scheme was launched in October 2007 and the closing date for the third round of applications was at the end of November 2008. There were two applications for grants in excess of £20,000 in this round. These are:

- Gorse Covert Community Association - £30,000 for the renovation of the Community Centre (final score 59.3)
- Trinity Methodist Church, Loughborough - £30,000 for redeveloping the building (final score 43.9)

Further details of each of the applications is set out below and the scoring matrices for each application are appended to this report.

### Gorse Covert Community Association

The Community Association was founded in 1981 and provides and promotes social, recreational, educational and community development support for the people living Gorse Covert, Thorpe Acre and Dishley. The Community Centre supports 30 local groups attended by 1500 local people.

The lottery-funded refurbishment of the Centre, which was considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 5th February 2009 (minute 158 refers), involves a new roof, a new first floor level – accessed by lift and stairs, new kitchen and sanitary provision and the creation of five separate and adaptable community spaces for the use of local groups. As well as providing improvements to the facilities offered at the Centre the scheme will improve the energy efficiency of the building.

A grant of £20,000 was originally sought to provide funding for work in addition to the lottery-funded scheme and which adds value to that scheme. In particular the grant will be used to provide improved playgroup facilities, external security fencing and lighting, thermal insulation above Building Regulations standards, sound insulation and improved access for disabled users which are not eligible for Community Asset Funding. The application was subsequently amended to seek a grant of £30,000 once firm costs had been obtained for the work. This is the maximum amount allowed under the scheme. The total cost of the non-lottery funded work is £62,000. The Community Association has been able to obtain the remainder of the funding for this work from Leicestershire County Council, the Development Trust Association, the Carbon Trust, the Building Maintenance Fund and by reducing its own internal reserves.

The original officer assessment scored this scheme at 53.8 with the following comments:

*Strong community based scheme with good volunteer and local input and comprehensive design details. Could be strengthened by better consideration of outcomes and a better link between the Council's funding and the outputs.*

The applicant provided additional information relating to the financial need for the grant and the beneficial outcomes of the refurbishment in particular increased local community capacity through an expanded Community Centre able to cater for more user groups and expanded opportunities for partnership working, increased sustainability of the Association through increased revenue generation and improved environmental sustainability through a more energy efficient building. As a result of the additional information provided, the final score for the application is 59.3. The application was supported by both the Shepshed, Dishley and Hathern and the Loughborough North West Area Forums.

This is a strong application that scores well in excess of the minimum score of 40 necessary for the award of a grant. In the view of the Charnwood Grants Panel the application is strong enough for the requested increase in the level of the grant to be supported. However, Cabinet supported the lottery-funded work to the Community Centre on the basis that it was a 100% externally funded scheme and

work on the larger scheme has begun, although not work on the specific work for which this grant is being sought.

#### Trinity Methodist Church, Loughborough

The Church Centre is a building dating from the 1960s that is in need of extensive refurbishment. The redevelopment provides a sustainable environment for the Centre's community activities. The result is a building with full disabled access for all members of the community and for the many educational, cultural and religious activities that take place in the building. The original application set out that the centre is used by 500 people per week but did not provide detailed information about the functions the centre is used for.

The cost of the project is £554,000 and a grant of £30,000 is sought for the project which is the maximum allowed under the scheme. The original officer assessment scored this scheme at 21.3 with the following comments:

*Scores low because they have provided no details of the proposed works. The application does not bring out how the local community will benefit from these works. If this information can be provided the application may score quite highly. Further information was requested.*

The applicant provided additional information relating to the project including full details of the non-religious activity that is based at the Church and the local community hub that it provides. A full set of drawings and contracts documents was provided. This was not included with the original submission documents. The final score for the application is 43.9. The Loughborough South West Area Forum felt that at the time when it considered the application, i.e. before the additional information was provided, there was insufficient detail in the application to enable the Forum to support it.

The application seeks the maximum grant available under the Community Facilities Grants scheme and the final score for the application only just exceeds the threshold score of 40 for the award of a grant. In addition, works are in progress and the project has moved substantially towards completion. Discussions with the applicant have established that the scheme can be completed without Charnwood Grants funding although this may cause some financial hardship to the Church.

#### Comparison with previous applications received and conclusion

In order to ensure that decision making on Community Facilities Grants applications is consistent and fair to all applicants it may be helpful to remind members of the decisions taken by Cabinet in respect of previous applications.

	Applicant	Amount applied for	Score	Amount awarded
Round 1	Ratcliffe-on the Wreake Village Hall	£30,000	79.5	£30,000
Round 1	Hoton Playing Fields Community Project	£25,000	69.3	£25,000
Round 1	Sileby Methodist Church	£30,000	57.2	£30,000
Round 2	Rearsby Village Hall	£20,000	54.4	£20,000
Round 2	Seagrave Memorial Hall	£30,000	51.5	£30,000
Round 2	Shepshed Town Council	£20,617	26.5	£0

The application by the Gorse Covert Community Association scored 59.3 and has the support of the Area Forums to which it was submitted. It is therefore recommended that a grant of £30,000 is awarded.

As stated above applicants are advised that applications scoring only just above the threshold score of 40 may not receive the full amount they have applied for. The application by the Trinity Church scored 43.9. Applicants are also advised not to begin work before a decision is made on their application. Work has begun on this project and it is nearing completion. This is contrary to the guidance and reflects the fact that the project could be completed without financial assistance from the Council. In the absence of a grant being awarded the Church may need to make more use of its reserves in funding the project. It is recommended that a grant is not awarded for these reasons.

#### Financial Implications

A sum of £400,000 was allocated to the Community Facilities Grants over a period of 36 months. Of this, £204,600 was awarded in the first two rounds. The Grants Panel has also awarded £8,900 of grants in the third round which fell within its delegated authority. Cabinet is recommended to award a further £30,000 which would leave an uncommitted balance of £156,500 for applications where further information is being sought from applicants and future application rounds in 2009 and 2010.

#### Risk Management

The risks associated with the decision Cabinet is asked to make and proposed actions to mitigate those risks are set out in the table below.

Risk Identified	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Management Actions Planned
The grants do not deliver the objectives of the Charnwood Grants scheme	Medium	Medium	Grants awarded will only be paid on the production of invoices and following inspection of completed work

Key Decision: No

Background Papers:

Grant application forms  
Minutes of Charnwood Grants Panel meetings

Officers to Contact:

Michael Hopkins (01509 634785)  
[michael.hopkins@charnwood.gov.uk](mailto:michael.hopkins@charnwood.gov.uk)  
Simon Jackson (01509 634699)  
[simon.jackson@charnwood.gov.uk](mailto:simon.jackson@charnwood.gov.uk)  
John Leney (01509 634676)  
[john.leney@charnwood.gov.uk](mailto:john.leney@charnwood.gov.uk)

**Gorse Covert Community Association (final score 59.3)**

<b>Scheme Specific</b>	<b>55.40</b>	
<b>Sustainability Checklist</b>	<b>22.43</b>	<b>+</b>
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>77.83</b>	<b>=</b>
<b>Assessment of Need</b>	<b>.763</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>Final score</b>	<b>59.3</b>	<b>=</b>

## Scheme Specific Scores (out of five)

	<b>Score</b>
Quality of targeting within the Borough	5
Quality of benefits for the target group	4
Quality of links to the objectives of the Corporate Plan	4
Accessibility of organisation	4
Evidence of local support and voluntary effort.	5
Quality of Plans and scheme details	5
Quality of cost plan and quotations	5
Quality of Funding proposals	5
<b>Weighted total</b>	<b>55.4</b>

## Assessment of Need (Percentage)

	<b>Score</b>
Financial position of organisation	65
Strength of constitution and local representation	90
Range of services provided to local community	90
Assessment of need	60
<b>Average</b>	<b>76.3</b>

Sustainability Checklist (out of 5)

		SCORE
<b>An Economically Prosperous Environment</b>	Improve access to training and self development opportunities for all?	2
	Improve quality of access to information by communicating in different ways e.g. different languages and different formats?	2
	Link local production with local consumption by buying local goods and local services?	3
	Contribute towards local employment / vocational training?	2
	Help local community based businesses set up and grow e.g. community enterprises, credit unions etc?	3
	Encourage local businesses to improve competitiveness through environmental good practice e.g. saving energy and reducing waste?	2
<b>Clean, Safe and Healthy Environment</b>	Help to reduce occurrence of crime, anti-social behaviour and/or the fear of crime?	3
	Help to deliver targets set in the Crime & Disorder Reduction Strategy?	2
	Reduce factors that contribute to ill health?	2
	Improving facilities and choice in the provision of health care?	2
	Encourage waste reduction, recycling, composting and the use of recycled materials?	3
<b>A Sustainable Environment</b>	Minimise the use of energy, water and other natural resources?	3
	Use and/or encourage the use of renewable energy e.g. wind, water, biomass, solar water heating and photovoltaic panels?	4
	Promote and encourage the use of public transport, cycling and walking?	3
	Encourage schools and businesses to adopt Green Travel Plans?	2
	Improve awareness of sustainable development and the environment?	0
	Have a Fairtrade purchasing policy or support ethical trading schemes?	3
	Use timber from sustainable sources e.g. FSC?	4
<b>Decent Homes and Neighbourhoods</b>	Create and preserve quality open spaces and/or wildlife areas for community use?	3
	Provide improved local amenities and facilities for local people?	5
	Improve access for people with disabilities?	5
	Encourage and/or promote energy efficiency?	4
	Encourage local action and decision-making e.g. involving local people in developing this project?	5
	Provide access to housing appropriate to need?	0
	Reuse / conserve existing buildings?	4
<b>Leisure and Cultural Opportunities for all</b>	Take into account under represented groups?	3
	Encourage partnership working and working between groups?	4
	Increase enjoyment of and participation in arts, local culture and heritage?	2
	Preserve and help to enhance local heritage, landscaping quality, local distinctiveness and local diversity?	2
	Encourage and promote the interaction and understanding of different cultures?	2
<b>Weighted total</b>		<b>22.43</b>

**Trinity Methodist Church, Loughborough (final score 43.9)**

<b>Scheme Specific</b>	<b>45.60</b>	
<b>Sustainability Checklist</b>	<b>14.95</b>	<b>+</b>
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>60.55</b>	<b>=</b>
<b>Assessment of Need</b>	<b>.725</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>Final score</b>	<b>43.9</b>	<b>=</b>

Scheme Specific Scores (out of five)

	<b>Score</b>
Quality of targeting within the Borough	3
Quality of benefits for the target group	4
Quality of links to the objectives of the Corporate Plan	3
Accessibility of organisation	3
Evidence of local support and voluntary effort.	3
Quality of Plans and scheme details	5
Quality of cost plan and quotations	5
Quality of Funding proposals	4
<b>Weighted total</b>	<b>45.6</b>

Assessment of Need (Percentage)

	<b>Score</b>
Financial position of organisation	75
Strength of constitution and local representation	65
Range of services provided to local community	85
Assessment of need	65
<b>Average</b>	<b>72.5</b>

## Sustainability Checklist (out of 5)

		<b>SCORE</b>
<b>An Economically Prosperous Environment</b>	Improve access to training and self development opportunities for all?	0
	Improve quality of access to information by communicating in different ways e.g. different languages and different formats?	3
	Link local production with local consumption by buying local goods and local services?	3
	Contribute towards local employment / vocational training?	0
	Help local community based businesses set up and grow e.g. community enterprises, credit unions etc?	0
	Encourage local businesses to improve competitiveness through environmental good practice e.g. saving energy and reducing waste?	0
<b>Clean, Safe and Healthy Environment</b>	Help to reduce occurrence of crime, anti-social behaviour and/or the fear of crime?	3
	Help to deliver targets set in the Crime & Disorder Reduction Strategy?	2
	Reduce factors that contribute to ill health?	2
	Improving facilities and choice in the provision of health care?	0
	Encourage waste reduction, recycling, composting and the use of recycled materials?	3
<b>A Sustainable Environment</b>	Minimise the use of energy, water and other natural resources?	3
	Use and/or encourage the use of renewable energy e.g. wind, water, biomass, solar water heating and photovoltaic panels?	0
	Promote and encourage the use of public transport, cycling and walking?	0
	Encourage schools and businesses to adopt Green Travel Plans?	0
	Improve awareness of sustainable development and the environment?	2
	Have a Fairtrade purchasing policy or support ethical trading schemes?	0
	Use timber from sustainable sources e.g. FSC?	2
<b>Decent Homes and Neighbourhoods</b>	Create and preserve quality open spaces and/or wildlife areas for community use?	1
	Provide improved local amenities and facilities for local people?	4
	Improve access for people with disabilities?	4
	Encourage and/or promote energy efficiency?	3
	Encourage local action and decision-making e.g. involving local people in developing this project?	3
	Provide access to housing appropriate to need?	0
	Reuse / conserve existing buildings?	4
<b>Leisure and Cultural Opportunities for all</b>	Take into account under represented groups?	2
	Encourage partnership working and working between groups?	3
	Increase enjoyment of and participation in arts, local culture and heritage?	2
	Preserve and help to enhance local heritage, landscaping quality, local distinctiveness and local diversity?	4
	Encourage and promote the interaction and understanding of different cultures?	3
<b>Weighted total</b>		<b>14.95</b>