

WIRRAL COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE BOARD – 7 JUNE 2007

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION

## **HOSTEL CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT GRANT FUNDING FOR BIRKENHEAD YMCA**

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### **1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Members of the additional allocation of £115,000 Hostel Capital Improvement Grant funding (HCIP) given to the Council to grant to Birkenhead YMCA for their innovative Maritime Industries Training Programme, which the Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG formerly ODPM) has allocated from the HCIP 2006/07 under spend.

### **2.0 BACKGROUND**

2.1 The Hostel Capital Improvement Programme (HCIP) grant funding is a £90 million programme being delivered over three years (2005/06 to 2007/08) to improve existing or to develop new hostel accommodation and in some cases, non residential services for single homeless people. The funding has two aims; (1) to ensure significant change in the delivery of services in tandem with improvements through capital works and, (2) improve employment, health, personal development and housing outcomes for residents. Through using the funding in this way it is expected that the number of exclusions and abandonment's currently experienced in many hostels will be reduced, even for the most challenging residents.

2.2 The HCIP forms an important element of the CLG's Homelessness agenda and the investment in Birkenhead YMCA's innovative training programme should contribute to the CLG's target to reduce homelessness, help more people into settled homes and halve the use of temporary accommodation by 2010.

2.3 The HCIP further links in with the Wirral Homelessness Review which is currently underway.

### **3.0 BIRKENHEAD YMCA MARITIME INDUSTRIES TRAINING PROGRAMME**

3.1 In 2004 Birkenhead YMCA decided to look to expand their existing training initiatives and develop links with new partners in response to feedback from a number of forums held with residents to find out their training needs.

3.2 As a result of the continued success of a number of narrow-boat days on Britain's waterways which encouraged YMCA residents to develop skills involving catering, cleanliness, teamwork and problem solving, a boat support / training group was formally established which consists of nine residents supported by YMCA maintenance and support worker staff.

3.3 Various achievements have been made through this training programme and the team since its inception has developed new skills and qualifications to take forward the training programme for other residents. Birkenhead YMCA as a result of this success is now in a position to further expand this programme through the purchase of its own boats.

#### **4.0 HOSTEL CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME (HCIP) FUNDING**

4.1 As the CLG have been working nationally with the YMCA movement, Government representatives recently met with Birkenhead YMCA staff to discuss accessing the HCIP under spend for 2006/07 financial year. As a result the CLG agreed to allocate £115,000 to Birkenhead YMCA to fund the purchase of 2 boats which will enable the YMCA to develop their Maritime Industries Training Programme which will both encourage and develop residents future employability outside of the programme as well as explore the potential to develop opportunities for their residents to be employed by the training programme itself.

4.2 The CLG confirmed that it was unable to carry forward any under spend into 2007/08 financial year therefore any funding to the YMCA needed to be allocated and transferred by the end of 2006/07 financial year. To ensure the YMCA could access this funding the CLG were keen for the Council to receive the grant and act as a conduit for the funding to the YMCA enabling the money to be drawn down.

4.3 Following recommendations from the CLG the Council is currently in the process of drawing up a legal agreement which details the terms and conditions for the grant to be paid to the YMCA and includes the CLG outcomes for HCIP funding.

#### **5.0 FINANCIAL AND STAFFING IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 Members approval is sought retrospectively to receive the £115,000 CLG Hostel Capital Improvement Grant in 2007/08 to support Birkenhead YMCA's Maritime Industries Training Programme.

5.2 There are no financial or staffing implications arising from this report. All funding for the purchase of the 2 narrow boats is being provided by the CLG with the Council acting as the accountable body.

5.3 The £115,000 grant will provide significant value for money by ensuring that the YMCA can develop and expand its existing Maritime Industries Training Programme.

#### **6.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 The Homelessness Strategy highlights significant equal opportunities issues both in relation to accessing housing and support services. The Council's Homelessness Service and partner agencies often deal with the most disadvantaged households in the community and Birkenhead YMCA's Maritime Industries Training Programme detailed in this report seeks to ensure improved hostel linked services are accessible to its hostel residents both now and in the future.

#### **7.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 None.

## **8.0 LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 All wards through the Borough are affected by this report.

## **9.0 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 None.

## **10.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 Homeless households, particularly those sleeping rough are often targets for crime and anti-social behaviour. Providing services which support homeless people to access a permanent, settled home in which to live and training and employment opportunities contributes significantly towards community safety.

## **11.0 PLANNING IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 None

## **12.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

12.1 None

## **13.0 RECOMMENDATION**

13.1 That the additional allocation of £115,000 HCIP funding be made available to fund Birkenhead YMCA's Maritime Industries Training Programme be agreed.

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This report was prepared by Sue Hooper, who can be contacted on 691 8268.