

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
NOTES OF A MEETING OF YOUTH ENGAGEMENT REVIEW TASK AND FINISH PANEL
HELD ON TUESDAY, 11 AUGUST 2015
IN COMMITTEE ROOM 1, CIVIC OFFICES, HIGH STREET, EPPING
AT 7.00 - 8.15 PM**

Members Present: S Murray (Chairman) , G Mohindra, S Neville, A Patel and B Surtees

Other members present: M Tinker (Epping Forest Youth Councillor)and H Kane

Apologies for Absence: C Roberts and J McIvor (Epping Forest Youth Councillor)

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

33. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)

The Panel noted there were no substitute Members appointed for this meeting.

34. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

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

35. NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The notes from the last meeting on 8 July 2015 were agreed as a correct record subject to the inclusion of the Community Services Structure and that the report and minutes of the Youth Strategy Group which Edward Nkwelle referred to, had not been included.

The Panel noted that Officers had tried to retrieve a copy of the report and subsequence minutes of the Youth Strategy Group from Essex County Council (ECC) but they had not been forthcoming. The Panel felt that without the report they were unable to assess the contribution of Youth Provision that ECC provided.

36. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Panel noted the Terms of Reference.

37. REVIEW FINDINGS

The Chairman asked the Panel to consider the information that had been provided at the previous meetings in conjunction with the Terms of Reference, for a clear steer on recommendations to be put to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding Youth Engagement Review.

The Panel advised that they had gained a detailed knowledge of the Youth Council and the role they played in the District and to their peers. Councillor Surtees commented that further consideration was required around increasing their status to

Adult Members, as it was felt that Members were not always aware of Youth Council. He also stated that there was a potential to widen the reach of the Youth Council in rural areas of the District.

M Tinker advised that the Youth Council could present to Full Council as well as Overview and Scrutiny to increase their awareness. The Panel felt that this should part of a recommendation to inform all Members about the Youth Council.

Councillor Neville commented on the usefulness of recent update received in the Members Bulletin and that this was a good way of showcasing the Youth Council to Members.

The Panel felt that some of the comments received back from the schools highlighted the need for a good relationship between the schools and the Youth Council and where this was good the Youth Councillors had excelled. The Panel was very impressed overall by the communication to their peers.

Councillor Patel advised that the Youth Council had provided value for money considering that the associated costs and budget had never been increased since the beginning, that 39% of the running costs had been raised by external funding and that the Youth Council had independently applied and acquired external funding.

Councillor Patel asked for comments to be included within the narrative from Local Partners such as Vicky Ford "The Epping Forest Youth Council has been a shining example across Essex and is frequently referred to positively." He felt that this reinforced what evidence the Panel had been shown.

The Panel asked M Tinker, as a Youth Councillor what he thought had been a significant achievement of Youth Council. M Tinker advised that winning the High Sheriff Award for the Bullying Campaign. The campaign had been highlight through the Youth Conference as one of the major concerns of the young people in the District. The award also achieved external funding and created further publicity for the project enabling the advice to be carried further for young people.

The Panel also commented on the Intergenerational events which the Youth Council had taken part in around the District, showing further that the Youth Council not only worked with the peers but other age's groups.

Councillor Mohindra added that schools should be encouraged to work with the Youth Council at every opportunity and he would like the Youth Council to be a future consultee on Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Panel felt that if a relationship with a school began to diminish, then Ward Councillors or School Governors could be approached to improve the links and push the need for this relationship.

The Panel advised that they were impressed with the feedback from local schools, other local partners and the favourable comparison to other Youth Council from a London Authority and similar District Council in Essex. The Chairman advised that J McIvor had also expressed complimentary comments about the Epping Forest Youth Council via his experiences of being a Member of the Youth Parliament which accessed Youth Councils on a national level.

The Panel felt that the work undertaken by Community Services and Safety Team that engaged with Young People such as the Crucial Crew and Reality Roadshow

events, delivered an excellent service and now provided the service to other authorities.

In light of the ECC Officers attendance at the last meeting, serious concerns were raised by the Panel with the regards to the County's ability to deliver any Youth Services. The Panel felt that the Youth Provision provided by Essex County Council could be put to better use by the District Council, as it was in a better position to know where the money was required.

The Panel asked Officers what where the pressing issues of young people in the District whether extra funding would help with targeted work. J Chandler advised that alcohol issues, legal highs, sexual exploitation (online) and self harming were of major concern. The targeted work would be supported by officers and extra resources would be welcomed and would act as a preventive to reduce future problems.

The Panel commented that this was an example of 'Spend to save' in the sense that the providing information to Young People would prevent problems later in life. These services, even though they were not statutory were of high importance to the District.

Councillor Patel advised that if anything, this highlighted the need for collaboration between tiers of government. Although ECC provided the premises it appeared that they were not the ones co-ordinate the service and provided the local knowledge that the Parishes and District Council had.

Councillor Patel asked whether the District had good relationships with the Faith Groups in the District who could help. G Wallis advised that they worked very closely with this sector across the District.

The Panel thought encouragement should be given to Parish and Town Councils to contribute to funding for the services provided, enabling further work to be carried out.

Councillor Surtees asked whether Officers would consider introducing the Youth Council and engagement with the District Council to Primary schools pupils in year 6. G Wallis advised that visits to the Civic Offices were available to Primary Schools across the District, through the Chairman, although they would take on board his comments.

The Panel agreed that a narrative should support the recommendations of the Panel and the draft report would be circulated to the Chairman and Vice Chairman for consideration before being attached to the next agenda for comment.

Recommendations

- (1) That the Youth Council be afforded the opportunity to present a report/update twice a year to Members through a suitable meeting;
- (2) That the Youth Council acts as a consultee for stakeholder and presentations at Overview and Scrutiny Committees;
- (3) That the Youth Council budget of £12,000 was maintained;

- (4) That resources were made available for an 'enabling fund' in the region of £8,000 per annum, that the Youth Council can access for projects, that would be agreed through the Neighbourhoods and Communities Select Panel;
- (5) That the Council pursues the devolvement of the budget and responsibilities for Youth Provision from Essex County Council; and
- (6) That additional funding for targeted work by Community Services and Safety in the region of £25,000 per annum be made available and not at the detriment of the current service.

38. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Panel noted that the next meeting would be Monday 14 September 2015 at 19.00 in Committee Room 1.