

CABINET – 21ST JANUARY 2010

Report of the Director of Governance and Procurement

ITEM 9 CHARNWOOD GRANTS – ROUND 4 COMMUNITY FACILITIES GRANTS

Purpose of Report

To determine an application for a Community Facilities Grant from a local organisation that exceeds £20,000 in value.

Recommendation

That a Community Facilities Grants of £30,000 for the conversion of part of the Old Magistrates Court building and to purchase IT equipment for an internet café be awarded to Glebe House.

Reasons

To provide financial support for a project that meets the criteria for an award and the aims of the scheme.

Policy Context

The Council's Corporate Plan includes aims of People Matter which seeks to improve the wellbeing of residents, acknowledging their diverse needs and Place Matters which seeks to make Charnwood a safe, cohesive Borough in which to live and work. 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. At its meeting on 26th November 2009, Cabinet agreed to include Community Grants in the Service Review Programme.

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 are 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 fourth round of applications was at the end of June 2009. There are two applications for grants in excess of £20,000 in this round which are ready for a decision to be made. These are:

- Glebe House - £30,000 for the conversion of part of the Old Magistrates Court building (final score 58.2)
- Glebe House - £2,907 to purchase IT equipment for an internet café

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

Glebe House

Glebe House was founded in 1983 to provide support and services for adults and children with learning disabilities. The project facilitates the relocation of the adult support services to the Old Magistrates Court building in Loughborough town centre. The ground floor of the building would be fitted out to provide accessible community space and an internet café. This would provide a community facility coupled with learning and employment training opportunities for Glebe House's

adult clients. The scheme links with the Cabinet decision on 29th October 2009 to refurbish the Old Magistrates Court building (minute 104E refers).

Two grants are sought: a grant of £30,000 towards the costs of £121,000 to convert the accommodation for Glebe House's needs and a grant of £2,907, half of the cost of providing the IT equipment for the internet café. The balance of the costs of the project will be met from external New Growth Point and Local Asset Backed Vehicle funding obtained by Glebe House and Glebe House's internal resources. Should less than the requested amount be provided through a Community Facilities Grant, the project could be altered to meet the resources available.

The initial officer assessment scored this scheme at 51.5. Following the provision of further information and the decision by Cabinet to proceed with the refurbishment of the Old Magistrates Court, the final score was 58.2. The application was supported by the Loughborough South West Area Forum.

This is a strong application that scores well in excess of the minimum score of 40 necessary for the award of a grant. The outputs of this project are:

- fully equipped facilities to enable internet access for all members of the local community;
- a café and catering facility that can be used by local people and groups as well as servicing the staff and users of the Old Magistrates Court tenants;
- a reception and bookings service for the Old Magistrates Court building and meeting rooms.

The outcomes of this project are:

- by the end of 2010/11 and in each subsequent year at least 100 adults with learning disabilities will complete a training programme in catering and hospitality skills at the Old Magistrates Court;
- by the end of 2010/11 and in each subsequent year at least 50 adults with learning disabilities will be able to demonstrate better integration into the community as a result of their work at the Old Magistrates Court;
- within 12 months of opening the Old Magistrates Court project will be able to evidence improved working within the Loughborough voluntary sector and between the local strategic partners;
- by 2011 the satisfaction ratings of users will show that the Old Magistrates Court has developed into a valuable community town centre facility;
- by the end of 2010/11 and in each subsequent year at least 1000 visitors to the Old Magistrates Court will engage with a Borough Council, Voluntary Sector, Police or Strategic Partner service for the first time;
- by 2011 the Glebe House Project will be able to show a 20% improvement in the success rate of its client base in securing paid work;
- by the end of 2011 at least 5 people with learning disabilities will be directly employed by the Old Magistrates Court catering and hospitality service.

This project is able to show strong links to the national strategy for adults with learning disabilities.

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	Platt's Charity	£25,000	38.0	£0
Round 2	Shepshed Town Council	£20,617	26.5	£0
Round 3	Gorse Covert Community Association	£30,000	59.3	£30,000
Round 3	Trinity Methodist Church, Loughborough	£30,000	43.9	£0*

* No grant awarded because work on the scheme was nearing completion and there was insufficient evidence of financial need for the grant.

The application by Glebe House scored 58.2 and has the support of the Area Forum to which it was submitted (Loughborough South West). This would also be the first Community Facilities Grant awarded in the Loughborough South West area, the only Forum area which has not received a grant to date. In the view of the Charnwood Grants Panel the application is strong enough for the full grants being sought to be awarded. However, no awards of greater than £30,000 have been awarded to a single organisation to date, notwithstanding the existence of the different strands to the Community Facilities Grant scheme described above. In order to be consistent with previous applicants and maintain the practice that the maximum total amount that can be awarded to an organisation is £30,000, it is recommended that Glebe House is awarded a total grant of £30,000 to support the entire project.

Financial Implications

A sum of £400,000 was allocated to the Community Facilities Grants over a period of 36 months. Of this, £280,606 was awarded in the first four rounds to date. Cabinet is recommended to award a further £30,000 which would leave an uncommitted balance of £89,394 for applications where further information is being sought from applicants and future application rounds in 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

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Glebe House (final score 58.2)

Scheme Specific	57.40	
Sustainability Checklist	18.94	+
Sub Total	76.34	=
Assessment of Need	.763	x
Final score	58.2	=

Scheme Specific Scores (out of five)

	Score
Quality of targeting within the Borough	5
Quality of benefits for the target group	5
Quality of links to the objectives of the Corporate Plan	5
Accessibility of organisation	4
Evidence of local support and voluntary effort.	4
Quality of Plans and scheme details	5
Quality of cost plan and quotations	5
Quality of Funding proposals	5
Weighted total	57.4

Assessment of Need (Percentage)

	Score
Financial position of organisation	65
Strength of constitution and local representation	85
Range of services provided to local community	85
Assessment of need	70
Average	76.3

Sustainability Checklist (out of 5)

		SCORE
An Economically Prosperous Environment	Improve access to training and self development opportunities for all?	3
	Improve quality of access to information by communicating in different ways e.g. different languages and different formats?	4
	Link local production with local consumption by buying local goods and local services?	3
	Contribute towards local employment / vocational training?	3
	Help local community based businesses set up and grow e.g. community enterprises, credit unions etc?	2
	Encourage local businesses to improve competitiveness through environmental good practice e.g. saving energy and reducing waste?	0
Clean, Safe and Healthy Environment	Help to reduce occurrence of crime, anti-social behaviour and/or the fear of crime?	1
	Help to deliver targets set in the Crime & Disorder Reduction Strategy?	1
	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
A Sustainable Environment	Minimise the use of energy, water and other natural resources?	1
	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?	2
	Encourage schools and businesses to adopt Green Travel Plans?	0
	Improve awareness of sustainable development and the environment?	3
	Have a Fairtrade purchasing policy or support ethical trading schemes?	4
	Use timber from sustainable sources e.g. FSC?	3
Decent Homes and Neighbourhoods	Create and preserve quality open spaces and/or wildlife areas for community use?	0
	Provide improved local amenities and facilities for local people?	5
	Improve access for people with disabilities?	5
	Encourage and/or promote energy efficiency?	3
	Encourage local action and decision-making e.g. involving local people in developing this project?	2
	Provide access to housing appropriate to need?	0
	Reuse / conserve existing buildings?	4
Leisure and Cultural Opportunities for all	Take into account under represented groups?	5
	Encourage partnership working and working between groups?	4
	Increase enjoyment of and participation in arts, local culture and heritage?	4
	Preserve and help to enhance local heritage, landscaping quality, local distinctiveness and local diversity?	3
	Encourage and promote the interaction and understanding of different cultures?	0
Weighted total		18.94