

WIRRAL COUNCIL

BIRKENHEAD CONSTITUENCY COMMITTEE

24TH JULY 2014

SUBJECT:	YOUR WIRRAL FUND
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	HEAD OF NEIGHBOURHOODS AND ENGAGEMENT
KEY DECISION? <i>(Defined in paragraph 13.3 of Article 13 'Decision Making' in the Council's Constitution.)</i>	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to inform Birkenhead Constituency Committee members of changes to the administration of the Your Wirral fund and ask for nominations for a 'Working Group' to lead the assessment process of this fund for Birkenhead.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The 'Your Wirral' fund is a small grants programme that has been in operation since 2007. It is a strand of the Community Fund that came as a result of the Value Added Tax (VAT) return generated by the housing stock transfer from Wirral Council to Wirral Partnership homes, now Magenta Living. From November 2007 to October 2012 a total of £1,835,585.85 has been spent supporting 783 groups for projects and activities across Wirral. The funding rests with Magenta Living and has been dormant for the last financial year. A Joint Working Group acts an accountable body for the fund and is composed of representation from Wirral Council, Magenta Living, Councillors and Board members of Magenta Living
- 2.2 The Your Wirral fund offers grants to voluntary and community sector (not for profit) groups across Wirral through an application process. In previous years applications were evaluated by representatives from Magenta Living and Wirral Council then signed off for payment or withdrawn by the Joint Working Group. Payments were made to successful groups by Magenta Living.
- 2.3 To be eligible for funding, applications must fit within one or more of the seven themes detailed below, which were agreed by the Joint Working Group in line with the charitable objectives of the Community Fund Deed:
1. Creating an attractive and safe environment
 2. Contributing to community economic regeneration
 3. Preventing crime or reducing the fear of crime
 4. Providing employment and training for local people
 5. Benefiting local people who face discrimination
 6. Improving community facilities
 7. Engaging communities to improve quality of life

3.0 YOUR WIRRAL FUND 2014/15

3.1 A total of £250,000 is available for 2014/15 (from the allocation in 2013/14 that has been dormant) and is to be allocated on a constituency basis; this is different to previous years when it has been Wirral wide. The amount allocated is determined by the number of Magenta Living housing units within each Constituency (outlined below). An allocation of £50,000 is available for projects or activities that are classed as Wirral wide; delivered in two or more constituencies or across Wirral.

Area	Number of units	Allocation
Birkenhead	4683	£75,000
Wallasey	3214	£50,000
Wirral West	2430	£40,000
Wirral South	1888	£35,000
Wirral Wide	12215 (Total)	£50,000

3.2 The Joint Working Group has agreed for the Your Wirral fund to be administered through the Constituency Committees. To ensure that the conditions of the Community Fund deed are not compromised the following conditions must be adhered to:

- All applications for funding must fit within the 7 themes but constituencies may prioritise a particular theme
- The same application form is to be used across all constituencies
- The same assessment process of applications is to be used across all four constituencies
- Assessment will take place via a panel with representation from Magenta Living
- Constituencies may determine the make up of the panel
- Constituency staff will advertise the fund, arrange payments and monitor projects
- All materials must display the Your Wirral, Magenta Living and Wirral Council logo's
- The funding allocation for each constituency is proportionate to the amount of housing units in the constituency.
- Individual grants must not exceed £2,500
- The activity must take place within the boundaries of Wirral.

4.0 YOUR WIRRAL FUND ADMINISTRATION

4.1 The fund will be launched across the borough the week commencing 28 July 2014 (after this cycle of Constituency Committee meetings has taken place) following the conditions of the Community Deed stated in section 3.0.

4.2 An online application form will be developed and a hard copy will be available, support will provided for residents that do not have internet facilities or have difficulty completing the application form. The application form and terms and conditions are currently being revised and an assessment template devised based on guidance from Internal Audit; the final versions of which will be signed off by Magenta Living.

4.3 The Your Wirral fund will remain open all year until the allocation is spent. A timetable will be developed that states the deadline dates to submit an application

and the length of time to assess/ process their applications to enable them to bid in sufficient time for their activity or project.

4.4 Wirral Council will pay successful groups and will claim back the money quarterly from Magenta Living. An evaluation report will be presented to the Joint Working Group and the Constituency Committee at the end of the funding round. Currently there is no confirmation that the fund will be available in the forthcoming financial year(s).

4.5 The proposed process for the Your Wirral Fund in Birkenhead is:

- Birkenhead Constituency Committee chooses all seven themes detailed in section 2.0 above.
- A Constituency Committee Working Group, to which all members of the Constituency Committee will be invited, together with a representative from Magenta Living, will meet to review and discuss all eligible applications and draft recommended allocations for consideration by the next available Constituency Committee.
- An evaluation process will be followed to assess the impact of the grants, monitoring spend and ensuring the projects/activities have met the desired outcomes as outlined in the application forms. This will be reviewed by the working group and a report presented to the Constituency Committee.

4.6 The proposed process for the Wirral wide funding is:

- Borough-wide applications will again have a 'cut off' point that is in line with the Constituency Committee cycle of meetings.
- A Task and Finish Group consisting of the Chair or Deputy Chair of each Constituency Committee (unless there is a conflict of interest in which case another elected member from that Committee will be nominated) and a representative from Magenta Living, supported by a Constituency Manager, will consider all borough-wide applications.
- The Group's recommendations will be signed off by the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods, Housing & Engagement.

5.0 RELEVANT RISKS

As the fund has previously been accessed by voluntary sector groups that deliver Wirral Wide there may be insufficient projects/activities to be generated in specific Constituencies. Prioritising individual themes and not using all seven could also reduce the number of applications. This could be mitigated against by promoting Your Wirral using existing networks and social media in collaboration with Magenta Living and Community Action Wirral. Increasing engagement with local residents groups to help them develop their ideas into viable projects also has the potential to reduce this risk.

6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

No other options are currently being considered but the fund administration will be reviewed throughout the year to identify any areas that need revising or additional support needed.

7.0 CONSULTATION

The changes to the administration of Your Wirral have been undertaken following discussions with Magenta Living and Wirral Council via the Joint Working Group and they are in accordance with the devolution of Your Wirral administration to the Constituency Committees.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

The devolution of Your Wirral to the Constituencies should have no negative implications for voluntary, community and faith groups. There is the potential for more geographically based groups to be aware of the fund and undertake area specific projects. The use of an online form with the accompanying support has the potential to increase the digital inclusion of small neighbourhood based groups.

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

The administration of the fund will be undertaken by the Constituency Teams. To reduce the amount of administration of Your Wirral an online application form is being developed by Wirral Council.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The process has been reviewed by audit and designed to ensure there are no legal implications.

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

There are no equality implications because Your Wirral has been running for over 7 years and equality and diversity was considered in the beginning stages of the fund. Devolving the fund to the constituencies will not impact on equality and diversity.

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

None

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

None

12.0 RECOMMENDATION

12.1 The Committee agrees the proposed process set out at 4.5 for the administration of Your Wirral Funding allocated to Birkenhead.

12.2 Nominations for the working group are received and agreed.

13.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION

Administering Your Wirral on a Constituency basis provides the opportunity to target resources to address the specific needs of a neighbourhood.

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