

Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C/058/2007-08.
Date of meeting: 8 October 2007.



Portfolio: Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services.

Subject: Youth Initiatives Scheme – Work Programme.

Officer contact for further information: Chris Overend (01992 564247).

Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470).

Recommendations:

(1) That the arrangements for the Youth Initiatives Scheme programme, including the revised schemes at Buckhurst Hill and Lambourne and the additional provision for Chigwell be approved: and

(2) That the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services be authorised to release funds for approved schemes on an ongoing basis in accordance with the timetables of works provided by the Parish/Town Councils.

Report:

1. The District Council has included within the Capital Programme a Youth Initiatives Scheme budget of approximately £100,000 per annum for the financial years 2005/06, 2006/07 and 2007/08.

2. The schemes were put forward by Town/Parish Councils and assessed by the previous Portfolio Holder for their suitability based on the following criteria:

- (a) Provision of a detailed plan and drawings illustrating what facility is to be provided.
- (b) Planning and building regulation approval to be obtained where required.
- (c) Need to be able to demonstrate that scheme will enhance the activities for young people in the area and thus assist the District Council's aims within the Best Value Plan.
- (d) Financial details illustrating how the costs of the project are made up.
- (e) Scheme to have been discussed with District Council officers and received their approval for "go ahead".
- (f) A £40,000 maximum grant.
- (g) Evidence of joint funding where appropriate and possible.
- (h) Evidence of some measure of support for scheme locally.
- (i) No retrospective approvals – applications to relate to new schemes or enhancement/further development aspects of existing schemes.

2005/05 Programme:

3. Details of the 2005/06 programmes are set out below:

SCHEME	AMOUNT £	COMMENTS
Epping Town Council – Refurbishment Recreation Area, Parklands, Coopersale	11,965	Works completed September 2005
Chigwell Parish Council – Youth Shelter, Chigwell Row	6,850	Works completed September 2005
Fyfield Parish Council – Sports System – Field Rear of School	17,074	Works completed October 2005
Fyfield Parish Council – Cricket Panels	354	Installed June 2006
Lambourne Parish Council – Sports Area, Abridge	5,750	Planning Application refused by Plans Sub-Committee May 2006, revised survey being carried out and scheme to be put forward for 2007/08.
Loughton Town Council – Teen Shelters, Roding Valley and Willingale Road	13,510	Works totalling £9,968 completed June 2006. Remaining £3,542 not required.
Waltham Abbey Town Council – Games Area Resurfacing, Town Mead, Youth Shelter, Ninefields	39,169	Works to Games Area in Town Mead completed. Youth Shelter at Ninefields to be installed – work now tendered.
TOTAL	94,672	

4. Details of progress in respect of the 2006/07 programmes are set out below:

SCHEME	AMOUNT £	COMMENTS
Epping Town Council – Renovation of Skateboard Area	12,000	Works completed September 2006.
Epping Upland Parish Council – Teenage Youth Facilities	35,000	Works completed September 2006.
Ongar Parish Council – Refurbishment of Skateboard Area	10,000	Works completed November 2006.
Sheering Parish Council – Youth initiatives/equipment – Upper and Lower Sheering	31,412	Works completed October 2006.
TOTAL	88,412	

5. Details of progress in respect of the 2007/08 programmes are set out below:

SCHEME	AMOUNT £	COMMENTS
Buckhurst Hill Parish Council – Teenage Ball Park, Roding Valley Recreation Area	35,000	See paragraph 6 below.
Chigwell Parish Council – Upgrade of Equipment, Chigwell Station Green Area	10,000	See paragraph 7 below.
Matching Parish Council – Upgrading of facilities, Jubilee Field.	28,000	Tenders now received. Completion anticipated prior to end of 2007.
Roydon Parish Council – Multi Sport Ball Court, Roydon Playing Fields.	40,000	Works commenced August 2007. Anticipated completion October 2007.
	113,000	

6. Following the refusal of planning permission for the original scheme at Roding Valley Recreation Area, Buckhurst Hill Parish Council have now come forward with alternative proposals. Several meetings have been held, including some on site, regarding the new proposals, involving representatives from the Environment Agency, and the Parish and District Councils. The general view held by all is that the alternative proposals should receive local support. A public consultation exercise is being held in that regard on 9 October 2007. It is felt as long as that public support is forthcoming and the Parish Council can provide guarantees that the scheme will be completed during the current financial year, the District Council should award a grant towards the scheme. When the original scheme was put forward, a grant of £35,000 was recommended. The costings in respect of the new scheme are different from the original scheme. These revised costings are being analysed and the amount of grant to be awarded will be determined in the light of that analysis and the outcome of the public consultation event.

7. An amount of £10,000 in 2007/08 has been earmarked for the upgrading of equipment at Chigwell Station Green. The cost of the safety surfacing has proved to be far greater than originally envisaged. As the safety of the young people using the facilities is of paramount importance, it is recommended that the grant to the Parish Council for this scheme be increased. The amount will be determined in the light of further discussions with the Parish Council regarding the additional works required and once the overall financial situation of the Youth Initiative Programme becomes clearer following decisions by the Portfolio Holder in relation to other outstanding schemes.

8. Following the refusal of planning permission for the sports area at Abridge, Lambourne Parish Council have recently carried out a parish survey to clarify the wishes of residents in terms of the type of multi-use games area required, the general principle having already been approved. A meeting is to be held on 27 September 2007 at which the results of the survey will be discussed. The outcome of the discussions at the meeting will be reported to Cabinet. Subject to the outcome proving satisfactory and guarantees that the work can be carried out in 2007/08, it is recommended that the award of grant of £5,750 originally earmarked for 2005/06 be reaffirmed.

Financial Position:

9. The total funds earmarked, including those for the Buckhurst Hill and Lambourne schemes amount to £296,084, leaving £3,916 out of the £300,000 originally identified for the three-year programme. The Portfolio Holder will use this money, and any additional amounts arising out of subsequent adjustments to the programme and recommended grants in respect of works not yet carried out, as appropriate on the outstanding schemes.

Statement in Support of Recommended Action:

10. Experience has shown that the provision of youth facilities helps reduce youth nuisance and anti-social behaviour. Such facilities are required throughout the District, but particularly in the more remote rural areas. The projects put forward have the support of the Parish/Town Councils and residents in the localities concerned.

Other Options for Action:

11. To agree or reject the proposed schemes. To agree the suggested funding or increase/decrease the amounts within the overall annual budget.

Consultation Undertaken:

12. Parish and Town Councils within the District.

Resource Implications:

Budget provision: Capital provision of £100,000 per annum for each of the three financial years 2005/06, 2006/07 and 2007/08.

Personnel: Existing provision.

Land: To be provided by Parish/Town Councils.

Community Plan/BVPP references: Nil

Relevant statutory powers: Local Government Act 2000.

Background papers: None

Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications: The indications are that the provision of these facilities helps reduce youth nuisance and anti-social behaviour.

Key Decision Reference (if required): N/A.