

Area West Committee – 18th June 2008

7. Proposed Arrangements for Future Opportunity Events (Executive Decision)

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Purpose of the Report

To advise members of the plans for future Opportunity events in Ilminster, Crewkerne and Chard.

Recommendations

It is recommended that members:-

- (1) approve the revised arrangements for future Opportunity events;
- (2) consider how the funds should be allocated to each Opportunity event.

Proposed Arrangements for Future Opportunity Events

Following the members workshop (see appendix at pages 13-16) and feedback received from the public after the previous three Opportunity events alterations have been made to the way future events are delivered.

The proposed arrangements are as follows:

Stage One

The public will be invited to submit applications under the following themes:

- Children & Young People
- Village Life
- Healthy Lifestyles
- Community Participation

The above will be open to community groups and parish councils within Area West. Interested organisations will be sent an application form and detailed guidance notes which will include information on how their completed application will be assessed.

Some projects may meet the criteria of more than one theme; in those circumstances an applicant can have their project assessed in more than one category but they can only go forward to Stage 2 in one of the themes.

In addition there will be the theme

- Improvements to your Environment

This category will be open to individuals who can put forward ideas for making improvements to the physical environment within their community. An example could be enhancing an area of land to make it more attractive for the community to use.

Applications will need to be submitted on an application form and will be assessed on deliverability and cost.

Once all applications have been received members of the appropriate sub group will meet with the Community Regeneration Officer and the Community Development Officer to assess the completed applications. These will be assessed against a rigorous scoring system to ascertain which ones get through to Stage 2. Details of the scoring system will be made available to members at a later date.

Stage Two

It is hoped that there will be an equal numbers of bids through to Stage 2 in each category, but this may vary at each event and will depend upon the quality of applications. As at previous Opportunity events applicants will make a three minute presentation to the public. The presentations will be made in order of category. Once all the applications in a category have been heard there will be five minutes for the public to ask questions of any of those projects. Once the public have heard from all the categories they will vote.

Voting

The public will vote using coloured stickers. Each category will be assigned a different colour and the public can only vote for one project in each category. This will ensure that people are using their votes for projects across all themes.

Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Involvement

Whilst the votes are being counted this time slot will be allocated to local voluntary and community groups. It is intended that they use this time to promote their organisation to the public and recruit potential volunteers. At Opportunity Crewkerne the Community Justice Panel used this time slot to inform the audience of their work and they successfully recruited three volunteers as a result. A couple of local community groups will be invited to use this slot at each event.

Audience Attendance

To control audience numbers the Opportunity events will become ticket only. Fifty per cent of the tickets will be allocated via the participating projects, which will each be assigned an equal number of tickets. The remaining 50% of tickets will be distributed in advance of the event. Once it has been decided which applications get through to stage two, details of those projects will be printed in the news media and the public will be invited to fill in a very simple form to apply for a ticket to attend the event. If there are more applications than actual tickets available the completed forms will be used to select a random but representative cross section of the community who will then be sent tickets before the event.

Timescales

The events will start an hour earlier at 6pm and will take place in October 2008 and January and March 2009. The timescales for the preparation and delivery of the Opportunity events are detailed in Table 1 overleaf.

Table 1: Timescales

Action	Ilminster	Crewkerne	Chard
Publicity & promotion	w/c 3 Sept 08	w/c 17 Nov 08	w/c 12 Jan 09
Closing date for submission of bids	26 Sept 08	12 Dec 08	6 Feb 09
Sub-Committee evaluate bids	w/c 29 Sept 08	w/c 15 Dec 08	w/c 9 Feb 09
Publicise details of bids through to Stage 2 & promote tickets	w/c 6 Oct 08	w/c 5 th Jan 09	w/c 16 Feb 09
Closing date for tickets	Friday 17 th Oct	Fri 16 th Jan 09	Friday 27 th Feb
Holding of Opportunity events	w/c 27 th Oct 08	w/c 26 Jan 09	w/c 9 th March 09

Allocation of Resources

£90,000 has been allocated to cover all three Opportunity events. In June 2007 the Area West Committee decided that, for the first round of forum events in Ilminster, Crewkerne and Chard, £30,000 be allocated to each of the community forums but for subsequent forum events, the allocation of funding for each forum be on the basis of the population of the corresponding community planning partnership area (£2.35 per head). This means the funds will be allocated as outlined in Table 2 unless members agree to an alternative way of allocating the money.

Table 2: Allocation of funds split by population

	Ilminster	Crewkerne	Chard
Population	7,771	12,682	17,743
% of Area West Population	20.3%	33.2%	46.5%
Resulting financial allocations based on %	£18,311	£29,882	£41,807

The implications of allocating the funds in this way means that the maximum level of funding available in each category will vary in each location and this will have implications for the maximum amount of money a group can apply for. Table 3 gives details of the maximum level of funding and the minimum number of projects that may benefit.

Table 3: Maximum level of funding per project per event

	Ilminster	Crewkerne	Chard
Maximum level of funding	£2,000	£3,500	£5,000
No of projects receiving funding if they all apply for maximum grant	9	8	8

Financial Implications

The £90,000 allocation for the three Opportunity events can be funded from the Better Aligning Service budget, the Area Reserve and the Area Capital Programme (unallocated balances).

Implications for Corporate Priorities

The Opportunity events will address the corporate aim to “Ensure safe, sustainable and cohesive communities” and in particular corporate objectives fifteen and sixteen:

- increase to 65% by 2010 the people who feel engaged in and can influence decisions that affect their communities (Objective 15)
- Maintain above 80% the people satisfied with their neighbourhoods as a place to live (objective 16).

Background Papers: *Previous reports to Area West Committee.*
