

Your ref:
Our ref: JC/MW/RB1
Ask for: Councillor Jim Creamer
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Chairman of Environment & Sustainability Committee
County Hall
West Bridgford
Nottingham
NG2 7QP

Re: Question Under Procedure Rule 39

Would the Chairman of the Environment & Sustainability Committee tell Council what percentage of Supporting Local Communities Funding approved for 2014/15 has been allocated to electoral divisions represented by Labour councillors?

Councillor Richard Butler

Dear Councillor Richard Butler,

Firstly I would like to thank you for your question. The County Council's Policy Committee on 16th October 2013 approved the establishment of the Supporting Local Communities Fund, with a budget allocation of £0.5m per year, for community-based environmental improvement schemes. Following on from this the Environment and Sustainability Committee subsequently moved the initiative forward on the 12th December 2013 by approving the criteria to be used for the operation of the SLC fund and agreeing that schemes in the current 2013/14 programme that could not be delivered in the current programme year would be re-assessed alongside existing applications submitted for the 2014/15 programme.

The SLC programme has been reviewed due to significant and ongoing cuts in Government funding. These unprecedented cuts total £154 million over the next three years and represent a quarter of the total amount the Council needs to maintain services at existing levels. At the same time the County Council is facing rising demands for its services to help support more vulnerable older people and children during these times of austerity. This has forced the authority to make some very difficult decisions. Rather than close the programme, it has been reduced to total annual budget of £500,000 and refocused to target areas of greatest need and deprivation. We have received requests for funding in excess of £7 million, so we introduced a new scoring system for this year's applicants.

We looked at factors like levels of deprivation, the amount of external funding and voluntary hours available as well as the opportunity for increased community cohesion and this is a much fairer system for distributing funds. The criteria for the funding are as follows:

- o Focus on areas of deprivation
- o Emphasis on matched funding approach
- o Support community cohesion and reduction of crime
- o Support economic viability including job creation / training opportunities
- o Encourage volunteering
- o Community 'ownership'

Among the schemes given the go ahead from April 1 are creating a community garden and allotment at St Mary's Gardens in Hawtonville, the creation of a new storage facility at Edwinstowe Cricket Club and refurbishment works at Mansfield Woodhouse Heritage Centre. We strictly adhered to the scoring scheme as we had so many projects to consider from every corner of the county. We wanted to give as many communities as possible a fair chance so we put a £50k ceiling on funding requests.

We have collated a reserve list of projects which will be given the go ahead if any of the approved projects drop off the list for any reason.

The fund will also be responsible for Phase II of the Nottinghamshire Roll of Honour, a permanent record of the 13,000 men and women who died in the Great War. Phase II of the Roll of Honour will be administered by volunteers from Trent to Trenches and will focus on asking members of the public for pictures, biography details, diary entries and family histories of those who died in the Great War. This fund will also contribute £10,000 towards the refurbishment and upkeep of war memorials across Nottinghamshire.

276 bids for funding were considered and prioritised and at Environment and Sustainability Committee on 6th March the programme was agreed, based on the bids received and obtaining the maximum benefit possible against the agreed objectives. Reserve schemes were identified in case some of the approved programmes are not deliverable for various reasons.

Programme Budget Split of schemes scoring between 15 and 18 points
(18-16 proposed for delivery, 15's possible reserve schemes)

You asked within your question about electoral divisions and the allocation of funding:

Labour	71%
Conservative	18%
Liberal Democrats	5%
Countywide	3%
Independents	3%

The 15/16 programme bidding process will commence in the summer and all applicants will be able to make submissions based on the full knowledge of the new criteria and I am hoping that all Members will support applicants in making bids that fit with the new objectives.

Please feel free to contact me should you wish to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely,



Councillor Jim Creamer
Member for Carlton West Division