

**LOCAL COMMITTEE GRANT APPLICATION
EVALUATION FORM**

Date assessed:
12th August 2008

Local Committee:
Witham

Reference No.
W0011

Meets all criteria.
Yes

DESCRIPTION

Name and type of Organisation:
Rivenhall Playing Fields Association

Ward Member/s supporting application:
James Abbott

Name of Project:
Village Hall Acoustics

Place of Project:
Rivenhall Village Hall

Brief description of Project:

The Rivenhall Playing Fields Association has applied for funding to carry out works to remedy serious acoustics problems encountered following the refurbishment of the village hall. The applicant states that the design in the hall i.e. the flooring, which is now laminate whereas before it was wood and now goes up to the edges when before there was a gap around and also the ceiling insulations etc have resulted in noise bouncing around. The applicant has been advised by an Acoustics company that they need some specialist equipment to resolve the problem at a cost of £10,000. They approached the Council's Community Hall's team who refurbished the hall and although they acknowledge the problem they do not have any funds to help us solve the noise issue.

The applicant has approached the Parish Council for support and have made some fund raising efforts.

Partnership working: The need for these works have resulted following refurbishment works by the Council to a Council owned hall. The applicant has shown that it has worked in partnership with the Parish Council, local users and the Council.

ASSESSMENT

Impact on Community: The works will enhance everyone's enjoyment of the building. At present the hall is regularly used by many organisations and village groups and they are all suffering with the noise especially the weekly coffee morning and Bingo sessions where the noise is particularly bad.

Evidence of Need: The Playing Fields Association Committee has received many complaints from residents using the hall who have experienced headaches when attending functions at the hall as the noise can sometime be overpowering in particular when there are large numbers of people using the hall. The Parish Council has noted that the poor acoustics makes it difficult to hold meetings and hear correctly. Also experience has shown that when guest speakers attend gardening clubs and nature care clubs it is often hard to hear even though there is a hearing loop fitted in the hall.

Sustainability: The application states that an ongoing costs and maintenance will be met by the Rivenhall Playing Fields Association.

Contribution to Corporate Ambition and Direction:

- Business is encouraged and the local economy prospers
- People take Pride in their Local Areas

FINANCIAL

Total Cost Of Project £ 10,000

Total Request from the Grant £ 10,000

Total Capital £ 10,000

Total Request for Capital £ 10,000

Total Revenue Costs £ 0

Total Revenue Costs £

Value for Money:

I am not clear as to whether this represents value for money as I have insufficient expertise in this matter.

Match funding secured:

A request has been made to the Parish Council for a grant of £6,000 but they have yet to hear of the outcome.

OTHER INFORMATION

Comments/observations: The Committee is invited to consider the application and fund the works in full, in part or reject the application.

At the time of preparing this paper the Association has yet to provide details of its Constitution and lease arrangements.

Has this application been accepted for a committee decision? Yes

If YES enter Date of Local Committee
23rd September 2008

If NO the reason why this application has not met the criteria:

What advice could be offered:

**IMPROVEMENTS TO ALLOTMENT SITES
IN THE WITHAM AREA**

Agenda Item 3.1

Contact Details:- Nick Day
Designation:- Area Manager – Street Scene
Ext. No:- 01376 332314
E Mail Address:- nick.day@braintree.gov.uk

Background Papers: -

1. Allotment Service Improvement Programme 2008-2011 (see Appendix 1)
2. Allotment Condition Survey & Improvement Plan (see Appendix 2)
3. Minute 34 from Cabinet Meeting of 7 July 2008
4. Minute 30 from Council Meeting of 21 July 2008

Financial Implications: - contained within the report

Equalities Implications: - N/A

Legal Implications: - Under current law BDC has an obligation to provide allotments for its residents where there is a clear demand. The law defines “a clear demand” as no more than 6 adults over 18 who are on the electoral register for the District in which the request for allotments is being made.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The recommendations of the Allotments Task & Finish Group were presented to Council in February 2008 and to Cabinet on 31 March 2008. Cabinet requested a comprehensive response to the recommendations, clarifying the short and long-term strategic objectives including costs for improving the service.

The response and an Improvement Plan were presented to Cabinet on 7 July 2008 and to Council on 21 July 2008 and were supported, subject to funding being approved. In addition, Cabinet considered the need for the Local Committee to be consulted on their views of the proposed actions within the Plan (attached as Appendix 2) and to clarify any local priorities. The Plan contains a proposal to greatly enlarge the existing site at Cut Throat Lane in 2009/10 subject to a formal consultation with local residents and a successful capital bid of £50,000 as part of the annual budget setting process. In addition, a number of improvements are proposed to sites in the Witham area in 2009/10 and 2010/11, although if Members consider any of the actions to be a priority, they may wish to consider bringing them forward into the current financial year utilising Local Committee funding.

The Local Committee are asked to consider and comment on the proposed improvements to the Witham and Silver End sites, as outlined in the attached Improvement Plan, and to identify any priorities that they may wish to support using local funding.

DECISION

To determine which, if any, of the improvement projects shown at Appendix 2 should be brought forward into the current financial year by the allocation of funds from the Witham Local Committee.

IMPROVEMENTS TO ALLOTMENT SITES IN THE WITHAM AREA

Background

The Allotments Task & Finish Group was set up in 2007 to review the Allotment Service provided by BDC, culminating in a report containing a number of recommendations to improve the service.

The Group's report was presented to Council in February 2008 and to Cabinet on 31 March 2008 and a comprehensive response, including a 3-year Action Plan setting out short, medium and long-term proposals, was presented to Cabinet on 7 July and to Council on 21 July 2008.

At both these meetings the improvement projects contained in the Action Plan were welcomed and supported, subject to funding being approved as part of the annual budget setting process for 2009/10 and 2010/11. However, it was suggested that if Local Members considered that there was an urgent need for site improvements, some works could be accelerated by using Local Committee funding to complete items ahead of schedule.

The actions identified in the Plan would address the biggest areas of dissatisfaction from current users in relation to site facilities and security. The proposal for additional allotment provision will also help meet increasing demand for the service and reduce waiting lists.

Proposed Improvements in the Witham Area

There is a capital requirement of £50,000 to enlarge the existing site at Cut Throat Lane, Witham in 2009/10 and a further sum of £28,000 for improvements to the following sites in Silver End and White Notley: -

- Silver Street – replace and extend fencing and gates (£20k)
- Vicarage Avenue - install water supply (£8k)

Conclusion

The proposed improvements will enhance the current infrastructure of the sites resulting in higher customer satisfaction with the service. This will also make the sites more attractive and fit for purpose to allotment associations and other community groups who could self-manage and maintain these sites in the future.

Paul Partridge
Head of Operations

Nick Day
Area Manager - Street Scene

Allotment Service Improvement Programme 2008-2011

Short Term Objectives – 2008/09

Task and Finish Ref No.	Action	Additional funding required
	Consult all tenants on the option of reducing the size of their plot in order to free up unwanted space for re-allocation to new tenants on the waiting list	None within existing resources
8.2.3	Recruit volunteer Allotment Site Stewards in order to build stronger links with our Tenants, improve two-way communications and involve them more in site management, in return for a rent-free plot they will pass information between BDC staff & the tenants, monitor the condition of the allotments and take action in cases of non-cultivation	None within existing resources
8.2.4	Consult with Parish Councils & other organisations within the District to determine the level of uncultivated plots that could be allocated for re-use	None within existing resources
8.1.2	Re-align revenue budget provision as part of the 2009/10 estimate process to provide additional funding to improve the infrastructure of existing sites as detailed in Appendix 3	Revenue £10k
8.2.2	Identify a staff resource to allocate to the management of allotments with clearly articulated job descriptions and responsibilities	Revenue £21k to be funded from within existing resources
8.1.4	Seek Capital provision as part of the 2009/10 estimate process to improve the infrastructure of existing sites as detailed in Appendix 3	Capital £45k
8.2.5	Liase with Greenfields Community Housing to ensure the continuity of allotments usage of newly transferred allotment sites	None within existing resources
8.2.7	Develop initiatives that seek to actively involve Local Ward Members in Allotment sites	None within existing resources
8.3.1 & 8.3.2	Liase with Planners to ensure that Allotment land is considered as part of leisure and amenity land in new developments of residential building planning applications in a similar way to play areas, and where appropriate be considered for section 106 agreements	None within existing resources
8.1.6	Publish allotment details annually to include year on year statistics to provide transparency of allotment policy (as recommended in the Government Select Committee on allotments)	None within existing resources
8.1.7	Publish a leaflet showing the key findings and outcomes of the Allotments Task & Finish Group, this to be made available to the public	None within existing resources
8.2.6	BDC Allotments services to consider joining the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners	None within existing resources

Medium Term Objectives – 2009/10

Ref No.	Recommendation	Additional funding required
8.3.3	Convert an existing open space at Tabor Field in Braintree to create 70 new starter, half & full size plots (subject to funding being approved and Public consultation)	Capital £40k
8.3.3	To extend the existing allotment at Cut Throat Lane in Witham on to the adjacent open space to create an additional 40 new starter, half & full size plots (subject to funding being approved and Public consultation)	Capital £20k
8.1.3	Seek Capital provision as part of the 2010/11 estimate process to improve the infrastructure of existing sites as detailed in Appendix 3	Capital £23k
8.3.5	In order to ensure the future tenure of allotment land at Halstead the lease duration of BDC allotments being managed by the Town Council should be revised from the current 20 years to 50	None within existing resources

Long Term Objectives – 2010/11

Ref No.	Recommendation	Additional funding required
8.2.3	Determine the feasibility of transferring the management of individual allotment sites to a Community Organization, "Friends of" Group through a formal lease arrangement in order to devolve responsibility to a more local level	Some Dowry costs may be required
8.2.3	Investigate the transfer of the management of the sites in Witham to the Town Council and those in Parishes to the Parish Councils through a formal lease arrangement	Some Dowry costs may be required
8.1.5	Steps should be taken to encourage schools and youth groups to take up allotment tenancies	None within existing resources

Allotments Condition Survey & Improvement Plan 2008-2010

Name of site	No of Plots	New Plots	Current condition	Improvements required	09/10 Costs	10/11 Costs
Bunyan Road, Braintree	7		Secure site, good condition	None identified		
Byron Close, Braintree	4		Secure site, good condition	None identified		
Church Street, Bocking	2		Too small for development	None identified		
Clifffield, Shalford	7		Secure site, good condition	None identified		
Cut Throat Lane, Witham	74	40	Unsecured boundary	Enlarge site to provide extra plots Install secure fencing & gates	£20,000 £30,000	
Dowches Gardens, Kelvedon	1		Too small for development	None identified		
Dukes Road, Braintree	17		Fencing in poor condition	Replace fencing & gates		£3,000
John Ray Gardens, Black Notley	5		Unsecured boundary	Install secure fencing & gates		£2,000
Marks Farm, Braintree	8		Secure site, no water supply	Install water supply		£5,000
North Crescent, Steeple Bumstead	6		Secure site, good condition	None identified		
Rose Hill, Braintree	21		Unsecured boundary	Install secure fencing & gates		£5,000
Silver Street 1 & 2, Silver End	28		Unsecured boundary	Install secure fencing & gates	£20,000	
Station Field, Braintree	20		Secure site, good condition	None identified		
The Green, Feering	4		Secure site, good condition	None identified		
Vicarage Avenue, White Notley	12		Secure site, no water supply	Install water supply		£8,000
Tabor Field		70	Disused rugby field pavilion demolished, floodlights obsolete	Create new site with 70 plots	£35,000	
TOTALS	216	110			£105,000	£23,000

MINUTES – CABINET MEETING 7TH July 2008

Minute	Issue	Action By
34	<p>(iv) MINUTES</p> <p>Councillor Walters, Cabinet Member for Environment and Sustainability, stated that the Allotments Task and Finish Group was another “success story”, and a three-year Action Plan had been produced on short, medium and long-term actions. The objectives will require funding and a Survey and Improvement Plan 2008-11 had identified schemes totalling £128,000 in Capital needs. For 2009/2010 schemes at Cut Throat Lane, Witham, Silver Street, Silver End and Tabor Field Braintree are put forward and if Local Members considered them a priority, they could be achieved earlier by taking the opportunity to use funding to Witham Local Committee and Braintree Local Committee respectively.</p>	Paul Partridge

MINUTES – COUNCIL MEETING 21ST July 2008

Minute	Issue	Action By
30	<p>(v) MINUTES</p> <p>Cllr Bebb re Cabinet 7th July 2008, Minute 34 on BDC Allotments Task & Finish Group recs. Group welcomed Council’s response – Cllr Bebb highlighted issues – demand for allotments, effective communications, and methodology for current/future stakeholders. Budget provided from 2009/10 – Local Committees could accelerate proposals by using their budgets. Cllr Walters responded waiting list for allotments up to date, findings of reports will be communicated to stakeholders, and that Braintree and Witham Local Committees have the opportunity to use their own funds.</p>	Paul Partridge