

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
NOTES OF A MEETING OF YOUTH ENGAGEMENT REVIEW TASK AND FINISH PANEL
HELD ON MONDAY, 20 APRIL 2015
IN COMMITTEE ROOM 1, CIVIC OFFICES, HIGH STREET, EPPING
AT 7.30 - 8.35 PM

Members Present: S Murray (Chairman), , R Butler, G Mohindra, C Roberts and B Surtees

Other members present: Mrs H Kane, J McIvor (Youth Councillor) and M Tinker (Youth Councillor)

Apologies for Absence:

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

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN

As this was the first meeting of the Panel, the Assistant Director of Community Services and Safety opened the meeting and requested nominations for the role of Chairman. Councillor S Murray was nominated by Councillor C Roberts and seconded by Councillor R Butler and accepted the role of Chairman.

Councillor S Murray then proceeded to request nominations for the Vice Chairman and Councillor G Mohindra was nominated by Councillor S Murray and seconded by Councillor C Roberts.

Resolved:

- (1) That Councillor S Murray be elected Chairman of the Panel for the remainder of the municipal year; and
- (2) That Councillor G Mohindra be elected Vice-Chairman of the Panel for the remainder of the municipal year.

2. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)

There had been no substitute Members Appointed for this meeting.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct.

4. SCOPING OF REVIEW AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Assistant Director of Community Services and Safety, J Chandler presented the Scoping Report and draft Terms of Reference for the Youth Engagement Review Task and Finish Panel.

J Chandler informed the Panel that following a budget saving exercise in 2014, the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee had asked Officers to look into the most effective use of the budget relating to youth engagement for

2016/17. In response the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Community Services submitted a proposal to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to establish a Task and Finish Panel to consider and review the potential options for the best use of the existing budget.

J Chandler advised the Panel that the total budget allocated to Youth Strategy budget was in the region of £120,000 and of this the operating costs of the Youth Council amounted to approximately £54,000 per annum with a project budget of £12,000, which was mostly used for transport. The Youth Council consisted of 21 young people aged between 13 and 18 years old that had been elected through elections held in the Districts secondary schools, along with five other young residents who live in the District but either go to school outside of the area or to Epping Forest College. In addition to provision of a Youth Council, the Council's Community Services teams also provided a range of activities, projects and programmes for young people across the District in key areas, including targeted work within the community and schools that was mainly funded through external funding via competitive processes.

J Chandler advised the Panel that youth engagement had been seen as a priority for a range of public and voluntary services, to ensure that young people were able to access core services and be involved in the design and delivery of these. This provided opportunities for agencies to build positive relationships with young people and promote good health and wellbeing. She also advised the Panel that several key partners had faced major budget reductions over the last 3-5 years and this had resulted in there being a complete withdrawal of 'face to face' Youth Service delivery across Essex by the County Council.

The Panel acknowledged that the Youth Council was an element of the Review but that youth engagement in its widest sense should be the main consideration. The Chairman asked that the Panel consider the terms of reference and recommend any additions or amendments.

Councillor G Mohindra suggested that the Task and Finish Panel should look at engaging young people who are not already engaged.

Councillor Surtees asked that the words 'Youth Council' be included into the second point of the term of reference, so that it read 'To review the level of engagement the Youth Council has with peers in the local schools....'

The Panel asked that the third point in the terms of reference include feedback from Redbridge and another comparative District Council.

The Panel asked that Officers produce a list of the work undertaken by the Community Services and Safety team. With this in mind Councillor Surtees asked whether any services for young people were required as a statutory function. J Chandler advised that youth engagement through the District Council was discretionary, but that there would be a significant impact on the community if this service was not provided.

J Chandler advised that to meet with the budget setting process for 2016/17 the Panel would be required to report back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 20 October 2015, therefore the Panel conclusions would have to be submitted by 8 October 2015. The Panel felt that a meeting each month should allow for the issues to be discussed in depth and allow Officers to collate any information requested.

Councillor Surtees stated that he was concerned that the Panel needed to find out what young people's requirements were and what would happen if these needs could not be met. Youth Councillor Matthew Tinker advised that the Youth Council had recently consulted young people in the District through a Youth Conference held at the Civic Offices, which had collated information about young peoples concerns such as drug and alcohol abuse. In response to the information collected, the Youth Council had produced #URNotAlone USB wrist bands which had been distributed to all year 9 pupils in the District and included information on bullying. This project had received the High Sheriff's Award and further external funding for more of the wristbands. Officers advised that the Youth Council could provide a presentation of the type of work they do at the next meeting. The Panel also requested further information on the amount of money that the Youth Council and Community Services secure from external sources.

Councillor Surtees raised concerns about how young people in rural areas were consulted. Jaymey McIvor (Youth Councillor) advised that the Youth Council had been involved in projects and meetings with Parish and Town Councils all over the District and Matthew advised that the Youth Council used Twitter, Facebook and other social media to contact and talk with young people in the District.

The Panel decided that further information was required about the Youth Council and what they provide for young people; what Essex County Council and other authorities were doing with young people's services; other work provided by the Community Services and Safety teams; and that they should consult with the Districts secondary schools in the form of a questionnaire. The Panel asked that the questionnaires for the Schools be a priority because of the holidays and exam period and members should be consulted through email to ensure that the letters were sent out quickly.

Resolved:

- (1) That the Terms of Reference for the Panel be approved, subject to the following additions:
 - (a) that (2) read 'To review the level of engagement the Youth Council has 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;'
 - (b) that (3) include reference to a London authority and a comparative District Council in Essex.
- (2) That the final report from the panel be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 20 October 2015;
- (3) That a further five meetings be held between now and the final report including the first two meetings set as Monday 18 May 2015 and 22 June 2015 at 19.00, Civic Offices;
- (4) That further information be provided to the panel about the Youth Council and Community Services provision for young people.

5. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The noted that the next two meetings had been scheduled for Monday 18 May 2015 and Monday 22 June 2015 and would begin at 7.00 p.m.