



Borough of Telford and Wrekin

Cabinet

Thursday 11 April 2024

2023-24 Leader and Cabinet Member Young Person's Grant Scheme

Cabinet Member:	Cllr Shirley Reynolds - Cabinet Member for Children, Young People, Education and Lifelong Learning Cllr Eileen Callear - Cabinet Member for Education, Employment & Visitor Economy
Lead Director:	Darren Knibbs, Director: Children's & Family Services
Service Area:	Children's Safeguarding & Family Support
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Wards Affected:	All Wards
Key Decision:	Not Key Decision
Forward Plan:	Not Applicable
Report considered by:	SMT – 19 March 2024 Business Briefing – 21 March 2024 Cabinet – 11 April 2024

1.0 Recommendations for decision/noting:

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 1.1 note the outcomes of the Leader and Cabinet Members Young Person Grant Scheme for 2023-24; and
- 1.2 note the launch of the Leader and Cabinet Members Young Person Grant Scheme for 2024-25;
- 1.3 agree to continue funding the Leader and Cabinet Members Young Person Grant Scheme in 2025-26.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To provide a summary of the 2023-24 Leader and Cabinet Member Young Person Grant Scheme and recommendations for 2024-25 and 2025-26.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 The Leader and Cabinet Members Young Person Grant Scheme has run since 2017, with a brief period where the funding was reallocated to the Laptops for Learning Scheme which was highly successful in providing devices to young people to continue their education during lockdown.
- 3.2 The scheme was open for applications between 1 December 2023 and 19 January 2024. The allocated budget was £14,000, with young people able to apply for up to £500 each. This year, the scheme was supported through sponsorship and match funding from external partners; Arriva; Balfour Beatty; Veiola and through the Virgin Media 02 Business Fund.
- 3.3 The main objective for this year's campaign was to receive 150 completed applications by the closing date. By close of the application window we had received 154 applications.
- 3.4 The communications strategy was effective with 42% of applications directly related to comms materials (excluding word of mouth) and social media in particular, working effectively to draw in applicants. This led to the response rate continuing to increase from previous years.
- 3.5 Feedback shows us that young people now recognise the branding and know what they need to do to apply. Also, that previous recipients are actively encouraging other young people to apply.
- 3.6 This year, 155 applications were made, and of these, 116 applicants were successful. To ensure that as many young people as possible were supported by the scheme, applications were looked at to ensure that there were no more cost effective ways of meeting the requests made. Also, not all successful applicants were awarded the full value of costs requested. The successful young people were awarded funding for a variety of reasons to support with their education, employment and training, or to kick start a business. The majority of requests were for laptops, bikes, sports equipment or travel passes.

Examples:

Young Person A has aspirations to go to university and to become a lawyer. Her request was for support through the scheme to buy a bicycle, helmet, lights, lock and high visibility jacket for her to travel independently to her education provision.

Young Person B will use the grant to purchase equipment to support with his career aspiration of becoming a barber. The grant will enable him to purchase hair clippers and scissors to develop his skills in this area of interest. He currently volunteers in a local barber shop and this grant would support him towards achieving his long-term career goals.

3.7 Feedback from successful applicants:

"This grant is going to give me so many more opportunities than I had before. I want to become a dancer so this money will really help me to book studio time, get head shots and be able to get to auditions. I'm really grateful for this money and excited for what I can do next."

"It means a lot to me to get this grant money because it's opening up doors to my future that I wasn't able to access before. I'm now able to buy the equipment I need and expand my business. I'm really grateful to the council for giving me this opportunity!"

"Being awarded the grant money was such a weight off my shoulders, knowing I could invest in some high quality headshots without the financial worry that would have come with it.

"I feel like I can finally kick-start my acting career and have the best foundation to show everyone what I'm capable of without financial hurdles getting in my way!"

3.8 A priority for the scheme was to encourage applications from some of the more vulnerable young people in the borough. A number of the applicants were supported to apply through Education and Skills, the Virtual School or their allocated worker in Children's Services.

3.9 The majority of applications were aged between 15 (school year 11) and 18. There was a clear spread of applications from the majority of wards across the borough.

4.0 Summary of main proposals

4.1 To provide a summary of the 2023-24 Leader and Cabinet Member Young Person Grant Scheme and provide assurance that the Scheme continues to be impactful and innovative.

2023-24 Leader and Cabinet Member Young Person's Grant Scheme

- 4.2 To continue to improve the scheme based on feedback and learning, year on year. This will include reduced bureaucracy with regards the application process.
- 4.3 To maintain connections with successful applicants to better understand how value can be added to their award, what support helped them on their journey after receiving funding, and any obstacles and challenges that remain.
- 4.4 To further examine how best to target communications to localities which would benefit most from investment, including local area data analysis.
- 4.5 To work closely with the internal internal services and partner agencies to target young people keen to enter education, employment and training.
- 4.6 To improve tracking of impact through repeating the alumni questionnaire.
- 4.7 To continue to improve communications from an earlier point through film content and live case studies.
- 4.8 Continued links with local organisations to identify sponsors and support to sustain the scheme through social value.

5.0 Alternative Options

- 5.1 The alternative options are to not undertake the scheme, to directly fund other existing NEET scheme or to add funding to existing care schemes. These are unlikely to have the same successes as they would not provide a broad enough scope to ensure the widest range of children and young people can apply for funding and celebrate their ambitions.

6.0 Key Risks

- 6.1 The key risk identified in this report is the potential failure to further target young people most in need of assistance or a potential lack of uptake. Officers will work hard to continue to consider how best to ensure the opportunities are highlighted as widely as possible and encourage young people to make applications.

7.0 Council Priorities

The recommendations of this report, support the following Council objectives:

- Every child, young person and adult lives well in their community.
- Everyone feels the benefit from a thriving economy.
- All neighbourhoods are a great place to live.
- A community focused innovative council providing effective, efficient and quality services

8.0 Financial Implications

8.1 There is ongoing base budget of £14,000 per annum for this scheme. Any expenditure in excess of this sum has to be found from reserves or one-off sources of funding. In 2022/23 total expenditure was £46,835, and as noted in section 3 above, 2023/24 expenditure will again exceed the base budget. It is likely that going forward, further one-off sources of funding will be required to fully support the awards.

9.0 Legal and HR Implications

9.1 The Council and Cabinet Executive has the legal power to make grants to young people in order to support their education, training or wellbeing needs. The grants themselves help the Council to demonstrate it is meeting our responsibilities in respect of a number of statutory duties. By considering the efficacy of the grants and agreeing whether or not to fund in future, Cabinet is demonstrating a commitment to good governance and oversight of the scheme.

10.0 Ward Implications

10.1 All wards must be targeted with communications and how to access application support.

11.0 Health, Social and Economic Implications

11.1 Improved access to education, employment, and training.

11.2 Improved later in life health outcomes relating to obtaining continuous employment or education access

11.3 A decrease in the NEET population and therefore associated ASB.

11.4 Increased social and emotional wellbeing for young people

12.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

12.1 The scheme is committed to EDI, and work has been undertaken on this years' scheme to ensure the form is accessible, with a broader range of application types and medium supported. The project lead also works to contact all applicants by a range of communication methods (phone, email, and via referees and other supporting bodies) to ensure applications are given the best opportunity to represent needs, requirements, and situation.

13.0 Climate Change and Environmental Implications

13.1 Not directly applicable.

14.0 Background Papers

14.1 None.

15.0 Appendices

15.1 None.

16.0 Report Sign Off

Signed off by	Date sent	Date signed off	Initials
Director	XX/XX/XXXX	20/03/2024	DK
Finance	XX/XX/XXXX	15/03/2024	TD
Legal	XX/XX/XXXX	20/03/2024	RP