Scrutiny Task and Finish Panel Agenda



Grant Aid Review Task and Finish Scrutiny Panel Monday, 15th February, 2016

You are invited to attend the next meeting of **Grant Aid Review Task and Finish Scrutiny Panel**, which will be held at:

Committee Room 1, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping on Monday, 15th February, 2016 at 7.00 pm.

Glen Chipp Chief Executive

Democratic Services

Gary Woodhall

Officer

The Directorate of Governance

Tel: 01992 564470

Email: gwoodhall@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Members:

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

THE DEADLINE FOR THE SUBMISSION OF SUBSTITUTES TO THIS MEETING IS 18:00 HOURS

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

(Director of Governance) To be announced at the meeting.

2. SUBSITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)

(Directorate of Governance) To report the appointment of any substitute members for the meeting.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(Director of Governance) To declare interests in any items on the agenda.

In considering whether to declare a personal or a pecuniary interest under the Code of Conduct, Overview & Scrutiny members are asked pay particular attention to paragraph 11 of the Code in addition to the more familiar requirements.

This requires the declaration of a personal and pecuniary interest in any matter before an OS Committee which relates to a decision of or action by another Committee or Sub Committee of the Council, a Joint Committee or Joint Sub Committee in which the Council is involved and of which the Councillor is also a member.

Paragraph 11 does not refer to Cabinet decisions or attendance at an OS meeting purely for the purpose of answering questions or providing information on such a matter.

4. MINUTES (Pages 5 - 10)

To confirm the minutes of the last meeting of the Panel.

5. PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS (Pages 11 - 22)

(Director of Communities) To consider the attached report (GAR-006-2015/16).

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, together with paragraphs (6) and (24) of the Council Procedure Rules contained in the Constitution require that the permission of the Chairman be obtained, after prior notice to the Chief Executive, before urgent business not specified in the agenda (including a supplementary agenda of which the statutory period of notice has been given) may be transacted.

In accordance with Operational Standing Order 6 (Non-Executive Bodies), any item raised by a non-member shall require the support of a member of the Committee concerned and the Chairman of that Committee. Two weeks notice of non-urgent items is required.

7. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

Exclusion

To consider whether, under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press should be excluded from the meeting for the items of business set out below on grounds that they will involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the following paragraph(s) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act (as amended) or are confidential under Section 100(A)(2):

Agenda Item	<u>Subject</u>	Exempt Paragraph
Nil	None	Nil

The Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, which came into effect on 1 March 2006, requires the Council to consider whether maintaining the exemption listed above outweighs the potential public interest in disclosing the information. Any member who considers that this test should be applied to any currently exempted matter on this agenda should contact the proper officer at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.

Confidential Items Commencement

Paragraph 9 of the Council Procedure Rules contained in the Constitution require:

- (1) All business of the Council requiring to be transacted in the presence of the press and public to be completed by 10.00 p.m. at the latest.
- (2) At the time appointed under (1) above, the Chairman shall permit the completion of debate on any item still under consideration, and at his or her discretion, any other remaining business whereupon the Council shall proceed to exclude the public and press.
- (3) Any public business remaining to be dealt with shall be deferred until after the completion of the private part of the meeting, including items submitted for report rather than decision.

Background Papers

Paragraph 8 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules of the Constitution define background papers as being documents relating to the subject matter of the report which in the Proper Officer's opinion:

- (a) disclose any facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the report is based; and
- (b) have been relied on to a material extent in preparing the report and does not include published works or those which disclose exempt or confidential information (as defined in Rule 10) and in respect of executive reports, the advice of any political advisor.

Inspection of background papers may be arranged by contacting the officer responsible for the item.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

(Director of Governance) The next meeting of the Panel is currently scheduled for 14 March 2016.



EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL NOTES OF A MEETING OF GRANT AID REVIEW TASK AND FINISH SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON THURSDAY, 29 OCTOBER 2015 IN COMMITTEE ROOM 1, CIVIC OFFICES, HIGH STREET, EPPING AT 7.00 - 8.40 PM

Members

C P Pond (Chairman), A Mitchell, G Shiell and B Surtees

Present:

Other members

present:

K Angold-Stephens and H Kane

Apologies for Absence:

J Knapman, A Boyce and S Murray

Officers Present

G Wallis (Community, Health & Wellbeing Manager), C Overend (Community, Policy and Grants Manager) and M Jenkins (Democratic

Services Officer)

17. SUBSITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)

There were no substitutions made at the meeting.

18. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- (a) Pursuant to the Member's Code of Conduct, Councillor G Shiell declared a non pecuniary interest in the following item of the agenda by virtue of being the District Council representative on the Epping Forest Citizens Advice Bureau. She indicated that she would remain in the meeting for the consideration of the item:
 - Item 5 Presentation by Epping Forest Citizens Advice Bureau
- (b) Pursuant to the Member's Code of Conduct, Councillor K Angold-Stephens declared a non pecuniary interest in the following item of the agenda by virtue of being the District Council representative on the Loughton Roding Citizens Advice Bureau. He indicated that he would remain in the meeting for the consideration of the item:
 - Item 5 Presentation by Epping Forest Citizens Advice Bureau.

19. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2015 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

20. PRESENTATION BY EPPING FOREST CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

The Panel received a presentation from R Poulter, Manager at Epping Forest District Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and J Woods, Chairman of the Citizens Advice Bureau Trustee's Board regarding the services and activities of the CAB in Epping Forest.

R Poulter began the presentation and highlighted the following:

- (a) CAB clients experienced complicated problems, 3 out of 4 clients felt a negative impact from their experiences.
- (b) 73% of clients were below the average income threshold. However following consultation with the CAB 2 out of 3 clients had their problems solved.
- (c) Every £1.00 invested in the CAB generated £3.10 in fiscal benefits, £15.83 in public value and £19.58 in benefits to the individuals who used their service.
- (d) A saving of £96,000 had been made in reducing homelessness by the CAB.
- (e) Epping Forest CAB had 56 volunteers and had recently recruited an extra 6 volunteers.
- (f) The Epping Forest CAB had provided advice to 2,497 people in 2014/15.
- (g) 33% of enquiries to the Epping Forest CAB concerned benefits and tax credits.
- (h) Over 25% of CAB clients had a disability or long term health problem.
- (i) 4 in 5 CAB clients felt less stressed after receiving their advice.
- (j) 2 in 3 CAB clients had their debt problem solved.

J Woods spoke next about the finances of the CAB. Funding for the CAB came from District Council grants, CAB fundraising, Parish and Town Councils and donations. However the bulk of funding came from specific projects which the CAB had applied for.

The CAB had cut staffing costs from April 2014 and they made savings through sourcing second hand office furniture and equipment where this was possible. However they needed top of the range IT equipment, particularly for assessing official websites.

It was explained that the 3 CAB branches currently open in the district were needed as the district was 131 square miles and had poor public transport in some places. The branches provided face to face contact which was preferred by 92% of the CAB's clients. R Poulter advised that the CAB were planning to move two of their branches to Loughton Library and Hemnall Street, Epping.

The Chairman thanked the representatives from the CAB and asked for Panel questions.

(i) Councillor B Surtees asked if there was any information on client satisfaction in terms of problem solving.

R Poulter replied that from the client feedback forms satisfaction was around 95%.

(ii) Councillor B Surtees enquired about difficulties experienced by some clients in obtaining appointments.

R Poulter advised that anybody could drop into a bureau but there was a waiting period before being seen. Clients would be greeted immediately on arrival and their priorities assessed, this allowed for more pressing enquiries to be dealt with sooner. Appointments could be arranged for more complicated enquiries. The CAB were trying to put experienced staff on the door to their bureaus to assess more readily the immediate needs of clients.

(iii) Councillor G Shiell asked if clients had confidential sessions at the CAB.

R Poulter replied that they issued a form for filling in to their visitors. Everybody was interviewed confidentially. The Panel was informed that whereas some problems could be dealt with quickly, most were more complicated, some sessions could last an hour. It was advised that there could be a range of other tasks involved in assisting clients such as paperwork and phone calls to be made.

(iv) Councillor H Kane asked if the CAB made home visits.

R Poulter replied that the CAB had a limited capacity for home visits but were working with VAEF on this.

(v) The Panel Chairman asked if the Epping Forest CAB supported people outside the district.

R Poulter advised that in regard to drop ins and appointments, their staff would only see Epping Forest residents. However the Epping Forest CABs did deal with telephone queries on a county wide basis.

(vi) The Chairman asked where would the Outreach services be re-located?

R Poulter advised that Outreach would be at Limes Farm and Abridge. They were working with GPs and they had plans to use Ongar Library at some stage.

The Assistant Director (Housing Operations), R Wilson, informed Members that he was shortly submitting a report to the Finance, Performance Management Cabinet Committee in November which would request the funding of two debt advisors for a year. They would be playing a crucial part in offsetting the potential impact from welfare budget cuts, helping to reduce homelessness. The District Council's temporary accommodation residence, Norway House at North Weald, was currently full to capacity and it was proving difficult to move tenants into the private rented sector. The authority was attempting to reduce the numbers of people in Bed and Breakfast accommodation as well. A close working relationship had been established between Housing officers and the CAB, for example they had quarterly meetings together.

The Policy Officer, C Overend, added that the CAB's clients, particularly those who had debt problems, generally had other issues which complicated the process helping them. This in turn made funding difficult because of the different categories in which support fell.

(vii) The Policy Officer, C Overend, asked the CAB representatives what bids for funding worked?

R Poulter replied that a bid to Essex County Council on supporting mental health patients on wards had failed. However a funding bid for debt mitigation had

succeeded this year. There had been 9 - 10 bids made to the County and local councils recently of which only two were unsuccessful.

(viii) Councillor K Angold-Stephens asked if businesses were providing any support to the CAB.

R Poulter replied that they had recently received a donation of office equipment from a bank, they used Epping Re-Use as well for finding office furniture and equipment.

(ix) Councillor B Surtees asked if there were excessive levels of supervision for volunteers at the CAB?

R Poulter advised that the CAB had very experienced advisors, good training was needed for staff and volunteers. Some people needed supervising.

(x) Councillor G Shiell asked about debt advise on Limes Farm estate.

R Poulter said that in some cases clients had been referred to debt specialists elsewhere.

The Chairman thanked the CAB representatives for their presentation and their answers to the Panel's questions.

21. REVIEW OF GRANT AID SCHEME - SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT WITH VOLUNTARY ACTION EPPING FOREST

The Panel received a report from the Policy Officer, C Overend, regarding the Review of the Grant Aid Scheme Service Level Agreement with Voluntary Action Epping Forest (VAEF).

When the terms of reference for the Task and Finish Panel were determined, it was agreed that the arrangements in respect of Service Level Agreements (SLAs), including those for VAEF, would be reviewed during the second stage in 2015/16. Therefore the Chief Officer of VAEF, J Foile, gave a presentation on services and activities they provided at the Panel meeting on 28 September 2015.

The VAEF existed to support the voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors, and was established district wide during the early 1990s. The District Council had provided financial support to VAEF by way of an SLA for many years. The funding agreed for 2015/16 was £39,120 which had remained unchanged since 2009/10. From this sum, VAEF paid the Council annual accommodation costs of £11,360 for use of the premises at Homefield House.

Members were asked to consider the current funding arrangements and make recommendations with regard to any funding to VAEF from 2016/17 onwards. Given the current uncertain financial climate faced by local government, it was vital that any funding agreement with VAEF included a range of key performance measures and an "added value" requirement through that agreement. The Policy Officer, C Overend, felt that the VAEF lacked spearheading and required stricter performance measures. The Community, Health and Wellbeing Manager, G Wallis, echoed this view by suggesting that setting targets would help with performance. She felt that there should be potential for a large pool of volunteers which could be recruited locally which could help the VAEF's profile.

Although funding continuity for the VAEF was important, it was equally important not to enter into a long term agreement at this stage, between VAEF and the District Council, so that effective service monitoring could take place. Councillor H Kane, Leisure and Communities Portfolio Holder advised that, as with funding for the Citizens Advice Bureau, working practices needed to change and evidence was important in justifying the investment made by the District Council.

RECOMMENDED:

- (1) That the District Council maintain provision for longer term funding to Voluntary Action Epping Forest from 2016/17 onwards, based on performance management benchmarking closely monitored on an annual basis; and
- (2) That a draft benchmarking arrangement for Voluntary Action Epping Forest would be brought to the Panel.

22. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business for consideration at the meeting.

23. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Task and Finish Panel would be held on Monday 23 November 2015.

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Report to Grant Aid Review Task & Finish Panel

Report Reference: GAR-006-2015/16
Date of meeting: 15 February 2016

Subject: Proposed Recommendations for

Service Level Agreements.

Responsible Officer: Julie Chandler (01992 564214)

Democratic Services: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470)



(1) That the Grant Aid Review Panel receives an overview of the findings of the Panel during Phase Two of the review; and

- (2) That Members agree the recommendations for inclusion within the final report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, in respect of proposed arrangements for the future operation of the Council's Grant Aid Scheme, as follows;
 - (a) a proposal to cease use of written Service Level Agreements for groups receiving three- year Grant Aid funding below £5,000 in total over the period of the award and to introduce a more efficient, annual monitoring process; and
 - (b) a revised, written Service Level Agreement for all Voluntary Sector Groups receiving three-year Grant Aid funding above £5,000, including Voluntary Action Epping Forest and Epping Forest Citizens Advice Bureau.

Reason for decision:

The Review Panel has now completed all aspects of its work in consideration of the Council's Grant Aid Scheme and needs to agree recommendations to be presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Options considered and rejected:

To maintain current administration systems for Grant Aid.

Report:

- 1. The Grant Aid Review Panel has now received presentations from all of the key organisations receiving Grant Aid funding as part of three-year Service Level Agreements with the Council, and has considered in detail, the range of other local voluntary sector groups receiving lower levels of funding.
- 2. At the last two meetings of the Panel, Members received detailed presentations from the two main recipients of Grant Aid from the Council, these being Voluntary Action Epping Forest which currently receives £39,120 per annum, over a three-year Service Level Agreement, (in addition to £31,690 towards office accommodation and fixed network line costs) and Epping Forest Citizens Advice Bureau (EF CAB), which receives £113,840 per annum, over the same period (in addition to which the sum of £42,000 is awarded from the Housing Revenue Account towards the Bureau's Debt Mitigation posts.) Following the presentations, time was allocated for detailed questions from Members and where necessary, further information sought.

Agenda Item 5

SCRUTINY

Epping Forest District Council

- 3. The Panel has also rigorously reviewed all paperwork and monitoring information utilised in the administration of the Council's Grant Aid Scheme, including pre-submission criteria, types of grant awarded, written Service Level Agreements and other requirements for groups receiving Grant Aid funding. This information has been considered alongside examples of Grant Aid arrangements operated by a range of other local authorities in Essex, and Officers have reviewed the Council's Grant Aid paperwork and SLA's to reflect Member preference from this discussion.
- 4. This report therefore includes a set of draft papers, which outline the proposed arrangements for monitoring and review of the range of grants available from the Council and seeks Members' final approval, prior to the full report submission to Overview and Scrutiny Committee in April.

Resource implications:

The recommendations in this report do not have any financial implications.

Legal and Governance Implications:

The report proposes enhanced governance arrangements for the Council's Grant Aid Scheme.

Safer, Cleaner Greener Implications:

None

Consultation Undertaken:

Consultation with voluntary sector groups in receipt of Grant Aid from the Council.

Background Papers:

Reports and minutes from previous Grant Aid Panel Meetings.

Risk Management:

Not applicable at this stage of the reporting process.

Epping Forest District Council Grant Aid SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT

Between EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL of the Civic Offices, High Street, Epping,

Essex ('hereinafter referred to as EFDC')

And (Group's name) of (Group's address)

('hereinafter referred to as the Grantee')

1. PURPOSE OF AGREEMENT

1.1 To ensure the efficient and effective use of EFDC's financial support to the Grantee

- 1.2 To further develop and maintain an effective working partnership between EFDC and the Grantee, in support of the interests of the communities of Epping Forest District.
- 1.3 To give the Grantee financial security regarding the grant for the period of the Agreement, subject to the schedule, arrangements and standards set out in this document being fulfilled.
- 1.4 This Service level Agreement (SLA) does not constitute a legal agreement between the parties; however, this Agreement aims to ensure best use of Council resources and establish a sound working relationship between the parties.

2. TERM

- 2.1 The "term" is the period running from up to and including .
- 2.2 The funding received by the Grantee must be spent in full by the end of the Term for the purposes that it was intended for. If the Grantee fails to spend the allocated funding by this date they will be required to return such part of any unspent grant as EFDC may determine.

3. GRANTEE OBLIGATIONS

The Grantee will:-

- 3.1 Undertake to achieve the outcomes and objectives detailed in **Schedule 1** of this SLA and provide monitoring evidence, as requested via supplied templates.
- 3.2 Participate in annual target setting with EFDC to ensure both parties are clear on achievable expectations.
- 3.3 Provide EFDC with all information and assistance in a timely fashion as is required by EFDC to evidence the performance requirements of this Agreement.
- 3.4 Provide access for an annual visit by the appropriate Portfolio Holder, Members and officers on request.
- 3.5 Comply with all applicable legislation and prevailing laws in the performance of service; including but not restricted to; the Data Protection Act 1998, the Equalities Act 2010 and all others as relevant, with particular attention to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults as detailed by the Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB) and Essex Safeguarding Adults Board (ESAB).

- 3.6 Provide and maintain policies of insurance through the term of this agreement, as EFDC may reasonably demand as appropriate for their role in achieving the outcomes.
- 3.7 Have robust governance and financial arrangements in place as required by Charity Law and comply with the legal obligations of charities under the Charities Acts and the Companies Acts, taking appropriate preventative action on behalf of themselves (and working with any partners) ensure business continuity to achieve key outcomes, in the event of the Grantee failing to secure its core, or other dependent, funding.
- 3.8 Assist EFDC in compliance with its obligations under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 in respect of achieving the outcomes in Schedule 1.
- 3.9 Invite the Council to Annual General Meetings (AGM), giving a minimum of 14 days' notice, so that officers may attend.
- 3.10 Ensure that the funding support provided by the Council is positively promoted in any publicity about the organisation.
- 3.11 Adhere to the principles of the Epping Forest Compact.
- 3.12 Advise EFDC in the event that it becomes apparent that it is going to be difficult to spend the funding within the timescales stipulated in this Agreement.

The Grantee will not:-

- 3.13 Assign or seek to assign in whole or part, its rights and or obligations under this agreement or sub-contract material elements of its obligations without written consent in writing from EFDC.
- 3.14 Promote itself as associated with or authorised to represent EFDC expect insofar as is expressly set out in the Agreement

4. EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OBLIGATIONS

EFDC will:

- 4.1 Provide the funds in accordance with **Schedule 2** of this SLA, subject to the achievement of the outcomes and objectives detailed in Schedule 1 of this Agreement.
- 4.2 Delay or suspend in whole or part payment under this Agreement if the Grantee fails to produce satisfactory evidence of progress towards achieving the outcomes detailed in Schedule 1.
- 4.3 Adhere to the principles of the Epping Forest Compact.

5. MANAGEMENT OF THIS AGREEMENT

5.1 Both EFDC and the Grantee will each appoint a "Contact Officer"

The Contact Officer for EFDC will be:

Name

Job Title

Address

Phone Number

Email

	Name	
	Job Title	
	Address	
	Phone Number	
	Email	
	The Grantee will:	
5.2	Provide EFDC with 2 copies of its Annumenths after the AGM:	al Report and examined accounts no later than 6
5.3	Provide EFDC with copies of the Agenda, Business Plans as and when published or r	Reports and Minutes of all General Meetings and of revised
5.4	Supply EFDC with a copy of estimated incopy	come and expenditure in advance of each financial
5.5	Produce a statement at the end of each financial year, separate from the Grantee's accounts, stating how the funding allocation from EFDC has been spent	
5.6	Provide suitable training for all staff and volunteers appropriate to their role and responsibilities.	
5.7	Participate in any other monitoring and review exercises approved by both parties and associated with this Agreement	
5.8	Where practical carry an acknowledgemen newsletters and relevant publicity material.	t of EFDC support on all letterheads, annual reports,
6.	REVIEW/TERMINATION OF AGREEMEN	т
6.1	Either party may request a review of this Agreement at any time if it should appear that the arrangement is not working satisfactorily for the purposes intended. In any case, the parties shall undertake a joint annual review of the Agreement.	
6.2	The annual review will cover all aspects of it being amended by mutual consent.	the operation of this Agreement, which may lead to
6.3	EFDC may terminate this Agreement by three months' notice in writing to the Grantee in the event that the Grantee fails to comply with the agreed terms.	
Signed on behalf of Signed on behalf of Epping Forest District Council: Grantee:		
	olio Holder for re & Community Wellbeing	Position:
Dated		Dated:

The Contact Officer for the Grantee will be:

SCHEDULE 1

Objectives:

- Xxx
- Xxx
- XXXXXX
- Xxx

SCHEDULE 2

Payment timetable:

Period:	Payable by:	Amount





GRANT AID

MONITORING & EVALUATION FORM

year.

All questions relate to your organisation's award for the

Organisation name:		
Name of person completing	form:	
Position in organisation:		
Telephone number:		
E-mail address:		
Value of grant awarded:		
1. Please detail how the grant award was spent.		
Α	В	С
List all the individual items or	List the total amount you	List the total amount you
activities that your grant was spent on	spent on each item	spent on activities

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spent on		
Total amount spent:		
Total allibuit spelit.		

2. Please detail how your project/service has benefited the local community?	
Please include any statistical information, case studies, photographs or similar, continuing on an additional sheet if required.	
3. Please detail how your project/service has achieved the specific objectives and outcomes set?	
4. What are the main challenges your organisation faces, financial or otherwise?	
Please use this space to offer any further comment or details of your organisation's activities in the future.	
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Declaration

Two members of the organisation should sign the declaration below. At least one of the persons should be a member of the Management Committee (ie Chair, Treasurer or Secretary). Both persons must have the authority to complete this declaration on behalf of the organisation.

We, on behalf of our organisation, declare that the information provided in this grant evaluation form is correct and complete to the best of our knowledge;

We confirm that all funds received from Epping Forest District Council's Grant Aid Scheme in the financial year have contributed directly to our organisation's charitable aims as identified in the initial application form.

1. Name	
Position in organisation	
Signature	
Date	
2. Name	
Position in organisation	
Signature	
Date	

Please return this form to:

Assistant Community, Health and Wellbeing Manager, Community Services,

Epping Forest District Council, 25 Hemnall Street, Epping, Essex, CM16 4LU

Or e-mail: tbc

