

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MINUTES

Committee: Grant Aid Review Task and Finish Scrutiny Panel **Date:** Thursday, 16 April 2015

Place: Committee Room 1, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping **Time:** 6.00 - 6.45 pm

Members Present: Councillors C P Pond (Chairman) J Knapman (Vice-Chairman) A Boyce, A Mitchell MBE, G Shiell, B Surtees and J Lea

Other Councillors: -

Apologies: Councillors S Murray

Officers Present: G Wallis (Community, Health & Wellbeing Manager), C Overend (Policy & Research Officer) and G J Woodhall (Democratic Services Officer)

21. SUBSITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)

The Panel noted that Cllr Lea was substituting for Cllr Knapman.

22. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

23. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Panel noted that there was no other urgent business to consider.

24. REVIEW OF GRANT AID SCHEME - FINAL REPORT 2014/15

C Overend presented the Final Report on the Review of the Grant Aid Scheme for 2014/15.

The Panel was reminded that the Review was being carried out as a result of a £11,517 reduction in the budget for the Grant Aid Scheme in 2015/16. This had reduced the budget to £83,453, of which £43,453 was expenditure already committed via three-year Service Level Agreements that ran until March 2016. This left the balance of £40,000 available for the consideration of applications for one-off Grants. In addition to this, the Council also had three-year Service Level Agreements with the Epping Forest Citizen's Advice Bureau and Voluntary Action Epping Forest, which totalled £152,500.

The Panel examined the draft Final Report on the Review of the Grant Aid Scheme for 2014/15. C Overend emphasised that paragraph 1.4 would keep various options open for the Panel to pursue in 2015/16, if the Overview & Scrutiny Committee agreed the request for the Panel to continue its work. It was felt that the second sentence of this paragraph should begin "The Review...", and that the use of the word "linkages" in paragraph 3.3 should be revised to "links".

The Panel debated whether recommendation 1(c) should be changed to refer to “Senior People” rather than “Older People”. However, G Wallis advised the Panel that the term “Older People” was in general use throughout the voluntary sector.

The Panel also discussed whether recommendation 4(c) should be revised to reference other funding bids made rather than other funding received. As there was no guarantee that a bid for funding from another body would be successful, it was felt that the wording should remain as it was. C Overend stated that the underlying philosophy of the Scheme was to encourage Groups to find alternative sources of funding, and Officers would assist in this.

Cllr H Kane, the Portfolio Holder for Leisure & Community Wellbeing, highlighted that the proposal to issue a press release after each Portfolio Holder decision concerning Grant Aid was published would indicate the breadth of the Scheme to the public. G Wallis added that the Council would publish the press release on its website, even if the local press did not include the story in their papers.

C Overend proposed a new recommendation (13) for the Panel to continue into 2015/16 to further examine the three-year Service Level Agreements and the Groups with which the Council had entered into such an agreement. This was agreed and it was noted that the current recommendations (13) and (14) would now become recommendations (14) and (15).

The Panel reviewed the main body of the report and agreed a number of revisions to improve the legibility and readability of the report. C Overend enquired as to whether the Panel wished to include other supporting information in the report. It was suggested that feed back from recipient groups could be included; C Overend informed the Panel that surveys had been undertaken of recent applications, and there were a number of letters of gratitude from recipient groups on file that could also be used.

Resolved:

(1) That the draft Final Report of the Grant Aid Review Task & Finish Panel for 2014/15 be agreed for submission to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 23 April 2015, subject to the following amendments:

- (a) the second sentence of paragraph 1.4 to begin “The Review...”;
- (b) the use of the word “linkages” in the last sentence of paragraph 3.3 to be changed to “links”;
- (c) a new recommendation (13) to be added for the Panel to continue into 2015/16 to further examine the policy for the three-year Service Level Agreements and the Groups with which the Council had entered into such an agreement;
- (d) the current recommendations (13) and (14) to become recommendations (14) and (15) respectively as a result of the new recommendation (13) outlined above;
- (e) the first sentence of paragraph 5.3 to be amended to “...the Panel concluded...”;
- (f) the penultimate bullet point of paragraph 5.9 to be amended to “Other possible funding...”;

- (g) Libraries to be added to the last bullet point of paragraph 5.10;
- (h) the penultimate bullet point of paragraph 5.11 to be revised to read "The records maintained/attendance figures (if applicable)/is the project being used/ how is its success measured; and"; and
- (i) the final sentence in paragraph 5.12 to read "...was intended to be carried out...".

25. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Democratic Services Officer informed the Panel that Members would be advised of the date for the next meeting in the new municipal year, once the interim report had been agreed by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

CHAIRMAN