

5. BELFAST COMMUNITY CO-ORDINATION

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Corporate Plan Output: Community Activities	

The purpose of this report is to update Board members on the progress of the Belfast Youth Network and indicate future funding needs for initiatives arising from this network.

This project helps to meet the outcomes for the following Christchurch City Council policies:

- *Community Policy*
- *Youth Policy*
- *Social Well-being Policy*

It also helps to meet the outcomes of the following Shirley/Papanui Community Board objectives:

- *To foster a strong sense of community.*
- *Promote recreation, leisure and continuous learning.*

BACKGROUND

Early in 2000 a meeting of youth leaders in Belfast was held with attendance by the Shirley/Papanui Board Chairperson and the Community Development Adviser and Community Recreation Adviser. The network of youth leaders (with representatives from four churches, the school and the medical centre) had met a few times since late 1999. Since that meeting the Community Development Adviser has been working closely with this group. The network has now developed into a strong, healthy network with approximately 15 people involved.

BELFAST DEVELOPMENTS

Belfast is currently undergoing enormous growth, stimulated to a large extent by the residential development which will add approximately 1200 residential properties to the area – almost doubling the size of Belfast over the next few years.

PRESENT PROGRAMME

The Belfast Youth Network is comprised of a number of agencies that are offering a range of programmes and activities for young people (from Primary age through to secondary aged youth). Leadership of these programmes/activities is well-established, experienced and ably qualified.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Although well equipped with youth leadership in the area, the Youth Network has clearly identified lack of co-ordination and resourcing as the major hindrances to future development. During late 2000 the Network began to focus on how these hindrances could be overcome. Consideration was initially given to the possibility of employing a part-time Youth Co-ordinator for the area. With further discussion and reviewing the research document commissioned by this Board in 1996, the Network decided to expand its membership and direction to include other community groups. Thus, invitations have been sent out to a further range of community organisations to join the network. Consequently, the present vision of this network is to obtain the services of a full-time Belfast Community Co-ordinator. A small sub-group met prior to Christmas 2000 to draft a Job Description. The purpose of this position is to “facilitate and enhance existing programmes within Belfast by helping to co-ordinate and strengthen community organisations.”

A structural arrangement has also been adopted which will enable good communication and liaison to proceed. A local trust (Operation Kingdom Share (OKS) Community Trust) has agreed to act as the legal umbrella organisation through which funding can be sought and to act as the employing body for this officer. A diagram of the proposal structure is attached.

The Network will be seeking an experienced qualified person for the position and the Job Description reflects this desire. Applications for funding will be made to a number of funding sources, including the Community Board and Christchurch City Council.

FUNDING

The position envisaged by the Network is one which has as its primary aim the objective of helping to strengthen existing organisations and their programmes and activities. Consequently it is a good candidate for funding from the Strengthening Communities fund. It is expected that a report on allocating of this fund will be presented to the 28 February 2001 Community Board meeting.

CONCLUSION

Since the presentation of the research document "Belfast: A Community in Transition" in late 1996 the Board has sought ways of assisting this community. The establishment of this network provides an opportunity for a strong partnership to be built.

Recommendation: That funding towards the employment of a Belfast Community Co-ordinator be allocated from the SCAP budget.

Chairperson's

Recommendation: That the officer's recommendation be adopted and that copies of the report be forwarded to the Residents' Association, the Belfast Rugby Club and Belfast School.