
REPORT TO:	Housing and Community Services	AGENDA ITEM: 8
DATE OF MEETING:	9 February 2006	CATEGORY:
REPORT FROM:	Director of Community Services	DELEGATED OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	D Fletcher/M Roseburgh	DOC:
SUBJECT:	Community Partnership Scheme	REF: HCS 07
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	All	

1.0 Recommendations

1.1 That members consider the recommendations of the Community Partnerships Scheme Assessment Panel and award 3 grants totalling £58,455 as follows: Derbyshire Wildlife Trust (£25,000), People Express (£25,00) and Walbrook Housing Association (£8,455).

2.0 Purpose of Report

2.1 To update members on applications for funding received by the Community Partnership Scheme and seek approval for recommendations from the assessment panel for awards from the scheme.

3.0 Executive Summary

3.1 The Community Partnership Scheme for 2005/06 is continuing according to the same processes and procedures as previously agreed and reported to Committee.

3.2 In total four applications were received for the third bidding round of 2005/06. Three of the four applications requested amounts above the scheme's normal limits. However under normal eligibility criteria projects were asking for £63,455 against a remaining budget of £119,419. Three of the four applications were scored. These included Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, People Express and Walbrook Housing Association. The panel decided an application from Woodville Working Men's Club was outside the scope of the scheme and therefore ineligible.

3.3 The eligibility of applications from Housing Associations was also discussed and a decision taken that Housing Associations could apply but only when the project submission was clearly outside the normal scope of their work and of obvious community benefit.

4.0 Detail

- 4.1 The Community Partnership Scheme offers capital grants of up to £25,000 from an annual budget of £150,000 to projects brought forward from the voluntary and community sector. A panel comprising five Councillors, with advice from the Partnership Development Officer and the Community Partnership Officer, assess projects against set criteria and then make recommendations about grant distribution to the Committee.
- 4.2 The following applications were received and considered for the third round of the scheme in 2005/06:

Derbyshire Wildlife Trust – Willington Gravel Pits Nature Reserve

The Derbyshire Wildlife Trust is a registered charity supported by over 10,000 members, 400 volunteers and 30 paid staff. Its purpose is to conserve and enhance the natural heritage of the County of Derbyshire.

The aim of this project is to acquire Willington Gravel Pits from a local landfill operator and manage the site as a high calibre nature reserve. It will hopefully be the first in a chain of reserves to form a significant wildlife corridor along the River Trent on South Derbyshire.

This funding will contribute towards the purchase of land from the landfill operator.

The total eligible project cost is £250,000. Derbyshire Wildlife Trust has secured the following towards this total cost:

Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund	-	£75,000
Bequest	-	£50,000
Fundraising/Donations/Appeals	-	£50,000
TOTAL	-	£175,000

They also anticipate that their fundraising strategy will bring in another £26,200 and have submitted a Landfill Tax application to SITA for £25,000.

Revenue costs will be sustained and managed by the Trust.

The project is needed because high quality wetland habitat and species are an important element of a healthy and bio diverse environment. The project will benefit local communities within the vicinity of Willington, as well other residents within South Derbyshire, by providing an enhanced environment of which they can be proud.

People Express – Conversion of Building M

People Express is a professional community arts voluntary organisation based in Sharpes Pottery Museum and working with vulnerable sections of South Derbyshire's community. They are partners in the innovative project between the Council and the voluntary sector to bring a new tourist information centre to South Derbyshire in the Sharpes Pottery building. In order to maximise this development People express need to relocate to the adjacent Building M on the Sharpes site. This coincides with their development needs for more workshop and office space that the conversion of Building M and subsequent relocation to will achieve.

The project is supported by Sharpe's Brothers Limited, the landowners, who have part renovated the building and are offering to complete the restoration and refurbishment to specification at a significant cost saving as compared to the feasibility study prices.

The outstanding cost of the project less renovation to date is £158,000. £11,000 has been secured from DDEP and £30,000 has been applied for from the Arts Council.

Walbrook Housing Association – Alexandra Road Young Mums and Vulnerable Families

Alexandra Road is a supported housing scheme for homeless young women who are either pregnant, have young children or assessed as vulnerable under the age of 25.

The aim of this project is to provide a communal space for the residents in order for them to interact socially and to undertake learning and life-skills opportunities. They plan to build a conservatory and equip the space with ICT equipment to provide opportunities for residents to access learning opportunities and life-skills as well as have a space for social and recreational interaction on site.

The total eligible capital cost for this project is £33,819. The revenue costs (£37,950) have been successfully identified. To meet the outstanding capital costs applications have been made to the following:

Derbyshire Learning Initiative Development Fund	-	£5,000
South Derbyshire Health & Housing Forum	-	£3,819

The need for the project has been identified through discussions with residents both past and present and floating support officers. They anticipate that this facility will address some of the issues and barriers these particular young women face in returning to an unsupported environment and vastly increase their chances of avoiding becoming homeless again.

Woodville Working Men's Club – Rewiring and improving disabled access

The panel decided not to score this application on a number of grounds. Firstly as a matter of principle, working men's clubs (although in this case considering themselves "not for profit") were deemed to be outside the scope and spirit of the scheme. Further the bid was primarily revenue based and of a very poor standard.

- 4.3 The Community Partnership Scheme Assessment Panel met on 11 January to score the applications against the questions and weightings previously agreed during the relaunch of the scheme. The weighted criteria include links with corporate priorities, security of external funding, sustainability, value of other contributions, value for money, community involvement, risk and commitment to equal opportunities.

Once the weightings had been applied the final score of the projects were as follows:

Derbyshire Wildlife Trust	6.50
People Express	6.83
Walbrook Housing Association	5.00

4.4 The point previously used, as a cut off in terms of making positive recommendations to committee was 4.67. The panel's recommendation for distribution of grant was therefore to support all three scored projects. However in determining the size of grant it was noted that all three applicants had requested grants above the normal maximum level of £25,000 or 25% of total project cost. In the case of Walbrook Housing Association the amount requested was above the normal 25% and took into account revenue costs, which are ineligible. The award was therefore considered on the basis of 25% of eligible capital costs. In the cases of People Express and Derbyshire Wildlife Trust the requests for high grants were made on the basis of exceptional circumstances. Grants above the normal maximum are permissible under scheme rules but only in exceptional circumstances. Since its reintroduction in 2003/03 no exceptions have been made and the panel agreed circumstances were not exceptional in either of these two cases.

4.5 It should also be noted that although the panel had previously considered an unsuccessful Housing Association application it was felt necessary to have a discussion around the eligibility of Housing Associations to apply to the scheme. It was decided that Housing Associations could apply but only when the project submission was clearly outside the normal scope of their work and of obvious community benefit. It was requested that the scheme guidance notes be revised to reflect this requirement. Following the debate the panel decided that the Alexandra Road project was eligible.

4.6 The recommendations for award of grants were therefore as follows:

Derbyshire Wildlife Trust	£25,000
People Express	£25,000
Walbrook Housing Association	£ 8,454

4.7 When committee has agreed the allocation of resources projects will be contacted and informed of the decision. A successful project will then have 12 months in which to spend their award. If the grant is not spent within this time period then applicants will need to reapply unless otherwise agreed. Grant payments will be released upon receipt of invoices or independently certified completion reports. The projects will also be monitored to ensure that the aims and objectives of the project have been met.

5.0 Financial Implications

5.1 The award of grants falls within the Community Partnerships budget allocation.

6.0 Corporate Implications

6.1 The scheme contributes to a number of the Council's key aims including safeguarding and enhancing a sustainable environment, reducing crime and disorder, developing a vibrant economy and improving access to leisure and cultural activities. In addition each individual project's impact on corporate priorities has been assessed as part of the appraisal process.

7.0 Community Implications

7.1 The scheme maximises funding available for community investment by providing both direct funding and enabling leverage from other funding sources. It also

continues to offer a direct line of communication with the voluntary and community sector.

7.2 The impact on the community and amount of community involvement in each individual project has been assessed as part of the appraisal process.

8.0 Conclusions

8.1 The Community Partnerships Scheme continues to provide the District Council with an excellent means to support a variety of community partners in improving the quality of life for local residents. It also enables the community partners to lever in additional external funding to the district.

9.0 Background Papers

9.1 File: CPS – Returned applications and assessments Round 3 2005/06

