

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL
EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SPORT SERVICE COMMITTEE

17 January 2008

Agenda Item	
Report No	

Support for the Development of the Duke of Edinburgh Award

Report by Director of Education, Culture and Sport

Summary

This report sets out the current operation of the Duke of Edinburgh Award in Highland. It outlines proposed changes, and recommends the resultant resource and staffing implications. If adopted, these changes would better allow the Council to meet the obligations of its Operating License.

1. Background

1.1 In common with practice across Scotland, The Council is licensed as an Operating Authority by The Duke of Edinburgh Award to offer the Award in a range of formal and informal settings. This brings a responsibility to

“safeguard the aims and standards of the Award and establish the necessary administrative framework to enable it to function and to ensure its continuity”.

1.2 Highland Award Project (HAP), a community voluntary organisation, has been in existence since 1990. The current management committee consists of members of the local and business community as well as representatives of the Council. The Council works in partnership with HAP on the development of the Award across the Highland area. HAP is a registered charity and has within its aims

“to promote the aims and objectives of the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award for the benefit of young people in the area.”

1.3 Since the early 1990’s, HAP has employed eight sessional workers to operate as Development Officers for each of the old corporate areas of the Council. The Development Officers are employed for between 5-10 hours a week for forty weeks of the year. HAP received a grant from the Council to cover the costs of these posts and additional support by Members is given by the local Community Learning and Leisure team.

2. Challenges

2.1 HAP has worked hard over the years to sustain a team of staff to support

development of the Award. However as a small voluntary committee, drawn from across the Highlands, they have a limited capacity to invest in developing structures and staff. Following a review of HAP activity in conjunction with ECS staff, particular concern has been raised in relation to -

- Staff support and supervision
- Staff training
- The legal and administrative requirements of employing staff
- The costs attached to employing small numbers of staff e.g insurance
- Links to wider youth development structure
- The capacity of the voluntary committee to continue to be responsible for staff.

3. Proposed Response

3.1 Following lengthy discussion with HAP, it is proposed that the appropriate way forward is for the Council to employ three Development Officers on a part-time (12 hours a week basis); each based within a Council Operational Area.

This proposal would ensure the proper legal and insurance responsibilities are met in the employment of the staff, whilst HAP is left to concentrate on promoting on the Award and fundraising for activity.

3.2 The benefit of the Council employing the Development Officers include:

- The Council would continue to meet its obligations as a Duke of Edinburgh Award licensee.
- Posts link to Operational areas of the Council and wider youth development structure.
- Clear management and support structure in place.
- Staff contracted to work for 52 weeks of the year rather than 40.
- Salary is harmonised with youth development structures.

4. Resource Implications

4.1 The current cost of employing a full complement of Development Officers by Highland Award Project is £22,000 per annum. The proposal has no additional costs.

4.2 Highland Award Project have indicated that they feel the proposal to transfer the employment of the HAP Development Officers from Highland Award Project to the Council is the appropriate way forward.

5. Recommendation

5.1 Members are asked:

To agree to the transfer of the development function of the Duke of Edinburgh Award to the Council, at no additional cost, and agree the staffing structure proposed in Appendix 1.

Signature:

Designation: Director of Education, Culture and Sport

Date: 6 December 2007

Author: Rebecca Raynes, Senior Youth Development Officer (Achievement)

Appendix 1 - Duke of Edinburgh Award proposed structure

