

11. Area North Community Grants - Martock Youth Project (Executive Decision)

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Purpose of the Report

For members to consider the continuation of the Service Level Agreement with Martock Parish Council and Martock Youth Centre Management Committee towards the Martock Youth Project.

Public Interest

There are over 1,000 young people under the age of 16 in the parish of Martock. The Martock Youth Project serves this age group through the provision of a Youth Centre and a full time Youth Development Officer, who is employed by Martock Parish Council. Funding is from a number of sources, principally the Parish Council, which is providing 84.62% of the total project cost.

This report provides an evaluation of the work carried out in 2008/09 and provides a basis for councillors to consider approving the continuation of the SLA.

Recommendation

1. Councillors approve the award of £3,500 to Martock Parish Council and Martock Youth Centre Management Committee towards the Martock Youth Project, allocated from the Area North Community Grants Budget and subject to the South Somerset District Council standard conditions for Community Grants (Appendix A) and the continued fulfilment of the performance plan (see background papers).
2. Subject to recommendation 1, authorise the Area Development Manager (North) to sign the Service Level Agreement on behalf of South Somerset District Council (SSDC) between Martock Parish Council, Martock Youth Centre Management Committee and SSDC.

Application Details - see following page

Application Details

Name of Applicant	Martock Youth Centre Management Committee
Project	Martock Youth Project
Project description	The provision of a fully accessible Youth Centre and a full time Youth Development Officer in Martock who will develop a full range of activities in a safe, supervised environment for young people aged 8 to 18. The application is for continued financial support for the second year of a three year Service Level Agreement originally agreed in November 2008.
Project cost for year 2 (2009/10)	£38,372
Amount requested from SSDC for year 2 (2009/10)	£3,500 (9.21% of year 2 project cost) NB: The total grant requested over the three years of the SLA is £10,500 (8.7% of the total project cost).
Special conditions	SLA between SSDC, Martock Parish Council and Martock Youth Centre
Application assessed by:	Teresa Oulds, Community Regeneration Officer (North)
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Background Information

The Martock Youth Project is delivered through the employment of a full-time Youth Development Officer and operation of the fully accessible Martock Youth Centre, housed in its own dedicated building. The Youth Development Officer is employed by Martock Parish Council, funded by the parish precept.

A full report containing the background to the project can be found in the report to Area North Committee in November 2008. In summary, the Martock Youth Project is a long term undertaking which aims to deliver an excellent young people's programme in Martock that:

- Meets the needs of the young people aged 8 years and over and the Martock community
- Revitalises and optimises the profile and use of Martock Youth Centre
- Increases the number of young people participating regularly in out-of-school education and leisure opportunities
- Enhances the range and quality of opportunities available for young people

A Youth Affairs Committee was established in 2003 in order to form a co-ordinated approach to the delivery of services to the young people in Martock and is a forum for representatives from Somerset County Council (SCC), SSDC, the Local Service Delivery Team (previously the County Youth Service), Martock Parish Council, Martock Youth Parish Council, Martock Youth Centre, Martock School and the Martock churches. The Youth Affairs Committee offers support to the Martock Youth Centre Management Committee.

Within the project there is a flourishing Youth Parish Council (formed in 2007) whose members are involved in fundraising and are represented on both the Youth Centre

Management Committee and the Martock Youth Affairs Committee. The young people play a crucial role in the Youth Project.

In November 2008, SSSDC formed a three year Service Level Agreement (SLA), with Martock Parish Council and Martock Youth Centre Management Committee which gave financial assistance of £10,500 to the project. This was for £4,000 in the first year, with a forward commitment of £3,500 in 2009/10 and £3,000 in 2010/11 and was subject to budgetary provision, evidence of financial need and satisfactory fulfilment of the SLA.

Current position of project

The Youth Development Officer (YDO) continues to run the Youth Centre and is a member of the Management Committee and Martock Youth Affairs Committee. The YDO co-ordinates and supervises an extensive range of activities which are advertised to young people attending the centre, on local notice boards, in leaflets, in the schools and in the local magazine, The Leveller, and by the Youth Parish Council.

The centre continues to operate a daytime “open door” policy so that parents, carers and other members of the community can visit, view the facilities and find out what is going on. This has resulted in the provision of one-to-one support to a number of young people and/or their parents or carers with difficult family backgrounds.

The condition of the Youth Centre continues to cause concern and contingency funding has been built in to the funding projection for 2010-2013 (see table below). The Parish Council and the Youth Affairs Committee are currently researching alternative permanent accommodation for the Youth Club, but it will remain in its current building for the foreseeable future, a factor that needs to be borne in mind when looking at the project's financial need. The poor condition of the building makes it difficult to let to outside organisations which has a detrimental effect on projected income.

Evidence of financial need/business plan

The grant from South Somerset District Council is towards the full operating costs of the Martock Youth Project, principally the running costs of the Youth Centre for the three years to 2011. Although there will be on-going costs after 2011, plans are in place to work towards further income generation, particularly if a new venue can be secured. The table below includes projections to 2013 and clearly shows that provision and thought has been given to the future beyond the end of the current SLA.

Martock Youth Project Funding Projection 2009-2013					
(NB: Including two years beyond SLA)					
	2009/10	2010/11	Total 09-11	2011/12	2012/13
Expenditure	£	£	£	£	£
YDO full employment costs	28,972	30,420	59,392	31,941	33,589
Annual running costs*	9,400	9,682	19,082	10,166	10,674
Building sinking fund	0	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000
TOTAL (A)	38,372	46,102	84,474	48,107	50,263
Income					
Cadets	2,200	2,266	4,466	2,379	2,498
Martock Christian Fellowship	600	618	1,218	649	681
Subs and hall hire	400	412	812	433	454
Martock Parish Council	31,672	39,806	71,478	44,646	46,630
TOTAL (B)	34,872	43,102	77,974	48,107	50,263
Amount requested (A-B)					
SSDC grant	3,500	3,000	6,500	0	0
Percentage	9.12%	6.50%	7.69%		

*The projections for the annual running costs of the Youth Centre for **2009/10** are:

Public liability insurance	£ 700
Buildings insurance	£ 780
Caretaker	£1,092
Cleaning supplies	£ 240
Wessex water	£ 96
EDF (electricity)	£1,800
E-ON (gas)	£ 732
BT phone and broadband	£ 600
Stationary and printing	£ 800
Computer sinking fund	£ 560
Routine maintenance	£2,000
TOTAL	£9,400

Evaluation of past year (2008-2009)

The performance plan within the SLA can be found within the original report to this committee in November 2008. An evaluation of the work undertaken in the past year has shown that the targets for the first year have been met, with the centre being open for both formal and informal sessions a minimum of five days a week. A varied programme of holiday activity sessions has run throughout the school holidays, some of which have involved trips out, e.g. to Bristol. Some of the older members of the Youth Club assist with the junior club, which has proved very successful for both age groups.

During the past year:

- Juniors meet weekly (Thursday) – attendance 20-25 a week
- Intermediates meet weekly (Tuesday) attendance 14 a week (with four older young people training as Activators which will enable them to run groups in the future.)
- Seniors meet on a Wednesday with 20+ attending

- Two formal after-school drop in sessions per week, with the YDO available informally on other days as needed by the young people.
- A varied programme of holiday activity sessions runs throughout the summer and other school holidays, including trips out.

Additional activities involving young people have included the opening of the Market House in May 2009, promoting waste recycling within the Youth Centre, various Youth Centre improvement initiatives and the consultation process for the new play equipment at Bracey Road, the skate park and MUGA extensions on the main recreation ground and the Youth Centre replacement project.

The YDO meets with her non-managerial supervisor, a Senior Youth Worker in the South Somerset West Local Service Team, approximately every six weeks, in line with Somerset County Council's partnership agreement with Martock Parish Council. The Senior Youth Worker commented that the YDO has successfully retained and developed her role as a youth and community worker and is very aware of the community in which she sits, how it works and what is needed by that community.

The nature of youth work means it can be difficult to quantify results. The impact on a young person's life may not be immediately apparent but the work carried out now can have positive results for that person as they move into adulthood. Positive feedback received from other service providers within Martock (including the police) suggests that the benefits of the project will continue to be felt beyond the life of the SLA.

It is proposed that the targets for 2009-10 remain much the same as previously, with some new activities being planned in order that a varied programme continues to be offered to the young people of Martock.

Risks

The project is low risk to SSDC, as its successful operation demonstrates. One concern is that the project will need to continue beyond 2011. The SSDC contribution is a low proportion, and support will be offered to help find alternative income sources. A further SLA could be formed, but the applicant is fully aware of the current financial constraints upon the Council.

In terms of the project itself, a number of young people have shown their commitment to the project by taking part in training that will enable them to become volunteer leaders and the management committee is actively looking at ways to safeguard the future of the project through funding opportunities and, most importantly, a move to new, possibly purpose-built, premises.

Summary and Recommendation

The Martock Youth Project offers a valuable service to the young people in the parish and has become well established and recognised within the community. The work of the project extends beyond the physical boundaries of the Youth Centre and inter-generational links have been made.

Whilst the Parish Council has taken steps to precept towards the cost of the project for the future, the amount requested is not a large percentage of the overall cost but would make a significant difference to the project's viability for the next year. The previously set targets have been met and it is recommended, therefore, that councillors support the continuation of the SLA as previously agreed in November 2008.

Financial Implications

The Community Grants budget for 2009/10 is £35,900. The total of grants paid or committed to date amount to £17,107.

If the award of £3,500 for the Martock Youth Project for the second of a three year SLA is approved, the uncommitted balance remaining will be £13,607.

Corporate Priority Implications

Financial and project development support to the Martock Youth Project will contribute to the corporate objective of ensuring safe, sustainable and cohesive communities through the following key target area

- 4.1 Deliver positive activities for children, young people (especially those at risk of exclusion or offending) and families, designed to reduce anti-social behaviour by October 2010.

Other Implications

The Martock Youth Project addresses the following Area North priorities:

3. Increase the accessibility and quality of community facilities, activities or services, in particular for children and young people and older people.
4. Increase access to public and community services including the development of local public access points and access to Internet technology
5. Increase levels of local action and involvement in decision-making which seeks to improve self-containment and sustainability
8. Increase levels of community safety and cohesion, reducing crime and the fear of crime, and anti-social behaviour through partnership work to target local priorities.

Carbon Emissions & Adapting to Climate Change Implications (NI188)

None

Equality and Diversity Implications

The project is open and accessible to all young people within Martock, allowing them to become involved in planned activities and offering them support and guidance to make informed choices. There would clearly be a negative impact on the community if the grant were not awarded, particularly bearing in mind the rural location of the project and the lack of other opportunities for the young people of Martock.

Background Papers: Report to Area North Committee 26 November 2008
Martock Youth Project Grant file