



## EVALUATION OF YIPWORLD.COM

Board Meeting – 23 September 2004

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise the Board of progress in respect of the independent evaluation and sustainability study of yipworld.com.

### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The SIP Board is committed to ensuring that the initiatives which it currently funds are sustained, where appropriate, beyond the current funding period and has commissioned sustainability studies on a range of projects.
- 2.2 At its meeting of 4 December 2003, the SIP Board agreed to allocate further funds towards commissioning an independent evaluation and sustainability study of yipworld.com.
- 2.3 Following the appropriate procurement process, independent consultants EKOS Limited were commissioned at the end of February 2004 to evaluate the performance and effectiveness of yipworld.com and to identify opportunities for its longer-term sustainability.
- 2.4 The consultant's research study was concluded at the end of June 2004 and the evaluation report presents the findings of the study, and is accompanied by a supplementary paper, which examines the way forward for yipworld.com.

### 3. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- 3.1 Overall, the independent evaluation suggests that yipworld.com has made considerable progress in addressing the issue of youth exclusion in the Coalfield Area and that there is widespread support for the continuation of the project.
- 3.2 A summary of the key evaluation findings are summarised below, including:
- **Accessing Resources:** yipworld.com has been actively addressing the issue of financial sustainability and has attempted to widen the funding base to reduce dependence on core revenue support from the SIP;
  - **Achievement:** the project has been successful in engaging with a large and diverse cross-section of young people in the SIP area and the services within the project are well used;
  - **Performance:** although the monitoring reports indicate that the project continues to achieve annual targets, the assessment of performance

could be developed through the introduction of an enhanced framework for monitoring and evaluation;

- **Good practice and innovation:** the findings of the research study suggest that yipworld.com can be considered an innovative project and should explore ways in which its health promotion activities, Pathway to Progress, and Information Communication Technology (ICT) services can be expanded. The innovation appears to be based on the project's commitment to change and improvement, and having the ability to identify the changing needs of young people and adapting to them; and
- **Impact:** the evaluation study acknowledges that yipworld.com has engaged with a large number of young people locally, who have reported a range of benefits arising from participation in the project. However, it is identified that there is further scope to co-ordinate the growing range of youth services in the area through, for example, linking to the Dialogue Youth project; increasing the range of training, careers guidance and work experience opportunities available to support the transition of young people into the labour market; and targeting outreach activity to areas where membership is low and youth provision more limited.

3.3 In considering the future direction of project activity, the findings of the research study suggest a number of areas in which the services provided by yipworld.com can be developed, including:

- consolidating services – core services have reached a point of maturity with consolidation now the priority;
- refocusing services – in particular the café and crèche services, as the current package of grant funding is coming to an end; and
- enhancing services – particular potential has been identified in providing additional support to young people aged 16 years and over.

3.4 The evaluation also suggests priorities for the way in which yipworld.com services should be delivered, in particular, the need for:

- increasing targeted outreach – taking the services of yipworld.com to areas where impact has been low but needs remain; and
- better 'joined-up' activities – working more closely with other providers to tailor a wider range of services around young people's needs.

3.5 The review also reveals a range of areas in which the organisational capacity of yipworld.com can be strengthened, including:

- the restructuring of Board and senior management arrangements to reflect the increasing managerial and administrative burden;
- a longer-term approach to strategic planning;
- a more systematic and targeted approach to securing funds;
- enhanced systems to monitor, review and report on performance; and
- the preparation of a three-year business plan, which incorporates the findings of the independent evaluation study and the report in respect of project sustainability.

3.6 The evaluation findings suggest a range of potential development areas for the growth and diversification of the project. These opportunities can be broadly categorised as follows:

- customer maximisation – opportunities to increase the uptake of existing services by existing customer groups, in particular, young people;
- customer development – opportunities to provide existing services to ‘new’ customer groups, including organisations and businesses;
- service development – opportunities to develop new services to meet the needs of existing customer groups; and
- diversification – opportunities to develop new services to meet the needs of new customer groups.

3.7 It is identified that sustainable organisations tend to have a wide base of funding and the sustainability report identifies a range of funds available as key funding options for yipworld.com, including European Union Structural Funds, The Big Lottery, and Scottish Individual Learning Accounts. The funding appraisal also re-affirms the ongoing potential to secure funding from a range of grant making trusts.

3.8 In addition, a small number of income generating options have been identified, including the delivery of children’s/youth services under contract to other agencies; the hire of existing meeting/training space; the delivery of training services to other organisations; and the establishment of a catering business.

#### **4. WAY FORWARD**

4.1 In order to address the opportunities and challenges outlined in the sustainability report, a range of early actions have been identified by the consultants in an Action Plan, which is currently being considered by the Board of Directors of yipworld.com.

4.2 The Directors have agreed to establish a sub-group to progress the identified actions within the Action Plan, which will work towards ensuring the continuation of yipworld.com in the future.

#### **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

5.1 The Board is asked to:

- i) note the final findings of the independent evaluation and sustainability study of yipworld.com;
- ii) note the progress to take forward the early actions by the Board of Directors at yipworld.com;
- iii) agree to receive further updates in respect of sustainability issues; and
- iv) otherwise, note the content of the report.

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**13 September 2004**