

**WIRRAL COUNCIL AND WIRRAL PARTNERSHIP HOMES – THE COMMUNITY FUND'S DISCRETIONARY FUND – 'YOUR WIRRAL'**

---

**1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1.1 This report seeks agreement to establish a "Your Wirral" Co-ordinator post following the agreement of funding by Cabinet on 1 November 2007.

**2.0 BACKGROUND**

2.1 The Community Fund was established as a consequence of the transfer of the bulk of the Council's housing stock to Wirral Partnership Homes (WPH) in February 2005. Amongst other issues this agreement enabled the recovery of VAT payable on certain works carried out as part of WPH's improvement programme to be paid in to a Community Fund with specific objects. The Fund also contains the balance of the Council's Housing Revenue Account at the time it was closed and the VAT monies arising from a similar Development Agreement between the Council and Beechwood and Ballantyne Community Housing Association.

2.2 A report setting out the arrangements for operating the Community Fund in partnership with WPH in accordance with the terms of the legally binding Community Fund Deed was considered and agreed by Cabinet on the 21<sup>st</sup> September 2006. The Deed sets out the framework for the purposes for which the Fund can be used and also that the Fund would be overseen by a Joint Working Group consisting of equal membership from WPH and Wirral Council.

2.3 Cabinet Members subsequently agreed a report on the 16<sup>th</sup> August 2007 which proposed the revised arrangements for distributing the Community Fund. These included:

2.3.1 Setting aside initially a sum of £2.5 million to cover any potential warranty claims or other liabilities arising from the stock transfer, this would be subject to annual review;

2.3.2 Establishing a Discretionary Fund to support the development of community based projects of benefit to local people across the whole of the Borough. The Fund will allocate £500,000 per year (£300,000 in 2007/08) of Community Fund resources targeted at small scale community projects;

2.3.3 Accounting for the measures outlined above, periodically dividing the balance of the Community Fund resources equally between WPH and the Council to be delivered through each organisation in accordance with the defined Community Fund purposes.

2.4 A report on progressing a revised agreement in respect of 2.3.3 above will be brought back to Cabinet in due course.

### 3.0 **PROGRESSING THE DISCRETIONARY FUND – YOUR WIRRAL**

3.1 Work has taken place to develop the Discretionary Fund outlined in paragraph 2.3.2 above and it is proposed that the programme is branded as '**Your Wirral**'. The Fund will be launched in November 2007 and a marketing campaign has been developed by Press and Publicity staff from WPH and the Council to ensure that community and voluntary groups from across the Borough as a whole are aware of the opportunities created by the Fund.

3.2 The Fund will provide grants of up to £5,000 to community and voluntary groups for projects, activities or items which meet the Community Funds broad objectives. The application process requests information commensurate with the level of funding sought and is based on current good practice and feedback from applicants to existing local funds such as the Area Forum's community initiatives fund.

3.3 Whilst the process will be designed to be as 'user friendly' as possible, there will however be the need to ensure that sufficient information is received to enable a robust assessment of each application to take place. This may include providing support or assistance to applicants who may not have previously been able to apply for grant funding. In addition there are a range of tasks associated with operating the Fund such as issuing offer letters, implementing financial and monitoring procedures and providing the necessary information to the Joint Working Group set up to administer the Fund as part of the approval process.

3.4 As a result the Joint Working Group has recognised the need to establish a Co-ordinator's post to oversee the process. The post would be located within the Council's Regeneration Department and would be funded from the Your Wirral Fund. The post would be graded at Scale 6 £20,895 to £22,293, plus on costs, and the duties of the post would include:

- Managing the application form process including ensuring the necessary information is provided to the Joint Working Group ;
- Ensuring that the agreed communication / promotion process is undertaken;
- Linking with WPH community grants, Area Forum grants etc;
- Requesting and reporting on monitoring information where required;
- Issuing offer letters and implementing financial and monitoring procedures;
- Providing support to small community groups / voluntary organisations to develop projects, to fill in the application form and to operate the claim process.
- Review of the operation of the scheme to ensure it reflects best practice and delivers value for money.

3.5 A report was considered by Cabinet on the 1<sup>st</sup> November 2007 and it was resolved that the establishment of a Your Wirral Co-ordinator post be recommended to the Employment and Appointments committee.

### 4.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The post would be graded at Scale 6 £20,895 to £22,293 plus on costs =£28,045. The full costs of the post would be met from the **Your Wirral** element of the Community Fund.

## 5.0 STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The post would be located within the Regeneration Department's Strategy and Implementation Section and would provide a redeployment opportunity for officers who are part of the Council's redeployment process.

## 6.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The post would promote the opportunities for Wirral voluntary and community organisations to have access to small scale funding to benefit all of Wirral's residents.

## 7.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no specific implications arising directly from this report, however projects funded through **Your Wirral** may have a positive impact on community safety.

## 8.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no specific implications arising directly from this report. However, projects funded through **Your Wirral** may have beneficial impacts for the environment and the well being of people in Wirral.

## 9.0 PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

19.1 There are none arising from this report.

## 10.0 ANTI-POVERTY IMPLICATIONS

10.1 **Your Wirral** resources will be made available to a wide range of community and voluntary organisations working to improve the quality of life for Wirral residents.

## 11.0 SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The **Your Wirral** fund will be available to residents within Wirral's most deprived areas as well as the wider community.

## 12.0 LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS

12.1 This report will be of interest to all Members of the Council.

## 13.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

13.1 Community Fund report to Cabinet 21<sup>st</sup> September 2006  
Community Fund report to Cabinet 16<sup>th</sup> August 2007  
Community Fund report to Cabinet 1<sup>st</sup> November 2007

## 14.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

14.1 Employment and Appointments Committee agree to the establishment of the post of **Your Wirral** Co-ordinator at Scale 6 (£20,895 to £22,293 plus on costs).

Alan Stennard  
Director of Regeneration

This report was prepared by Sally Keating who can be contacted on 691 8125.