

Item 7

AREA 2 FORUM

9th JANUARY 2007

Report of the Head of Strategy and Regeneration

Sedgefield Borough Local Improvement Programme

Application Report

Introduction

This report highlights a Local Improvement Programme (LIP) application submitted to and initially appraised by the Strategy and Regeneration Section. The report provides information to the Area 2 Forum for their consideration and comments, which will be used to formulate a report and recommendation to the Sedgefield Borough Council Cabinet in due course.

The Area 2 Forum have been allocated £836,000 of LIP capital resources between 2006 and 2009. £278,700 has been allocated to 2006/07, £157,854 of which has been committed to date, leaving a balance of £120,846.

Project Background

- **Name of Project:** Bishop Middleham Play Area Renewal Scheme
- **Name of Applicant:** Bishop Middleham Parish Council
- **Legal Status:** Parish Council
- **Date of Application:** 20th November 2006
- **Landlord:** Sedgefield Borough Council, leased to Bishop Middleham Parish Council.
- **Brief Description of Project:** The Project will enable new play equipment and safety surfacing to be installed to a supervised toddlers play area at the rear of the Village Hall and a series of enhancements to the main children's play area in the Leisure Park within the village targeting 5 year olds and over.
- **Requested from LIP:** £69,320 (59%)
- **Total Project Cost:** £116,903 (Capital)
- **What will the LIP be used for:** To provide new age appropriate play equipment and safety surfacing in both play areas, at the Village Hall and the Leisure Park. The existing limited play equipment has fallen into disrepair and needs to be removed due to safety concerns. The project will provide new stimulating play equipment at both sites enabling the sites to be fully utilised.

LIP Criteria

- **Department for Communities and Local Government Definition:**
The applicant has stated that the project will address a series of issues within the existing two play areas, which are currently underused.
- **Community Strategy Objectives:**
The applicant has stated that the project will link directly to develop and maximise the leisure and cultural facilities in the Borough by providing a safe leisure facility for the children of Bishop Middleham.
- **Evidence of need and community support:**
The applicant has stated that the village appraisal carried out by the Parish Council in August 2003 revealed that one quarter of all respondents were dissatisfied with recreational provision in the village. Respondents indicated that they would like to see more play areas for children and more for teenagers to do. Issues were raised regarding the current location of the park, feeling that it was too isolated. Consideration was given to other locations during the consultation but these were felt to be less suitable than the existing sites. A focus/community group was formed in May/June 2006 to establish the views of parents, children and residents in the village. Primary school pupils have also been consulted. The annual playground inspection report highlights the need for the replacement of existing equipment. Two community consultations days have also been held.
- **Value for money and revenue implications:**
The applicant has applied for £69,320, which is 59% of the overall capital costs. Applications are being submitted to Awards for All, The Big Lottery Fund and Lafarge for the remaining £47,583. The Lafarge funding is already confirmed. The remaining match funding is expected to be confirmed by March 2007. The applicant has outlined that Bishop Middleham Parish Council will cover future revenue costs associated with the project.

The applicant intends to use 'Kompan' to carry out the project, the preferred supplier of Sedgfield Borough Council who has been chosen following a full tender process.

Further appraisal and development work will be undertaken with the applicant with respect to the confirmation of the additional match funding prior to the project being progressed through the Council's full decision making processes.

Recommendation from the Strategy and Regeneration Section:

That the Area Forum considers the following key issues:

- The relative priority of this project within Area 2 locality.
- The enhancement of the play facilities at their current locations within the village.

Subject to discussion and agreement of the above points that the Area Forum supports the further development of this application through the Council's decisions making process.

Material considerations:

Other applications received from groups within Area 2:

- The Ladder Centre – Extension. *Application to seek funding towards the cost of provided additional space at the Ladder Centre to accommodate new community activities.*

It is anticipated that a report on this project will be brought to the next Area Forum meeting.

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