

TASK AND FINISH PANELS

1. YOUTH ENGAGEMENT REVIEW TASK AND FINISH PANEL

Origin

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting of 10 February 2015 set up a Task and Finish Panel to review potential options for the best use of the existing budgets for youth engagement for the future. Also, they agreed that it would be helpful to co-opt two youth councillors to sit on this panel and give their input. This Panel stemmed from a PICK form submitted by Councillor Kane the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Community Services.

Aims and Objectives

- (a) To report findings to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and submit a final report for consideration by the Committee and the Council by November 2015;
- (b) To include two representatives from the District Youth Council on the Task and Finish Panel;
- (c) To determine the impact of the Council's current engagement with young people, through consultation with local statutory and voluntary sector partners, and,
- (d) To determine the best use of the allocated funding for the future.

Draft Terms of Reference

1. To review the operation of the Youth Council and identify specific areas of work undertaken and the success and impact of these;
2. To review the level of engagement with peers in local schools and 'other young people' of all ages across the district, through the range of work undertaken by the Youth Council and the importance of this engagement for local community groups;
3. To consider feedback from local schools and other partners in respect of the work of the Youth Council;
4. To identify the expenditure related to various elements of the Youth Council work programme and analyse the cost/benefit of this;
5. To consider other work undertaken by Community Services and Safety to engage with young people and identify the costs associated with this;
6. To consider the status of Essex Youth Services following recent service transformation and resulting implications for the district; and,

7. To prepare a set of recommendations for consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting in November 2015.

The Panel

The Committee appointed the following members to serve on the Panel:

Members (up to May '15): S. Murray, G. Mohindra, C. Roberts, B. Surtees, K. Adams, R. Butler

Members (after May '15): S. Murray, G. Mohindra, C. Roberts, S. Neville, B. Surtees A. Patel

Other Members who attended: Mrs H Kane, J McIvor (Youth Councillor), M Tinker (Youth Councillor)

Officers: J Chandler (Assistant Director Community Services and Safety), G Wallis (Community, Health & Wellbeing Manager and R Perrin (Democratic Services Officer).

The Panel had its first meeting in April 2015 and their last meeting on 14 September 2015.

Outcome

Recommendations of the Panel in relation to the Epping Forest Youth Council was:

- i) That the Council retains and continues to support and develop the Youth Council in terms of wider youth engagement;
- ii) That the Youth Council be afforded the opportunity to present a report/update twice a year to all Members of Council through a suitable meeting;
- iii) That the Youth Council acts as a consultee for stakeholder presentations at Overview and Scrutiny Committees;
- iv) That the current operational budget for the Youth Council be maintained at £12,000 per annum; and,
- v) That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee makes a bid to the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee for Continuing Services Budget (CSB) Growth of £8,000 per annum for an enabling fund, that the Youth Council can access for projects, to be agreed by the Neighbourhoods & Communities Select Committee.

Recommendations of the Panel in regard to future delivery of youth provision by Community Services and Safety:

- i) That the Council pursues the devolvement of the budget and responsibilities for Youth Provision from Essex County Council to the District Council; and,
- ii) That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee makes a bid to the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee for

Continuing Services Budget (CSB) Growth of £25,000 per annum, for targeted work by Community Services and Safety and not at the detriment of the current service.

2. GRANT AID REVIEW TASK AND FINISH PANEL

Origin:

At its meeting on 16 September 2014, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed the establishment of a new Task and Finish Panel to review the Council's Grant Aid Scheme for Sports, Arts, Leisure and Community Groups in terms of the overall policy/guidance and procedures for Major Grants and Service Level Agreements including those for the determination of applications, and those for the pre and post determination stages.

Aims and Objectives:

- (a) To report findings to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and to submit a final report for consideration by the Committee and the Council by April 2015;
- (b) To gather evidence and information in relation to the review through the receipt of appropriate data, presentations and by participation in fact-finding visits to other authorities if necessary;
- (c) To have due regard to relevant legislation and the Council's procedures;
- (d) To consult political groups and independent Councillors during the review process.

Term of Reference:

To review the current structure of the Grant Aid Scheme, taking into consideration the terms of the overall policy/guidance and procedures those for the determination of applications, and those for the pre and post determination stages and how this framework would best fit the structure of the Council.

(1) To specifically consider:

- The eligibility criteria and assessment arrangements for funding taking into account the budget available and the thematic areas in the leisure and cultural strategy;
- The grant maxima;
- Appropriate arrangements for safeguarding;
- Review procedures.

(2) To consider any other matters that are deemed appropriate.

The Panel

The Committee appointed the following members to serve on the Panel:

Councillors Caroline Pond (Chairman), J Knapman (Vice-Chairman), T Boyce, A Mitchell, S Murray, G Shiell and B Surtees

The Panel did not finish its work by the end of the 2014/15 municipal year and continued its work into the 2015/16 year, holding its final meeting on 14 March 2016.

The Panel recognised the vital role that the voluntary and community sector brought to local community well-being in the Epping Forest District. However, it also acknowledged the need for a more proactive approach to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of grants awarded, and particularly the higher level grants.

Outcome

The Panel were satisfied that the agreed amendments to the Grant Aid Service Level Agreements and improved performance management would ensure that the Council was receiving best value from the grants awarded. They also felt that the level of remaining Grant Aid Funding should remain as it is, to ensure that the Council could continue to support the essential services provided through the voluntary sector.

The Panel made the following recommendations:

- (1) That the current level of Grant Aid funding be maintained;
- (2) That, from 1 April 2016, funding of less than £5,000 per annum for three years be provided for Voluntary Groups without the need for a formal Service Level Agreement, but, subject to the receipt of an Annual Report from each Group outlining the benefit to the District from the funding;
- (3) That the revised Service Level Agreement as agreed by the Panel, be adopted by the Council;
- (4) That the District Council maintain provision for longer term funding to Voluntary Action Epping Forest and Epping Forest Citizens Advice Bureau from 2016/17 onwards, based on performance management benchmarking closely monitored on an annual basis; and
- (5) That a more rigorous process of monitoring is adopted for the higher Grant Awards currently in operation for Voluntary Action Epping Forest and Citizen's Advice Bureau