

Area North Committee – 26 January 2011

8. Area North Community Grants – Martock Youth Project (Executive Decision)

Executive Portfolio Holder: Cllr Patrick Palmer, Area North
Strategic Director: Rina Singh, Place and Performance
Assistant Director: Helen Rutter, Communities
Service Manager: Charlotte Jones, Area Development Manager (North)
Lead Officer: Teresa Oulds, Community Regeneration Officer (North)
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Purpose of the Report

For councillors to consider a financial contribution to the Martock Youth Project, as the third year of a three year Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Martock Parish Council and Martock Youth Centre Management Committee.

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, employed by Martock Parish Council. Funding is from a number of sources, principally the Parish Council, which provides 84.62% of the total project cost.

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

Recommendations

- 1) Approve the award of £3,000 to Martock Parish Council and Martock Youth Centre Management Committee towards the Martock Youth Project, as third payment of the three year service level agreement, allocated from the Area North Community Grants budget 2010-11 and subject to the South Somerset District Council standard conditions for Community Grants (Appendix A) and the fulfilment of the performance plan (see Appendix B).
- 2) Note and endorse that further discussions are underway, led by the Martock Youth Project, with neighbouring parishes which are considering how the project could be developed across the area.

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 third year of a three year Service Level Agreement originally agreed in December 2008.
Project cost for year 3 (2010/2011)	£45,485
Amount requested from SSDC for year 3 (2010/11)	£3,000 (6.6% of year 3 project cost)
Total project cost over three years	£120,044
Total amount of SLA over three years	£10,500 (8.75% 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 Office 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 reports to Area North Committee in November 2008 and January 2010. 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
- 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
- Revitalises and optimises the profile and use of Martock Youth Centre

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, SSDC signed a three year SLA with Martock Parish Council and Martock Youth Centre Management Committee which agreed 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 an active 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 operates 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.

During the last year, in response to requests for activities on a Saturday morning, it was decided to employ a part-time worker to run sessions at that time and additional funding was obtained for this new post. Some of the worker’s time has been diverted to filling the staffing gap on Tuesday evenings that has been caused by the withdrawal of SCC support on those days (The withdrawal was due to the recruitment freeze.)

The condition of the Youth Centre continues to cause very real concern, despite remedial work having been done and contingency funding has been built in to the funding projection for 2011-2013 (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. The recent inclement weather has highlighted the building’s deteriorating state which has proved uninviting to young people at times: an effect the YDO has worked hard to mitigate.

It is currently unknown what the precise effects of the expected cuts in service provision from SCC will be for the Martock Youth Project. However, the Youth Affairs Committee has instigated an initial meeting between interested parties from surrounding towns to look at ways of working together to address the needs of young people in their communities. The Martock Youth Project is in an excellent position to not only continue its own good work, but also possibly advise and work with other communities, sharing its own good practice and experience.

Evidence of financial need/business plan

The grant from SSDC has been 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 plans are in place to work towards further income generation, particularly if a new venue can be secured, there will be on-going costs after that.

The following tables show: funding for years two and three of the SLA; projections for the annual running costs of the youth centre for year three and projections for the two years beyond the SLA.

Martock Youth Centre Funding 2009-2011 (Years two and three of the SLA)			
	Year 2 2009/10	Year 3 2010/11	Total Years 2 & 3
Expenditure	£	£	£
YDO full employment costs	28,972	30,420	59,392
Annual running costs	9,400	9,565	18,965
Building sinking fund	0	2,500	2,500
Additional youth worker support*	0	3,000	3,000
TOTAL (A)	£38,372	£45,485	£83,857
Income			
Cadets	2,200	2,200	4,466
Martock Christian Fellowship	600	500	1,218
Subs and hall hire	400	1,123	812
Martock Parish Council	31,672	38,662	£70,861
TOTAL (B)	£34,872	£42,485	£77,357
Amount requested (A-B)			
SSDC grant	£ 3,500	£3,000	£ 6,500
Percentage	9.12%	6.6%	7.75%

*This is a new expenditure line, added this year, and covers the cost of the Saturday youth worker.

Projections of Annual Running Costs of the Youth Centre for year three of SLA	
Public liability insurance	£ 700
Buildings insurance	£ 780
Caretaker	£1,390
Cleaning supplies	£ 250
Electricity, gas and water	£2,200
BT phone and broadband	£ 665
Stationary and printing	£ 520
Computer sinking fund	£ 560
Routine maintenance	£2,500
TOTAL	£9,565

Martock Youth Centre Projected Funding Beyond SLA 2011-2013		
Expenditure	2011/12	2012/13
	£	£
YDO full employment costs	31,333	32,273
Annual running costs	9,852	10,148
Building sinking fund	2,500	2,500
Additional youth worker support*	6,267	6,455
TOTAL	£49,951	£51,375
Income		
Cadets	2,266	2,334
Martock Christian Fellowship	515	530
Subs and hall hire	1,157	1,191
Martock Parish Council	46,013	47,319
TOTAL	£49,951	£51,375

*This figure has been based on a one fifth contribution towards the cost of an additional youth worker who could be jointly funded by a number of neighbouring Parish Councils.

Evaluation

The targets for the second year were met and the performance plan within the SLA is attached as Appendix B, with a column containing targets for the final year. It is to be expected that these will be met, as they have in previous years.

Additional information

- The weekly footfall of young people accessing the youth centre exceeds 186. This figure does not include those taking part in activities off-site.
- The YDO meets with her non-managerial supervisor, a Senior Youth Worker in the South Somerset West Local Service Team, approximately every six weeks, which is within the acceptable limits of the timetable agreed in Somerset County Council's partnership agreement with Martock Parish Council. It is not clear what provision will be made for her future professional development and management, given the cuts to youth work funding recently announced by SCC. However, the Manager of the Local Service Team has said that, although no decisions have yet been made, she would hope that the support of community provision would be a priority for County staff working in the areas.
- Commenting on the YDO's work to date, her SCC supervisor said: "the Youth Development Worker has successfully developed her role within the community, working with young people and the wider community. This is evidenced by the level of involvement and engagement of young people in a wide range of projects within the community and the volume of opportunities and activities for young people to engage in."
- Additional activities that the young people have participated in over the last year include the inaugural Victorian Street Fair in May; working with a local stonemason to create a sculpture that will be installed in the precinct; intergenerational activities and taking part in the Renovate Bike Project (in conjunction with the police and fire brigade).

- Partnerships have been built up with other agencies involved in the Martock community, including the fire brigade, two local primary schools and the police. This has proved advantageous to all concerned within the community.
- Some of the older members of the Youth Club assist with the junior club as Activators and also assisted with the new Saturday morning club. This collaboration has proved to be of great benefit to both age groups and will assist with the sustainability of the project.
- The young people have continued to be involved in the consultation process for the new play equipment at Bracey Road.
- Members of the youth club were again nominated for the SSDC Gold Star Awards.

Risks

The project has an excellent chance of continuing beyond the end of the SLA, with the amount of money requested being only a small percentage of the total cost. A number of young people have shown their commitment to the project by taking part in training that has enabled 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 a move to new, possibly purpose-built, premises.

The future

All those involved in the Martock Youth Project are committed to its continued success and progress, although the current financial climate does mean that it may be harder to achieve than may have been the case previously. Members of the Youth Affairs Committee have instigated discussions with neighbouring parishes with a view to working together to provide additional opportunities for young people and Martock is well placed to offer advice as well as benefit from collaborative work.

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 not only within but also beyond the immediate community. The work of the project extends beyond the physical boundaries of the youth centre and inter-generational links have been made. 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 originally agreed in November 2008.

Financial Implications

The Community Grants budget for 2010/11 is £42,324. The total of grants paid or committed to date amounts to £25,267 (including a commitment to the Martock Youth Project).

If the award of £3,000 for the Martock Youth Project for the final year of a three year SLA is confirmed, the uncommitted balance remaining will be £17,057.

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.

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: *Reports to Area North Committee 26 November 2008 and 27 January 2010.*
Martock Youth Project Grant file.
