

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET – 14TH APRIL 2011

SUBJECT:	SUPPORT FOR WIRRAL'S COASTAL RESORT TOWNS
WARD/S AFFECTED:	NEW BRIGHTON, HOYLAKE & MEOLS AND WEST KIRBY & THURSTASTON
REPORT OF:	INTERIM DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	COUNCILLOR ANDREW HODSON REGENERATION AND PLANNING STRATEGY
KEY DECISION	YES

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report informs Members of the process that has been undertaken to bring forward proposals for the allocation of the £200,000 revenue grant available for supporting economic regeneration in Wirral's coastal resort towns of New Brighton, Hoylake and West Kirby.
- 1.2 The report provides Members with details of the proposals that were considered at the special Participatory Budgeting workshops facilitated by West Wirral Area Forum and Wallasey and New Brighton Area Forum on the 14th and 17th March respectively.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

- 2.1 Members are requested to agree that funding should be allocated to those projects ranked the highest by the West Wirral Area Forum up to the maximum sum available of £100,000, as set out in Appendix 1.
- 2.2 Members are requested to agree that funding should be allocated to those projects ranked the highest by the Wallasey and New Brighton Area Forum up to the maximum sum available of £100,000, as set out in Appendix 2.
- 2.3 Members are requested to agree that a report be brought back to Cabinet outlining how the process of administering participatory budgets will be further developed.

3.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 3.1 Cabinet on the 4th November 2010 [minute 210] agreed that the Coastal Resorts Grant should be allocated on the basis of £100,000 to New Brighton

and £100,000 to Hoylake/West Kirby. Members also agreed that the respective Area Forums should take a leading role in the decision making process and that recommendations of the Area Forums should be presented to a future meeting of the Cabinet for decision.

4.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 In March 2010 the previous Government announced that funding would be made available to local authorities to support the economic development of seaside towns. As a result Wirral, together with 24 other local authorities in England, was awarded a “one-off” grant of £200,000. Guidance for the use of this fund was not prescriptive, but had the key aim of supporting regeneration and economic development within the target areas.
- 4.2 At the meeting of Cabinet on 4 November 2010, Members agreed that the grant be notionally allocated on the basis of £100,000 to New Brighton and £100,000 to Hoylake/West Kirby. It was also agreed that the respective Area Forums should take a leading role in the decision making process and that recommendations would then be presented to a future meeting of Cabinet for a decision [Minute 210 refers].
- 4.3 Following a meeting with the respective Chairs of the two Area Forums it was agreed that proposals be considered through the Participatory Budgeting process. This process has been used previously by Area Forums in respect of the ‘You Decide’ funding and enables local people to make informed decisions about their neighbourhoods and the targeting of public resources.
- 4.4 Applications for funding were invited between the 19th January and the 25th February 2011. Information concerning the funding was presented to the Area Forum meetings in February and sent to the network of contacts of the respective Area Forums. In addition the initiative was publicised on the Council’s website. This resulted in 12 proposals totalling £414,485 in Hoylake/West Kirby and 12 proposals totalling £284,752 in New Brighton.
- 4.5 Special meetings of the respective Area Forums were held in March and applicants were given the opportunity to present their projects and take questions from the audience. Residents were then asked to score each project with the aim of establishing which projects had the greatest level of support from local residents.
- 4.6 **West Wirral Forum – 14th March 2011 – Hoylake / West Kirby**
 - 4.6.1 This meeting drew an audience of approximately 120 people with twelve presentations facilitated on the night. A summary of all the projects and their respective scores is attached as Appendix 1.
 - 4.6.2 The five highest scoring projects are recommended for approval, however it is proposed that the grant offer for two of the projects is reduced for the following reasons:

- The proposal for the Hoylake Lifeboat Museum was the second most popular project on the evening in terms of its overall score. However in achieving this ranking, a number of residents indicated that the applicant should not be awarded the full £100,000 but proposed lower figures within the range of £20,000 to £40,000. It is proposed to award the project £30,000 as this represents an average of these figures and the applicant has stated that this sum would enable work to be carried out in support of the project. For instance the application outlines that £20,000 is needed for the completion of the boat restoration and the additional £10,000 could contribute towards the cost of the presentation and casing of artefacts (listed as requiring £20,000).
- Meols Parade Gardens renovation project was ranked fifth. The sum of £69,110 is required to fund the first four projects and this therefore leaves a balance of £30,890 from the available funds of £100,000. The Friends of Hoylake and Meols have confirmed that this sum would still allow them to undertake significant works to the Gardens.

4.7 Wallasey and New Brighton Forum – 17th March 2011 – New Brighton

4.7.1 This meeting drew approximately 100 people with twelve presentations facilitated on the night. A summary of all the projects and their respective scores is attached as Appendix 2.

4.7.2 The six highest scoring projects are recommended for approval with one amendment being proposed to the “Get Your Feet Wet” proposal as follows:

- The proposal submitted by Wallasey Yacht Club included a sum to fund the cost of a replacement tractor. The applicant has confirmed that this is not integral to the delivery of the project and that the project can be delivered for the reduced sum of £16,012.

4.8 Unsuccessful Applications

4.8.1 A number of projects did not receive sufficient support for funding on this occasion. These included:

- A number of innovative tourism related ideas. It is intended that officers will work further with the applicants to ensure that these ideas are considered as part of the planning for the Womens Open Golf Championship in 2012 and for the return of the Open Golf Championship in 2014;
- Environmental improvements to retail areas. Officers will advise applicants that proposals could be submitted for consideration as part of the Keeping it Local initiative which was announced in the Council’s budget for 2011/12;
- Proposals to support unemployed residents back into work. The Council is making substantial investment in services that will address worklessness and increase skills. This includes a £1.4 million contract covering the whole of the Borough which will ensure that residents are engaged and supported into work. This contract will be delivered by a consortium of voluntary sector organisations;
- Small scale capital projects. Officers will explore opportunities for any alternative funding sources with the project applicant.

5.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 5.1 It was a requirement of the application process that applicants identified any risks associated with the delivery of their proposals and the action necessary to mitigate such risks within their submission. Each of the project proposals recommended for approval will now be expected to ensure a robust process is in place to ensure these are managed effectively through implementation.
- 5.2 A funding agreement will be put in place between the Council and each of the successful projects and this will outline that the funding should be used solely for the purpose for which it was given. Project owners will be required to provide financial records and receipts for all claimed expenditure. However, where necessary to assist with cashflow for small voluntary and community organisations, phased payments can be made in advance subject to:
- the organisation clearly evidencing a need for advance funding, and
 - the provision of financial receipts against each advance before any further advances are made.
- 5.3 A number of the projects concerned involve capital works to improve Council assets in local neighbourhoods and the resulting improvements will need to be maintained by the Council's Technical Services Department in the future. The projects concerned are:
- Swing into Grove Park, Hoylake;
 - Meols Parade Gardens, Hoylake;
 - Tidal Pool, New Brighton

It was made clear throughout the application process that the grants available were on a "one-off" basis and that no further funding was available for any revenue commitments for future years. The areas listed above are currently maintained by the Council and will be enhanced by the projects.

- 5.4 There may however be some additional ongoing maintenance costs associated with these projects. At this stage it is anticipated that they could be contained within the current available budgets. Obviously as the projects are developed some joint working with the applicants would help reduce the total amount and this will be addressed through the funding agreement.
- 5.5 Council officers have raised subsequent questions regarding the operation of the Tidal Pool, New Brighton in relation to health and safety issues. Discussions will be held with the applicant to ensure that any concerns can be addressed. Should the project not be able to continue due to any outstanding risks we would recommend that the Wallasey Sea Cadets Crow's Nest project, which was the next highest scoring project, be awarded the funds.

6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 6.1 No alternative options were considered as the resources available through the Fund are targeted at specific areas and involvement of local people through the Area Forums in contributing to decision making is consistent with the Council's commitment to community engagement.

7.0 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The Participatory Budgeting approach taken to evaluate the proposals embodies community consultation, enabling neighbourhoods to play an active role in determining the targeting of the resources in question. The process undertaken as part of determining the allocation of these resources will be fully reviewed and a report will be brought forward that suggests how such exercises could be undertaken with the Area Forums in future.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 8.1 The projects that have been proposed for funding will all be delivered by groups from the voluntary, community and faith sector.

9.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

- 9.1 There are no staffing implications arising from this report. The initiative will continue to be managed by Officers from the Corporate Services Department from existing resources.
- 9.2 The three projects set out in section 5.3 above will require on-going maintenance but at this stage the Director of Technical Services advises that it is not anticipated that there will be any difficulties in containing those for the reasons stated.
- 9.3 Two of the projects have stated that some of the grant will be used to contribute towards the costs of employing a member of staff. It will be made clear in the funding agreement that there is no further funding available from the Council to sustain any posts beyond the grant awarded to the project.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 Implementation of successful project proposals is likely to bring about equal opportunities improvements and benefits.
- 11.2 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) was carried out in March 2010 in respect of the Area Forum's funding process ('You Decide').

12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 There are no direct carbon reduction implications arising from this report.

13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 There are no immediate planning and community safety implications arising from this report. Planning consent for some of the individual proposals may be required and will be addressed as appropriate through the planning process.

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APPENDICES

There are two appendices attached to this report.

REFERENCE MATERIAL

Background papers and information used in the preparation of this report are held by the Regeneration Team within Corporate Services Department.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet – Support for Wirral’s Coastal Resort Towns	4 November 2010