

WIRRAL COUNCIL

YOUTH AND PLAY SERVICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE - 8th OCTOBER 2007

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

YOUTH OPPORTUNITY FUND/YOUTH CAPITAL FUND 2007/08

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is to update the Committee about developments of the 2007/08 Youth Opportunity Fund and Youth Capital Fund. The Committee is asked to note the report.

1. Background

- 1.1. With the introduction of the Youth Opportunity Fund (YOF) and Youth Capital Fund (YCF) in April 2006 Wirral received an allocation of £392,513 for both 2006/07 and 2007/08 financial years.
- 1.2. Last year the young people's grant panel allocated the money across 66 successful Wirral projects. This panel also reviewed the paper work associated with the application process in readiness for application packs to be set out in the new financial year.
- 1.3. Recruitment for the 2007/08 young people's grant panel commenced in April 2007. Numerous young people were invited to be part of the panel including those from schools, voluntary and statutory youth groups and Area Youth Forums. Throughout the year, at events such as United Kingdom Youth Parliament and Youth Conference/Parliament, young people were asked if they wished to be part of a future panel. Young people who were harder to reach were specifically targeted to be represented on the panel, such as Looked After Children, young people with disabilities or learning difficulties. The training for the panel took place in May and June 2007. The training was jointly facilitated by young people from the previous year's grant panel who were keen to be involved to share their experiences with the newer panel members. The training covered the process of scoring applications against the set criteria with particular emphasis on equality of opportunity and confidentiality. A total of 17 young people attended the training sessions.
- 1.4. Application packs were available from the first week in April 2007 with a deadline of 27th June 2007. The panel met on the 30th June, 14th July, 24th July, 31st July and 7th August to make their decisions. In additions, applicants who were successful last year and who applied for funding over £2,000 to continue or develop their project were asked to give a short presentation to the panel. These presentations took place on 10th and 12th July and were scored by young people in a similar manner to applications.
- 1.5. A total of 81 applications were received (excluding 10 late which the panel decided not to consider), which amounted to a total requested of £614,326.02. Young people on the grant panel made the following decisions relating to these applications:
 - 44 successful applications, totalling - £196,793.28
 - 37 unsuccessful applications
 - Overall remaining after 1st round - £180,719.72 (£98,199.32 YOF & £82,520.40 YCF)A full list of allocations is attached see Appendix 1.
- 1.6. Due to the fact that all the money was not allocated in the first round a second round has been advertised. The deadline for this round was 17th September 2007. Young people will make the decisions about these applications in October and November 2007.
- 1.7. **Unsuccessful Applications - Emerging themes**
18 months after the two funds have been operational in Wirral a number of themes are beginning to emerge regarding unsuccessful applications, these include:

- A lack of understanding of the detailed information needed by the grant panel in order to make decisions. For example, young people from the grant panel have been extremely keen to ensure that applications provide value for money and have the necessary detailed supporting information regarding costs. Many applications are therefore rejected as the costs are not broken down in sufficient detail.
- It is a DfES requirement for these funds that applications must be written by young people for young people. A number of applications have been rejected as young people on the panel believe that they have been completed by adults.
- This process of having young people as grant makers is new and there may be, in some instances, a lack of understanding by some applicants as to the rigour applied by the young people on the grant panel.

1.8. In order to mitigate for some of these issues for the second round a number of alterations have been made to the current systems:

- All applications which meet the essential criteria will be asked to meet the grant panel and give a presentation about what they hope to do with the money if successful. Independent adults will be asked to join the grant panel to view these presentations.
- Independent adults will be invited to the final decision making meetings regarding allocation of funds in the second round.

2. **Financial implications**

2.1. This work is supported by the Senior Youth Engagement Worker, this post is funded partly from the support elements of the Youth Opportunity Fund. The post is temporary until 31st December 2008.

3. **Staffing implications**

3.1. Some staff have allocated part of their time to support young people from the grant panel.

4. **Equal opportunities implications**

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

5. **Community safety implications**

5.1. All applicants are asked to site the benefits their project will have on the community.

6. **Local Agenda 21 implications**

6.1. There are none.

7. **Planning implications**

7.1. There may be some planning implications arising from some successful Youth Capital applications, the service is currently taking advice from Parks and Open Spaces regarding a skate board park in West Kirby.

8. **Anti-poverty implications**

8.1. These funds are concerned with enabling young people to have greater opportunities within Wirral.

9. **Social inclusion implications**

9.1. The allocation for Wirral-wide and vulnerable groups aims to increase social inclusion opportunities for young people.

10. **Local Member Support implications**

10.1. This report affects all wards.

11. **Background paper**

- *Youth Matters 2005*
- *Participation Next Steps* – Youth Service Advisory Committee, 21st September 2006
- *Youth Opportunity Fund & Youth Capital Fund* – Youth Service Advisory Committee, 14th December 2006
- *Youth Challenge Competition Fund* – “Actions Speak Louder”, Youth Service Advisory Committee, 15th March 2007

RECOMMENDATIONS

That:

- (1) The Committee notes the progress made in the area of allocating the Youth Opportunity Fund and Youth Capital Fund.

Howard Cooper
Director of Children’s Services