

# Item 5

## AREA 2 FORUM

8<sup>th</sup> April 2008

### Report of the Assistant Chief Executive

#### **Sedgefield Borough Local Improvement Programme Update on Project Activity**

This report provides the Area Forum with an update on project activity as part of Sedgefield Borough Council's Local Improvement Programme (LIP).

The purpose of the LIP Programme is to improve community assets and support community engagement in the regeneration of local areas. As part of this, Local Communities can propose projects against set criteria agreed by Sedgefield Borough Council. Through this Programme resources will be released to improve sites and improve the usability of community facilities and buildings across the Borough.

The Area 2 Forum has been allocated £836,000 of LIP capital resources between 2006 and 2009. This level of resource is available for community organisations and partner Town and Parish Council's to bid for to fund a range of eligible project activity.

#### **Projects Funded to date within the Area 2 Forum locality**

##### **West Cornforth - Number 66 Youth Drop in facility – LIP Grant £66,400**

This project is complete and is now operational. Very positive feedback has been received from the young people benefiting from the facility.

##### **Chilton Environmental Improvements – LIP Grant £93,455**

This project is complete. The project has seen the provision of new facilities within the Welfare Park including Tennis Courts, Youth activities and leisure opportunities.

##### **Mainsforth and District Community Centre – LIP Grant Offered £75,830**

The project involved the replacement of the heating system with a more efficient 'zoned heating system' to increase the usability of space within the centre. The works are ongoing.

##### **Ferryhill Town Youth FC Dean Bank Park Facility Development – Technical Study – LIP Grant offered £11,250 approved to date.**

Funding approved to carryout a detailed technical study to assess the requirements in developing a new football facility targeting grass roots football development with young people – *See note below.*

##### **Ferryhill LADDER Centre – Technical Study LIP grant offered £6,170**

Funding to assess the requirements in extending the LADDER Centre to offer new activities. This project is currently awaiting a decision from the Big Lottery

Fund on the costs for the new build. Subject to the lottery decision it is not clear if the applicant would require any LIP funding.

In summary, to date £251,105 has been awarded through the LIP programme for project activity across the Area 2 Forum locality. Additional funding remains for additional project activity.

The following projects are currently being actively developed and will be taken through the formal decision making process of Sedgefield Borough Council when all outstanding appraisal queries have been resolved.

### **Update on Projects under development**

#### **Ferryhill Town Youth FC Dean Bank Park Facility Development**

Considerable progress has been made with the development of this project since the Technical Study was undertaken to look at the planning and design issues of an enhanced football facility adjoining Dean Bank Park.

Layout plans showing a new 6-team changing facility and social area and an additional number of pitches have been subject to local consultation through display in Ferryhill library. Key to the project will also be improved drainage to existing pitches to meet FA standards. Following feedback from Durham FA and the Football Foundation the proposed synthetic floodlit pitch has been removed from the scheme. This has been replaced by a similar size grass pitch.

The Consultants appointed to undertake the study – Steve Wells Associates are in the process of establishing a robust project budget for the works. It is estimated that the capital cost will be between £1.1m - £1.2m. It is planned that the majority of the costs are met through a Football Foundation grant towards the facility development.

#### **Next Steps**

A key part of the Consultants work was to take the project through to a Football Foundation Grant application submission. To do this a business plan is needed that outlines a range of detailed information on the aims of the project, future management / maintenance of the facility and also a robust revenue budget to cover the costs of running and maintaining a facility of this nature.

A draft business plan has been put forward by the Consultants. We are awaiting feedback on the financial aspects of this from Ferryhill Town Youth FC before further progress can be made. In addition to this Ferryhill Town Youth FC have been asked by Ferryhill Town Council to produce their annual accounts, as these also need to be included in the Football Foundation bid.

Following receipt of this information the Consultants will be able to finalise the business plan. This will then need to be agreed by Ferryhill Town Council as project applicants and then a detailed planning application will be submitted for the scheme.

It is expected that once the final capital costs are established, and the business plan finalised a LIP application will be submitted towards a percentage of the overall capital costs. This will be brought to the Area Forum once it is received by Sedgefield Borough Council.

### **West Cornforth Community Centre**

This project is currently undergoing detailed appraisal and work is on going with the Council's Valuation and Corporate Property Services to establish robust project cost's and assess the extent of the work. The Community Association have been successful with a Northern Rock grant towards a percentage of the capital costs. The applicant has requested £85,600 of LIP Funding.

### **Dean Bank Institute – Learning Suite Proposal**

This project has been through the Area Forum process and is currently under appraisal. The applicant has requested £50,000 of LIP funding towards improvements to create a new learning room for additional courses.

### **Bishop Middleham Village Hall**

This project has been through the Area Forum process and is currently under appraisal. The applicant has requested £39,391 of LIP funding towards improvements in the Village Hall.

### **Chilton Welfare Park Masterplan – Phase 2**

This project has been through the Area Forum process and is currently under appraisal. The applicant has requested £169,471 of LIP funding towards the second stage of improvements within the Welfare Park focusing at work to the pavilion in the park. The overall project is dependent on the applicant raising additional funding towards the overall costs. Once this is confirmed the project will be taken through the decision making process of the Borough Council.

### **Withdrawn Projects**

#### **Duncombe Heritage Centre Project**

This proposal has been withdrawn following feedback from the History Society and Ferryhill Town Council. It is my understanding from correspondence received that the History Society are still keen to progress with the proposal at the Cemetery site, but on a more incremental basis, rather than through a major redevelopment of the premises. LIP funding will therefore not be sought for these improvements.

### **Additional Project Activity**

Despite the Area 2 Forum locality being buoyant with a range of project proposals across all locality areas, the Capital Programme Team from Sedgefield Borough Council are still keen to consider additional project proposal from community groups, charities and partner Town and Parish Council's.

The nature of many LIP projects are that they are often dependant on other funding being levered into the scheme, for example the Ferryhill Football project is dependent upon the Football Foundation looking favourably on a large capital grant for it to succeed. In addition to this capital projects can often not proceed due to planning and technical issues regarding land and or building.

Given that the LIP programme is entering it's financial year of operation (3-year programme from April 2006 – March 2009) the Capital Programme Team are keen to make progress on applications quickly given the timescales for decision making in the run up to the close of the scheme.

**Recommendation from the Strategy and Regeneration Section:**

That the Area Forum notes the content of the report and recognises the need that in some instances, further reports will need to be brought to the Area Forum as progress on particular projects develops.