

WARD BASED INITIATIVES

NOTES FOR THE GUIDANCE OF COUNCILLORS

1. INTRODUCTION

The Capital Programme Report to the Executive Board in February 2008 introduced the provision of £30,000 per ward (£10,000 per ward member), over a two year period commencing in 2008/09, for a Ward Based Initiative scheme, to provide Members with funding to progress minor schemes within their wards.

The report to Executive Board in April 2009 sought approval to extend the scheme by allowing Members to sponsor capital projects within their respective wards in the form of grants to voluntary organisations, with a further provision of £10,000 per ward.

2. ELIGIBLE SCHEMES

2.1 The expenditure must be for the acquisition or improvement of any Council asset or, in the case of a grant to a voluntary organisation, must be for works to their premises that will result in reduced running costs and must fall within the definition of capital expenditure as set out in the Capital Finance Regulations, this includes:

- the purchase or laying out of land
- the purchase or refurbishment of buildings to enhance the building rather than maintain it
- the purchase of equipment for Council use (Schools, Libraries, Community Centres etc. – for schools, see Section 5.6 below)
- CCTV

2.2 Schemes must be consistent with the Council's approved Corporate Plan / Vision priorities and with Departmental Asset Management plans (see Section 4 below re approvals process)

2.3 Schemes must provide benefit to whole wards or communities and not confer private benefit to individuals.

3. FINANCIAL CRITERIA

3.1 The total scheme cost will be inclusive of fees for design and supervision and any other associated costs (Planning Permissions, Building Regulations etc).

3.2 Schemes must result in no additional revenue costs for the Council, unless these can be met from within existing departmental budgets.

3.3 Joint sponsorship of projects can be made with other ward members.

4. JOINT FUNDED SCHEMES

Departments can joint fund WBI schemes, only if such a programme of works is included in the Capital Programme. Any such matched funding by the sponsoring department would require that additional authority to spend be obtained independently of the WBI scheme.

5. INITIATING SCHEMES

5.1 It is essential that proposals complement existing departmental service plans and strategies. Therefore, Councillors should discuss the scheme proposals with the Head of Service or a nominated officer. Section 10 shows a list of contacts in the areas of responsibility.

That Officer will be able to advise on:

- the Council's legal powers for such expenditure
- the estimated capital costs
- the potential revenue costs (and the likely ability of the service to meet those costs)
- whether the proposals are likely to secure approval.

5.2 The formal submission document, signed by the sponsoring Councillor(s) is to be forwarded by the responsible department, when the scheme is almost fully formed. The Head of Service with responsibility for the property must approve it as being within current Council policies, in the interests of the Council and as involving no more expenditure than is proportionate to the benefit to be achieved and is satisfied that there are no other reasons (including alternative proposals) which make it inappropriate to approve the proposal. Where the form is signed by 1 or 2 Councillors, the form should indicate whether the other Ward Councillor(s) have been made aware of the proposals.

5.3 Full details of the scheme should be provided to determine:

- whether and how the proposal meets the WBI eligibility criteria
- whether and how the proposal meets the WBI financial criteria
- whether and how proposals are consistent with approved Council priorities and the relevant Departmental Asset Management Plan
- whether any CCTV project meets the Community Safety criteria, details of which are available from the Community Safety Officer.
- that schemes relating to schools meet the criteria (see further below, para 5.6)

Insufficient detail can unfortunately delay the progress of a scheme while further information is sought.

All documentation (Guidance Notes, Contact Lists and Submission Forms) will be sent to Councillors and is also available on the Council Intranet). Any updates or alterations to such forms will be communicated to all councillors and Departmental nominated officers.

5.4 CCTV Schemes

All WBI proposals for CCTV schemes must comply with the Council's criteria for CCTV schemes as advised by the Community Safety Officer.

5.5 Energy Efficiency Schemes

As with all WBI projects, proposals must be capital in nature and be for Council assets or, in the case of a grant to a voluntary organisation, must be for works to their premises that will result in reduced running costs. Depending on the nature of the scheme and in order to support the sustainability agenda, the scheme will allow members to supplement the WBI funding with match funding from the Council's Energy Efficiency reserve.

The reserve was established as part of the 2006/07 revenue budget to provide pump priming funding to energy efficiency initiatives. Further revenue contributions have been made to the reserve each year since 2006/07 and it has also been supplemented by external funding of £90k p.a. over a four year period from Salix Finance which is a scheme operated by the Carbon Trust aimed at encouraging Local Authorities to create invest to save funds for reducing energy consumption.

All proposals in respect of environmental efficiency should be discussed in the first instance with the relevant contact officer who will advise on the merits of the proposal and on whether match funding would be available. In the majority of cases, funding will be made available as a loan, with a maximum payback period of 5 years. After the payback period, the service area will benefit from the ongoing efficiencies and the energy efficiency reserve will become ultimately self sustaining.

The funding has already been used to install new heating systems in Leisure Centres, install Automatic Meter reading equipment and to pilot the use of Biomass fuel technology (woodchip and wood pellets to replace coal). The following are further examples of energy efficiency initiatives which members may wish to support with match funding from the reserve:

- Insulation including cavity wall, double glazing, roof
- Boilers
- Heating systems
- Combined Heat and Power
- Swimming Pool cover
- Voltage reduction equipment
- Heating and Lighting controls

In addition, one of the agreed priorities for the WBI scheme is capital investment in renewable technologies within schools, council owned community buildings or premises owned by voluntary organisations working within the local community; for advice on such investment, please contact George Munson, the Climate Change Officer.

5.6 SCHOOLS

All WBI proposals relating to schools must be assessed by the Property Services Division within Education Leeds using the six criteria set out as follows (the criteria will rank equally in determining whether the proposal will be supported):

1. **Condition**
The proposal should relate to building condition issues categorised as “poor” and identified as priority 1 or 2 as identified by the condition surveys carried out as part of developing the Education Department’s Asset Management Plan.
2. **OFSTED identified premises deficiencies**
The proposal should address premises deficiencies identified in the school OFSTED report that would directly contribute to the raising of standards.
3. **Curriculum Computers**
A priority for support would be for schools which fall below a minimum ratio of computers to pupils of
1:12 in Primary Schools and
1:8 in High Schools.
Proposals should be justified in terms of the overall deficiency of equipment at a school and/or support the essential renewal or replacement of equipment in line with the school ICT Development Plan.
4. **Capital for Revenue Savings**
Proposals should be cost effective in reducing future revenue expenditure e.g. energy efficient schemes, and may also contribute to improving the learning environment.
5. **School Security**
Proposals should improve the security and safety of pupils, staff, premises or equipment. Evidence of priority should be supported by a high level of reported incidents from the Property Services Division Incident Base.
6. **Developments/Improvements to Facilities**
Proposals to contribute to improved educational standards or to promote social inclusion will require the endorsement of the School Improvement Strategy Group.
7. **Grants for facilities co-located with schools**
Proposals which are for a facility based on a school site, for example a sports facility or a community centre, will not automatically be subject to the same prioritisation criteria as school schemes. The position will depend on the particular arrangements in force on each site. Where a grant is proposed for such facilities, then officer advice should be sought at the outset to clarify the position.

6. **Approvals Process**

When received, the application will be checked to make sure:

- there are sufficient funds available for the proposal to qualify within the financial limits
- that the proposal meets the eligibility and financial criteria outlined above
- that it is within the legal powers of the Council to make the grant.
- external organisations in receipt of grant awards will be required to enter into a legal agreement with the Council to protect the Council’s investment in future. Legal requirements will be scaled dependant on the level of Council investment.

the proposal will then be submitted to the Director of Resources for approval.

Until all necessary approvals have been obtained, no firm commitments of funding can be given.

7. Final Approval Stage

Following the above approvals, a scheme will be set up in the Council's Capital Programme under the sponsoring Service area and the scheme will proceed like any other Council Capital scheme. This means that the Council's Financial Procedure Rules and Contract Procedure Rules must be followed with regard to tendering and appointment of contractors. The final stage is for a Chief Officer Approval form to be completed by the Department, which when approved, allows a contract for the work to be awarded.

8. Joint Funded Schemes

If, during the WBI process, it becomes apparent that the WBI element of the scheme exceeds or will exceed the approved amount, the Head of the sponsoring Service will seek agreement from the Councillor(s) to the revised cost before proceeding further (subject to the additional funds being available).

9. Position Statements

The Chief Officer Financial Development will maintain a record of the value of schemes relating to each ward, will undertake scheme monitoring and will provide other financial monitoring information as required.

10. Contact Points

Initial contact with Service Areas should be made to the officer named on the contact list attached. Ward Based Initiative matters will be co-ordinated within Financial Development by Keith Burton telephone number 2474294. Keith is based on the 3rd floor West of the Civic Hall.

CONTACT POINTS FOR WARD BASED INITIATIVE SCHEMES

SERVICE AREA	NAME OF CONTACT OFFICER	TELEPHONE NUMBER
Highways – Grass verges etc.	Helen Franklin	24 75318
Street Lighting	Helen Franklin	24 75318
Minor Traffic Engineering Works	Howard Claxton	39 50851
Streetscene Services	Stephen Smith	24 74249
Environmental Schemes	Dr Tom Knowland	39 50643
Renewable Energy Schemes	George Munson	39 51767
Libraries, Arts & Heritage	Catherine Blanshard	24 78331
Parks & Countryside	Sean Flesher	39 57451
Sport & Active Recreation	Mark Allman	24 78323
Children's Services – Early Years & Youth	Sally Threlfall	24 74334
Children's Services – Services for Children & Families	Edwina Harrison	24 78597
Schools – Estates Management	Tony Palmer	24 75342
Adults Social Care	John Lennon	24 78702