

Item 4

REPORT TO CABINET

25th October 2007

REPORT OF ASSTISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Portfolio: Social Regeneration & Partnership

LOCAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME – Mainsforth & District Community Centre Improvements.

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report highlights a Local Improvement Programme (LIP) application submitted to and appraised by the Strategy and Regeneration Division. Following endorsement of the project by the Area 2 Forum, this report provides information to Cabinet for their consideration.
- 1.2 The project aims to renew the boiler and heating system in the community centre and boxing club. This will enable the centre to install a more energy efficient boiler and zoned heating system with the aim of expanding the available use of the community centre to more community organisations.
- 1.3 The project meets the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) eligible 'Regeneration' Definition. ✓
- 1.4 The project has also demonstrated links to the key LIP criteria of meeting elements of the Community Strategy and community consultation. ✓
- 1.5 The applicant has requested **£75,830** of LIP funding, which is 94% of the total capital project costs of £80,830.

2. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Cabinet...

- 2.1 Approve the application for LIP Funds based upon the information provided in the report.

3. LOCAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

- 3.1 The purpose of this 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 Cabinet. Through this programme resources will be released to improve sites and improve the usability of community facilities and buildings across the Borough.

Background – Application and Applicant

- 3.2 This project has been developed by Mainsforth & District Community Association, and is located in Ferryhill Station. The Community Centre was built in 1927 as the Miners Welfare Hall, and still has many original features, including one of the largest theatre halls in the North East region. The hall has a professional sloping stage, lighting and balcony seating for 150 people. The centre is the hub of local community activity and is for all groups and individuals to access.
- 3.3 The project consists of the renewal of the boiler and heating system in the community centre and boxing club. This will enable the centre to install a more energy efficient boiler and zoned heating system with the aim of expanding the available use of the community centre to more community organisations.
- 3.4 The LIP application has outlined the need to renew the boiler and central heating system in order to cater for more user groups. One of the barriers to this is the cost of heating additional rooms within the building. Currently one system controls the whole building and if one group wants to use space within the building then the whole building has to be heated. With monthly energy costs increasing it has been very difficult for the Community Centre to offer additional users space due to cost implications. By replacing the old system with a new 'zoned heating system' heat will be able to be directed to the rooms in use rather than the whole building. This will also ensure that rooms not currently in use can be fully utilised. Interest has been shown for the use of the smaller rooms by Bishop Auckland College to offer adult learning courses, and also by local young people who are requesting some youth provision.
- 3.5 The centre is the only community facility of its type in the village. Over the past five years the Associations have undertaken a range of additional refurbishments including, installation of a lift, renewed ladies and gents toilets, installed disabled toilets to floors, refurbished main hall and lounge, new lighting and a refurbished kitchen.

4. CORPORATE POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 It is felt that the project proposal has links to the Coalfield Housing Market Renewal/Masterplan as the facility is based within Ferryhill Station. The group aim to secure the centre for future use and expand the available activity to local people.
- 4.2 In addition to the above, the proposal has also been discussed corporately with the Council's Energy Officer. It is felt that the project has links to the Council's Sustainable energy and Water Policy, meeting policy area to;

Promote the importance of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases to our partners and stakeholders, improve energy efficiency of our buildings, and also to reduce energy costs.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Area Forum 2 has been allocated £836,000 of LIP Capital resources between 2006 and 2009. £278,700 has been allocated for 2006/07. A number of projects have been supported in the previous year to the value of £174,024, and there is some additional under-spend resulting from last years LIP allocation.
- 5.2 The applicant has requested **£75,830** of LIP funding, which is 94% of the total capital project costs of £80,830 for the refurbishment work. The Community Association will fund the remaining capital costs.
- 5.3 The Community Association will manage and maintain the facility; the revenue costs will be funded by income from room hire charges and local fundraising.

6. CONSULTATIONS

- 6.1 In 1999 a report was commissioned as part of the Area Appraisal for Ferryhill Station – The ‘Options for the Future’ Report. In relation to the Community Centre the report concluded that, “the building has very high running costs... the costs of running and maintaining the building currently dictates the activities rather than the needs of the community.” By carrying out these works the group hope to reverse that trend.
- 6.2 A series of letters of support have been attached with the application. Replies to a recent questionnaire indicate the need to have the facility available to the community. Some verbal consultation has taken place with positive results.

7. AREA FORUM RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 A positive response was received to the proposed project by the Area 2 Forum at it’s meeting held on 11th September 2007. The Area Forum agreed to support the progress of this project to the full amount requested.

8 OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 The application has undergone an appraisal against the Local Improvement Programme criteria. The application has met the key elements of the LIP criteria, and demonstrated links to the Community Strategy priorities.
- 8.2 Procurement – The funding requested represents a grant to an external organisation. The grant is conditional upon the applicant identifying a full quotation / and or tender process for the works.

- 8.3 Crime and Disorder - In line with the Council's Community Strategy, this project has identified a link with providing activities and support services that hope to result in a fall in crime and anti-social behaviour rates within this community.
- 8.4 Sustainability – the project has links to the Council's Sustainable Energy and Water Policy, meeting policy area to; Promote the importance of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases to our partners and stakeholders and also to reduce energy costs.

9. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There has been no previous consultation or engagement with the Overview and Scrutiny Committees regarding this particular project.

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Ward: Chilton/Broom

Key Decision Validation: Not applicable

Background Papers:

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|-----------------|---|-----------|
| Internal | | |
| 1 | Promotion Of The Regeneration Of The Borough Housing Land Capital Receipts To Support Regeneration And Affordable Housing Provision | June 2005 |

Examination by Statutory Officers

	Yes	Not Applicable
1. The report has been examined by the Councils Head of the Paid Service or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The content has been examined by the Councils S.151 Officer or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The content has been examined by the Council's Monitoring Officer or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The report has been approved by Management Team	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>