

GRANTS COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

24 September 2007

Present:

Councillors The Mayor

Officers: Tony Brown, Chief Solicitor
 John Mennear, Assistant Director (Community Services)
 Joe Hogan, Crime and Disorder Co-ordinator
 Steve Hilton, Public Relations Officer
 Jo Wilson, Democratic Services Officer

10. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Victor Tumilty.

11. Adjournment of the meeting

In the absence of a quorum the meeting was adjourned to Monday 1st October 2007 immediately following Cabinet in accordance with Council Procedure rules.

Upon reconvening the meeting on Monday 1st October 2007 at 10.45 am in the Avondale Centre, the following Members were present:

Councillor Robbie Payne (in the chair)

Councillors The Mayor and Victor Tumilty

Officers: Tony Brown, Chief Solicitor
 Nicola Bailey, Director of Adult and Community Services
 Joe Hogan, Crime and Disorder Co-ordinator
 Steve Hilton, Public Relations Officer
 Jo Wilson, Democratic Services Officer

12. Apologies for Absence

None

13. Declarations of Interest from Members

None

14. Confirmation of the minutes of the meeting held on 16th July 2007

Agreed

15. Civic Lottery Fund *(Director of Adult and Community Services))*

Type of decision

Non-key

Purpose of report

To seek Grants Committee consideration of the future of the Civic Lottery fund and the specific request of the General Purposes Sub-Committee to seek amendment of the 'approved purposes' of the Civic Lottery criteria to enable repair and maintenance of the town's Civic Regalia.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The report provided a short history of the Civic Lottery and its current approved purposes of use. Members had previously requested a review of the Lottery Fund with a view to its cessation. Approval had been given for the Civic Lottery fund interest to be disbursed in its entirety thus creating a 'closed fund' which would reduce value year on year. However over the four years 2003/04-2006/7 the amount of interest earned had increased the value of the fund from £372,000 to £411,000.

In June 2006 the General Purposes Committee had expressed concern at this increase and determined that they wished officers to explore extending the type of expenditure which could be funded from the Civic Lottery Fund to include repairs to Civic Regalia. The Regalia Committee also supported this request which would allow an increased percentage of the Civic Regalia to be displayed within the Civic Centre.

Members were also asked to consider re-affirming their decision to close the Civic Lottery Fund. The original reason for considering termination was due to the small level of interest payments generated which then took a disproportionate amount of officer time to administer. Should members decide to cease the fund options were given as to how the capital could be disbursed. Any alterations would require formal approval from the Secretary of State.

It was felt by members that using Civic Lottery Funds for the repair of Civic Regalia was inappropriate. The Chief Solicitor advised that he felt the Secretary of State was unlikely to consider such a use to be a satisfactory extension of the criteria for distribution of the fund. Following further discussion members agreed that they wished the Civic Lottery Fund to continue with the maximum grant allowed to be increased to £2000. The Chief Solicitor expressed his understanding that the consent of the Secretary of State would not be required in that regard. A request was also made for more publicity in order to encourage more diverse groups to apply.

Decision

1. That the request of the General Purposes Sub-Committee be refused and Civic Lottery monies not be used for the repair of Civic Regalia,
2. That the Civic Lottery Fund continue,
3. That the maximum amount of grant allowed to an individual group be increased to £2,000
4. That a publicity exercise be undertaken to encourage new applications and
5. That a further report be brought to Grants Committee advising members of what interest had been forthcoming following said publicity

15. Community Safety Capital Grants Allocation *(Head of Community Safety and Prevention)*

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To advise Members of applications to the Community Safety Capital Fund and seek approval for recommended grant awards.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Council decided that its capital budget for 2007/08 would include an allocation £150,000 to implement community safety projects, which are associated with and contribute to Safer Hartlepool Partnership's strategy

covering crime, disorder and drugs. Following an underspend of £3,542 in 2006/07 this had been increased to £153,542.

Five applications for grant were reported to Members.

Lynnfield School Play Area

This project would purchase and install CCTV, improve lighting and install alleygates as part of a broader package to create a safe play area on Lynnfield School site and improve security to the surrounding neighbourhood. The total cost of the project would be £174,500 with an NDC contribution of £148,500. This would leave a Community Safety Capital Fund contribution of £28,000.

With regard to the monitoring and maintenance of the CCTV cameras NDC would pay for the first two years with Neighbourhood Services covering the costs thereafter.

Thornton Street Linear Park

Part of the physical regeneration of Central Hartlepool included the development and implementation of a Community Housing Plan in the NDC area. This plan included initiatives aimed at tackling low demand housing, crime and anti-social behaviour and the need for environmental green space in the area. Chief among these was the creation of a linear park on the North side of Thornton Street, adjacent to Middleton Grange shopping centre. The plans included the removal of derelict properties and investment in existing housing. A number of improved security measures had been included, details of which were given within the report.

The total cost of the project would be £750,000. The NDC would contribute £630,000 with the Highways Department contributing £60,000. This would leave £65,000 from the Community Safety Capital Fund. It had been agreed that Neighbourhood Services would be responsible for the overall maintenance of the park. Should CCTV be included NDC would provide an additional £8,000 toward future maintenance.

Hartlepool Business Security Fund

The Business Security Grant Scheme had been running for a number of years and had been successful in assisting small businesses vulnerable to crime to secure their premises. The project involved the provision of grant assistance to manufacturing and related service sector businesses undertaking security works to their sites and premises. Businesses would be able to apply for up to 50% of the cost of security installations to a maximum of £2,500. The total cost of the project would be £80,000 and members were asked to consider approval of a £20,000 grant to the project.

Social Lighting

There were various locations throughout the Borough where there was inadequate or no public/street lighting and little prospect of the provision of any, particularly on back streets and urban footpaths. These areas provided opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour. Successful applications had been made over the past years when funding of £10,000 and £20,000 had been allocated for the establishment of the social lighting programme in various locations. The Council had adopted, in partnership, a Community Safety Plan and improvements to street lighting in the selected areas would be specifically to target crime and the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour and help with CCTV installations. Potential sites would be drawn from a number of sources including Elected Members, Parish Councils, Police referrals and NDC Officers.

The installation cost of one street lighting column varied depending on its location. Generally, however, the maximum cost of a fully serviced column is £1,000. Members were requested to approve a grant of £20,000 to the project. The Public Lighting Service would include all additional columns into its maintenance programme, including inspections, repairs and energy costs.

CCTV

The Community CCTV scheme had grown substantially over the past few years providing cameras undertaking the surveillance of public space in a considerable number of locations throughout the town. In excess of 80 cameras are operational 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, with the majority of cameras monitored on a live basis at a CCTV Control Centre, linked directly to Cleveland Police HQ Control Room. It had been identified that several cameras required full replacement or mid-term refurbishment, a capital budget expense as the current revenue budget did not afford adequate flexibility to progress these needs. Other funding sources had been fully exhausted and the only option if funding were unavailable would be to decommission a number of cameras.

Members were requested to approve a grant of £20,000 to support the capital refurbishment of CCTV cameras and supporting operational equipment. The ongoing maintenance and operation would be incorporated into overall CCTV budgets.

The Crime and Disorder Co-ordinator indicated to members that should they approve the five proposed awards in their entirety this would result in an overspend of the Community Safety Capital Fund of £13,458. Members were advised that agreement had been reached with the Hartlepool Business Security Fund, Social Lighting and CCTV for a £5,000 reduction in their individual grants. Members questioned the fairness of asking three of

the five projects to take a cut in grant but were advised that the projects concerned had been happy to accept this.

Decision

1. That a grant award of £28,000 toward Lynnfield School Play Area be approved
2. That a grant award of £65,00 toward Thornton Street Linear Park be approved.
3. That a grant award of £15,000 toward Hartlepool Business Security Fund be approved
4. That a grant award of £15,000 toward Social Lighting be approved
5. That a grant award of £15,000 toward CCTV be approved.

J A BROWN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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