

Youth Opportunity Fund and Youth Capital Fund

Executive Summary

- 1.0 This report aims to update the Committee about developments of the Youth Opportunity Fund and Youth Capital Fund. The Committee is asked to note the report.

Background

- 2.0 In April 2006, Wirral was allocated £210,472.00 Youth Opportunity Fund and £182,041.00 Youth Capital Fund for the financial year 2006/07. The two funds:
- Are for young people aged 13-19 years
 - Give young people a voice in making decisions
 - Help involve disadvantaged and hard to reach young people
 - Improve things to do and places to go for young people in their neighbourhoods
 - Will be invested in youth facilities, particularly in deprived areas
 - Should contribute to Every Child Matters (ECM) outcome areas
- 2.1 **Youth Opportunity Fund (YOF)**
The money in this fund is for young people to bid for new activities. These activities must support the ECM outcome areas, e.g. projects, trips, residential etc.
- 2.2 **Youth Capital Fund (YCF)**
This money is to be spent on capital items which can include refurbishments, IT equipment, youth shelters etc. The money in this fund can be used along side the Youth Opportunity Fund.
- 2.3 Part of the criteria for the allocation of these funds is that young people themselves are the decision makers, as well as the applicants and beneficiaries.
- 2.4 In July 2006, a consultation took place with young people regarding "Participation – Next Steps". As part of this consultation, questionnaires were completed by young people, through a number of Secondary Schools, Area Youth Forums and Youth Service units. At the end of the questionnaire, young people were asked if they would like to become more involved in Youth Forums and in allocating the new Youth Opportunity Fund and Youth Capital Fund. These names were entered onto a database by Youth Service.

- 2.5 In August 2006, letters were sent out to all of the young people on the database, asking them to attend a training day. 10 young people attended, where they learnt more about the criteria of the funding and went through a draft application pack to ensure that it was accessible to young people. This group also decided that a proportion of the funding should be “top sliced” in order to ensure access for vulnerable and Wirral-wide groups (£30,000.00 from each fund). The remainder of the money would be divided across the 4 Wirral districts, calculated on a 13-19 year old per head basis.
- 2.6 On the 5th and 12th October, two evening training sessions were arranged for young people. This training covered the whole process of scoring applications against the criteria, with particular emphasis on equality of opportunity and confidentiality, with the young people being given sample applications to score. A total of 18 young people were trained during these sessions (these young people represent the four districts and hard to reach groups) and the membership of the grant panel was closed until the 2007/2008 allocation. This decision was taken purely based on the stringent timescales set by DfES in terms of allocating and spending the funding (all monies have to be spent by 31st March 2007).
- 2.7 Application packs were available from the first week in September, with two deadlines: 16th October and 6th December. The Grant Panel met on the 28th October to score the first batch of applications, which resulted in 13 successful bids, allocating £31,938 Youth Opportunity Fund and £44,700 Youth Capital Fund. Three bids were unsuccessful, in that they did not meet the essential criteria and 33 applications were asked for further information, in order for the grant panel to make a decision. The deadline for this additional information was 17th November, with the grant panel meeting on the 22nd and 29th November to make their decisions.
- 2.8 This additional information led to the grant panel making further decisions, where a further £59,459.43 has now been allocated, giving a total spend to date of £70,459 Youth Opportunity Fund and £65,638 Youth Capital Fund.
- 2.9 An Officers Liaison Group has been established from the statutory and voluntary sectors. The purpose of this group is to provide professional advice to groups that have been awarded funds. It is envisaged that advice on planning and consultation will be necessary for those allocations for Youth Shelters. And refurbishments of premises.

Next Steps

- 3.0 The Grant Panel will meet on the 9th December to score the second batch of applications, where it is envisaged that the remainder of the funding for 2006/07 will be allocated.

- 3.1 The role of this panel will then be to monitor the successful projects. This will range from visits, to helping collect and evaluate the statistical data required by DfES.
- 3.2 The grant panel will also look at the paperwork associated with the funding and identify amendments/changes that will help improve the process of applying, scoring and allocating the funding.

Outcomes

- 4.0 The young people who are on the grant panel will be accredited for their work, by achieving the service section of the Bronze Duke of Edinburgh's award.
- 4.1 Examples of successful bids include: computer suites, residential activities, refurbishments, project work and IT equipment.

Financial & Staffing Implications

- 5.0 This work is supported by the Senior Youth Engagement Worker, this post is funded partly from the support funds element of the YOF/ YCF and the Youth & play service. The post is funded until the 31 March 2007.

Equal Opportunities Implication

- 6.0 The successful applications aim to increase the opportunities available to vulnerable and hard to reach young people.

Human Rights Implication

- 7.0 There are none.

Community Safety Implication

- 8.0 There are none.

Planning Implication

- 9.0 There may be planning implication arising from decisions made in relation to the Youth Capital Fund. The grant panel is currently taking advice from Parks and Open Spaces Department regarding bids for Youth Shelters, an adventure trail and a multi-use sports area.

Local Member Support Implication

- 10.0 This report affects all wards.

Background Papers

- 11.0 *Youth Matters 2005*
Participation - Next Steps – Youth Service Advisory Committee, 21st September 2006

Recommendation

- 12.0 The Committee notes the progress that has been made in the area of allocating the Youth Opportunity Fund and Youth Capital Fund.

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