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Commissioning of positive activities for young people in Cheltenham

Background

The unprecedented financial crisis has resulted in huge cuts in public expenditure. As part of its 2011-12 budget, Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) has agreed to focus its resources on young people who are in greatest need and those at risk of not making a successful transition into adulthood. To achieve this, a complete redesign of Young People's services is now taking place which will see GCC withdraw from direct provision of general services for young people. In Cheltenham, this will affect the following youth centres:

- Whaddon Youth Centre (which is owned and operated by GCC);
- Oasis Youth Centre (which is owned and operated by GCC);
- Springbank Resource Centre (which is managed by Hesters Way Neighbourhood Project);
- Aggs Garden Pavilion (which is owned by Cheltenham Borough Council - CBC);
- Brizen Youth Centre (which is leased to Leckhampton with Warden Hill Parish Council and managed by the Brizen Management Committee);
- Naunton Park Pavilion (which is owned by CBC and managed by a management committee);
- Charlton Kings Youth Centre (which is owned by the trustees of Charlton Kings Youth & Community Centre).

The residual GCC funding is proposed to be targeted on prevention services aimed at young people in greatest need.

The proposal

GCC have agreed to invest £50k in each of the six Gloucestershire districts in 2011-12 in positive activities for young people, to be delivered by voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations.

In addition, to the GCC funding, the following partners have also agreed to contribute funding:

- Cheltenham Community Safety Partnership and the Stronger Communities Partnership have agreed to allocate £5k to enable statutory organisations to deliver positive activities with young people
- Cheltenham Health and Wellbeing Partnership has provisionally agreed to allocate £5k to enable groups to promote healthy lifestyles with young people.

This gives a total fund of £60k in Cheltenham.

In addition, Cheltenham Borough Council has allocated £50k to commission a programme of activity to support the sustainable development of additional capacity and expertise within the VCS providers of community-based youth work across the whole of the borough.

Cheltenham Borough Council will lead the allocation process and make the decisions about which projects will be supported. It will seek advice and support from the Cheltenham Children and Young People's Partnership and the Social and Community O+S working group.

What do we want to achieve with the funding

Overall outcome

Young people are able to access a programme of activities, across the whole borough of Cheltenham that makes a positive difference to them, their health and wellbeing and the communities they live in.

We will consider applications for funding that will deliver improved outcomes for young people aged 11-19 in at least one of the following areas:

- Young people making the right choices about the health and wellbeing.
- Young people feeling valued in their communities.
- Young people feeling safe in their communities.
- Young people making a positive contribution.
- Young people have fun.

The assessment criteria

From xx onwards, an assessment panel, which will include the Cabinet Member for Housing and Safety, the Chair of the Cheltenham Children and Young People's Partnership, 1 representative from the Social and Community working group, 1 representative from the Safer, Stronger and Health and Wellbeing Partnerships and 1 young persons representative will assess all submitted applications. The panel will be looking for projects that have been well thought out and can demonstrate the following:

- How the project will meet the 5 outcomes for young people set out above;
- Evidence that there is a need for the project including evidence from consultation with young people;
- Overall value for money including any match funding (inc in-kind contributions) and possibility of sustaining the project beyond the initial year of funding;
- Accessibility of the project including affordability;
- Evidence of thorough planning including safeguarding arrangements, health and safety, any relevant licensing issues, appropriate risk management and contingency planning;
- Evidence of the active involvement of young people in the project.

We are also looking for assurances that project deliverers will put in place a robust system for collecting, monitoring and assessing the impacts of the project and for reporting and sharing this information.

The assessment panel will seek to distribute this funding to promote equality of access across the different areas of Cheltenham.

Recommendations will be made to the borough council's cabinet that meets on xxx. Successful applicants will be notified shortly afterwards.

Duration

The 50k is an annual commitment for the period of the county council's medium term financial strategy ie for at least the next 4 financial years inc 2011/12, though the intention is not to support ongoing revenue projects for that period - but use the funding to support one off investments. The use of the funding will be reviewed by the county council's scrutiny committee which will make recommendations to the county's cabinet about the effectiveness of the funding.

Successful applicants will have a period of 12 months to implement the project.

Who can apply?

The GCC fund of £50k is to be allocated exclusively to Voluntary & Community Sector (VCS) organisations which includes community, parish and social enterprise organisations as well as voluntary ones.

The Health and Wellbeing and the Safer Stronger partnership funding is open to any statutory agency, public body, constituted voluntary sector, community or neighbourhood based organisation.

What we will fund

'Positive Activities' are defined to include 'provision that delivers activities'. Delivery costs of running programmes of activities (venue, equipment and staffing) are eligible expenses.

What we won't fund

- Staffing/managerial costs that are not related to the direct delivery of the project.
- Projects being delivered outside the boundaries of Cheltenham borough.
- Projects that cannot demonstrate that appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place.

How much can be applied for?

To encourage a wide range of bids, there will be no lower amount and no upper amount. Bidders should be aware however, that there is a strong commitment to ensure that young people are able to access a wide-range of activities across the whole borough.

Can an organisation make more than one grant application?

Yes, though no more than one award will be awarded to any one organisation.

Making an application

Please complete all pages of the application form. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

We want to encourage applicants to complete their applications on a computer as hand written applications maybe difficult to read. If you require any help with completing the application forms please let us know as soon as possible and we will provide assistance.

Your grant application should also be accompanied by a copy of your last annual accounts (audited where this is a requirement for your organisation) and a copy of your constitution.

Agreements and performance management

Before the project can start, the council will enter into a project agreement with the provider which will set out various obligations on the two parties. This is very important as the way in which the money is used will be subject to inspection and audit and your monitoring plans will help us ensure that your project is progressing along the right tracks.

Grant payments

For successful applicants, payments will generally be made in arrears on receipt of completed performance management report and claim form. However, we can arrange advance payments to help with cash flow but this will be subject to checks and you will be liable to repay this if your project does not make satisfactory progress.

Other considerations

Please be aware that as this is public money, the funding will be subject to inspection and audit. Any fraudulent activity will be quickly identified and reported to the police.

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