

Scrutiny Task and Finish Panel Agenda



Grant Aid Review Task and Finish Scrutiny Panel Monday, 14th March, 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, 14th March, 2016
at 7.00 pm .**

**Glen Chipp
Chief Executive**

**Democratic Services
Officer**

Gary Woodhall
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. SUBSTITUTE 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 (OS) 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 - 8)

To confirm the minutes of the last meeting of the Panel, held on 15 February 2016 (attached).

5. GRANT AID REVIEW - FINAL REPORT 2015/16 (Pages 9 - 28)

(Director of Communities) To consider the attached report (GAR-007-2015/16).

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):

<u>Agenda Item</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Exempt Paragraph</u>
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) To note that this is the last scheduled meeting of the Task & Finish Panel.

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**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
NOTES OF A MEETING OF GRANT AID REVIEW TASK AND FINISH SCRUTINY PANEL
HELD ON MONDAY, 15 FEBRUARY 2016
IN COMMITTEE ROOM 1, CIVIC OFFICES, HIGH STREET, EPPING
AT 7.00 - 8.00 PM**

Members Present: C P Pond (Chairman), A Boyce, G Shiell and B Surtees.

Other members present: H Kane

Apologies for Absence: A Mitchell and S Murray

Officers Present J Chandler (Assistant Director (Community Services)), G Wallis (Community, Health & Wellbeing Manager) and G J Woodhall (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

24. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)

The Panel noted that no substitutes had been appointed for this meeting.

25. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

26. MINUTES

Resolved:

(1) That the minutes of the meeting held on 29 October 2015 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to the following amendment to minute 21, resolution (2) to read:

“(2) That a draft Service Level Agreement for Voluntary Action Epping Forest would be brought to the Panel.”

27. REVIEW OF GRANT AID SCHEME - SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT WITH EPPING FOREST CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

The Chairman invited the Panel to review the Grant Aid Service Level Agreement with Epping Forest (EF) Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) following their presentation to the Panel on 29 October 2015.

Cllr Boyce commented that he was very impressed with the services offered by the EF CAB when he spent a day with them during his year as Chairman. They helped a vast number of people with their problems, including financial, personal and family issues.

G Wallis reported that the CAB was now fully operational from Loughton Library and were happy to host further visits from Members if they wished. The new CAB

premises in Epping were scheduled for opening in April 2016. Officers could not advise the panel on the Outreach service provided by the CAB and based at Ongar. J Chandler expressed concerns about the expensive overheads for the CAB in the District and opined that the Outreach service was very cost effective in comparison to permanent offices. G Wallis highlighted that the CAB received a considerable amount of money from the Council each year to provide their services within the District, and an application had recently been received for a further £5,000 (not granted) for refurbishment of the new premises at Loughton Library.

Cllr Pond felt that it was better for the CAB to be based at Loughton Library rather than a back office, especially with the excellent parking facilities nearby. Cllr Kane informed the Panel that she had attended the last annual general meeting for the CAB in the District, and the CAB were happy that the County Council had offered space within Loughton Library. However, the move had been expensive as the CAB had undertaken certain office modifications so that the accommodation met their specifications, which had been funded out of their reserves.

G Wallis was concerned that the CAB within the District was not reaching out enough to other organisations for funding, and relying solely on the District Council; however, the CAB had indicated that this issue would be examined in the future. J Chandler added that funding from the European Union was also potentially available. Cllr Surtees commented that the CAB had to demonstrate value for money to the Council, given the high level of funding provided to them, and that services-in-kind should also be counted, such as the provision of rent-free premises.

Cllr Pond believed that the CAB needed three centres in Epping Forest as it was such a widespread District. G Wallis stated that the CAB had only two permanent centres within the District, at Epping and Loughton, as the centres at Waltham Abbey and Limes Farm were part of the Outreach Programme. J Chandler added that there was the possibility for the CAB to be based at the Civic Offices in the future as part of the Transformation Programme. Cllr Surtees welcomed the idea of creating a possible Community Hub at the Civic Offices.

Resolved:

(1) That provision for longer term funding to the Citizens Advice Bureau in Epping Forest be maintained by the District Council from 2016/17, based on performance management benchmarking closely monitored on an annual basis; and

(2) That the Service Level Agreement for the Citizens Advice Bureau in Epping Forest be based on the agreement in relation to Voluntary Action Epping Forest.

28. PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS

G Wallis introduced a report on the proposed recommendations for Service Level Agreements.

G Wallis reminded the Panel that it had now received presentations from all of the key organisations receiving Grant Aid funding through three-year Service Level Agreements with the Council, as well as considering the range of other local voluntary sector groups receiving lower levels of funding. The Panel had received detailed presentations from Voluntary Action Epping Forest (VAEF), which currently received £39,120 per annum plus £31,690 towards accommodation costs, and Epping Forest (EF) Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), which received £113,840 per annum plus £42,000 from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) towards two Debt

Advisor posts. The Panel had also reviewed all paperwork and monitoring information used in the administration of the Council's Grant Aid Scheme, and considered the arrangements operated by a number of other local authorities in Essex.

G Wallis reported that the proposals before the Panel, for inclusion in the final report to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee in April, was: for Service Level Agreements to be no longer used for those Groups receiving less than £5,000 in total over the period of the award (usually three years); for a revised Service Level Agreement to be approved for those groups receiving funding in excess of £5,000 over the period, including VAEF and EF CAB. The new Service Level Agreement would include the revised Monitoring/Evaluation form and a Schedule of Objectives to be achieved as a condition of their funding.

J Chandler added that the Chief Internal Auditor had requested section 4.2 to be strengthened in the draft Service Level Agreement to delay and/or prevent payment if necessary in the event that the Group or Organisation failed to provide sufficient evidence of progress towards the achievement of their agreed objectives. Cllr Surtees suggested that section 5.2 should read "...*audited accounts*..." rather than "...*examined accounts*...", and this was agreed by the Panel.

In response to questions from Members of the Panel, G Wallis stated that the potential funding of Groups involved in questionable activities would be covered by section 3.5 and the need for the Group to comply with Safeguarding legislation. If the Council should ever run out of money then J Chandler believed that this would probably be dealt with under the Council's general Business Continuity risk within the Corporate Risk Register, but the Chief Internal Auditor would be requested to examine the wording.

Cllr Surtees enquired as to whether Column A on the Monitoring & Evaluation Form should include the number of cases dealt with by the CAB within the District. J Chandler stated that this would be covered by the objectives agreed with the CAB under Schedule A of the Agreement, and could be outlined in Section 2 (Benefits for the Local Community) of the Monitoring & Evaluation Form. G Wallis added that the Council would ask for such information from the CAB when the Agreement was reviewed in any case.

The Panel thanked G Wallis and N Wilkinson for their assistance and support throughout the Review, and expressed their gratitude for the tremendous efforts made by C Overend before his tragic death in October 2015.

Resolved:

(1) That the overview of the findings of the Panel during Phase II of the Review be noted;

(2) That the following proposed arrangements for the future operation of the Council's Grant Aid Scheme be agreed for inclusion in the Panel's final report to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee in April 2016:

(a) that the use of written Service Level Agreements be ceased for Groups receiving three-year Grant Aid funding of less than £5,000 in total over the period of the award and a more efficient annual monitoring process be introduced for these Groups instead; and

(b) that the revised Service Level Agreement (as attached at Appendix 1 of the report) be approved for all Voluntary Sector Groups receiving three-year Grant Aid funding of £5,000 or more in total over the period of the award, including Voluntary Action Epping Forest and Epping Forest Citizens Advice Bureau, subject to the following amendment:

(i) Section 5.2 be amended to read “...*audited accounts*...” not “...*examined accounts*...”.

29. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Panel noted that there was no other urgent business for consideration at the meeting.

30. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

The Panel noted that there was no business which necessitated the exclusion of the public and press.

31. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Panel noted that its next, and final, meeting was scheduled for 14 March 2016.

CHAIRMAN



SCRUTINY



Report to the Grant Aid Review Task & Finish Panel

Report Reference: GAR-007-2015/16

Date of meeting: 14 March 2016

Portfolio: Leisure & Community Services.

Subject: Grant Aid Review – Final Report 2015/16.

Responsible Officer: Julie Chandler (01992 564214)

Democratic Services: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470)

Recommendations:

- (1) That the draft Final Report of the Panel for 2015/16 (attached as an Appendix) be agreed, subject to any further revisions requested by the Panel; and**
- (2) That the approved Final Report of the Panel for 2015/16 be submitted to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and recommended for adoption at its meeting scheduled for 19 April 2016.**

Reasons for Decision:

The Panel has now completed all aspects of its work relating to its review of the Council's Grant Aid Scheme, and now needs to agree the final report for the second part of the Review regarding those organisations in receipt of Grant Aid funding via Service Level Agreements. If approved, this report will be presented to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee at its meeting scheduled for 19 April 2016.

Options Considered and Rejected:

None, as the remit of the Panel was to report back to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee when it had completed its review.

Specific options considered for the allocation of those Grants issued via three-year Service Level Agreements have been detailed within the attached Final Report of the Panel for 2015/16.

Report:

1. The Panel considered one-off major Grants during 2014/15 and reported its findings to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 27 April 2015. Those findings were agreed and the Panel was tasked to further consider those Grants issued as part of a three-year Service Level Agreement during 2015/16.
2. This review is now complete and the Panel is requested to consider the draft of its Final Report for 2015/16, and whether any amendments should be made to the Report prior to its submission to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 19 April 2016.

Resource Implications:

The recommendations in the Panel's final report do not have any direct financial implications.

Legal and Governance Implications:

To implement enhanced governance arrangements for the Council's Grant Aid Scheme.

Safer, Cleaner, Greener Implications:

None.

Consultation Undertaken:

Various voluntary sector groups in receipt of Grant Aid funding from the Council.

Background Papers:

Presentations, reports and minutes from previous meetings of the Panel.

Risk Management:

Not applicable at this stage of the process.



SCRUTINY

Report of the Grant Aid
Task and Finish Review Panel
Part Two – Service Level Agreements

March 2016

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Chairman's Foreword

Before I begin to report back on the findings of this Part Two Review of Grant Aid, I would firstly like to acknowledge the tragic loss of the Council's Lead Officer for Grant Aid, Chris Overend.

Chris was Lead Officer for the Part One Review and for most of the Part Two process, until his life came to an untimely end shortly after the October meeting of the Panel. We were sincerely grateful for the work that Chris undertook in relation to Grant Aid and the many other areas of his work within the Council.

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At its meeting on 16 September 2014, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed the establishment of a Task and Finish Panel to review the Council's Grant Aid Scheme for Sports, Arts, Leisure and Community Groups. This was in terms of the overall policy, guidance and procedures for major grants and Service Level Agreements.

Early in the Review process the Panel came to the conclusion that it would be easier and more logical to break down the review into two parts, namely one focussing on the major grants and associated policy and procedure and the other relating to the Service Level Agreements with voluntary groups active in the District, including the CAB and Voluntary Action Epping Forest, which has been carried out in 2015/16. This report relates to the second part of the review.

I would like to thank those involved for their input and invaluable contributions and ideas within Part Two of the Review. This includes all members of the Panel (Councillors John Knapman, Ann Mitchell, Glynis Shiell, Brian Surtees and Tony Boyce), Councillor Helen Kane as the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Wellbeing, Gill Wallis, Community, Health & Wellbeing Manager and Julie Chandler Assistant Director (Community Services and Safety).

Cllr Caroline Pond

Chairman of Grant Aid Task & Finish Review Panel

Overview

The Review Panel acknowledged the £11,500 saving made from the Grant Aid Budget for 2015/16 in respect of the one –off major grants and considered whether any further reductions could be made to the overall Grant Aid funding programme. It also looked at the various criteria for the distribution of funding; the monitoring and evaluation for each grant awarded and the Service Level Agreements applied.

More detailed consideration was given to the higher level funding agreements, in respect of Voluntary Action Epping Forest and the Citizen's Advice Bureau, who provided presentations to the Panel on their work. In addition, visits were made by the Panel members, to various organisations in receipt of grant funding.

As stated within Part 1 of the Grant Aid Review, the Panel recognised the vital role that the voluntary and community sector brings 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.

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 (Appendix 2);
- (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;
- (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

Report:

1. The meetings of the Panel for the second part of the Grant Aid Review were held on 20 July, 28 September, 29 October 2015, 15 February and 14 March 2016. In undertaking this stage of the Review, the Panel considered a range of information including the following:
 - The breadth and funding amounts of Service Level Agreements in place
 - The Service Level Agreement (SLA) documentation itself
 - Information from other local councils on Grant Aid agreements and monitoring
 - Monitoring and evaluation paperwork used by the Council
 - Presentations from the two major funding SLA's; Voluntary Action Epping Forest (VAEF) £39,120 and Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) £113,840.
2. At its first meeting the Panel agreed the scope of the Review and that it would be undertaken in three sections, to consider: Epping Forest CAB; VAEF, and the other smaller Service Level Agreements. Visits would be made to a sample of these groups and VAEF and EF CAB would additionally be asked to provide presentations on their work and use of the grant funding provided by the Council.
3. The Panel would also consider the Grant Aid arrangements across a range of Councils in Essex, with a view to adopting best practice from these.
4. It was noted that the current Three-Year Service Level Agreements were all due to end in March 2016, hence it would be an advantage to complete the review as soon as possible. VAEF and EFCAB would be advised of the Panel's Terms of Reference before they prepared their presentations to the Panel. It was suggested that a sample of groups in receipt of smaller Service Level Agreements could be visited by the Panel.
5. It was also suggested that a questionnaire be sent to each Group in receipt of a Service Level Agreement to assist in the Panel's deliberations.
6. At the second meeting of the Panel officers gave an overview of the Grant Aid scheme and advised the Panel that the present two tier Grant Aid Scheme was set up in the 1990s, with the aim of providing a degree of financial security to well-established voluntary groups to enable the Groups to develop their services further. It was an approach that was replicated by other Councils at the time. Currently, there were 15 voluntary groups who had a Service Level Agreement with the Council, ranging from the Alzheimer's Society to Zinc Arts in Ongar which provided a variety of services across the District. Each Service Level Agreement had a number of standard features, such as the provision of up-to-date accounts, minutes from management meetings, and publicising the support provided by the District Council.
7. Following the visits made by the Panel to some of the Groups, it was acknowledged that: the Alzheimer's Society was performing important work, which could be replicated across the District if further funding was available; the Red Cross had needed to move premises recently but were still able to loan equipment and the Ongar & Villages Voluntary Care needed more money to provide publicity asking for more volunteers. There was a certain amount of dissatisfaction expressed concerning Zinc Arts in respect of their financial management.
8. The Panel was requested to consider the existing arrangements and make recommendations for the operation of Service Level Agreements from 2016/17 onwards, options for which included: maintaining the current arrangements; reducing the number of such agreements; or even dispensing with them altogether. However, the Panel was reminded that it had already agreed in the first stage of the review, that any Group in receipt

of a Funding Agreement from 1 April 2016 would be required to show 'added value' to the District, on an annual basis.

9. The Panel was reminded that the current Service Level Agreements, and accompanying criteria, were dated and required revising and it was suggested that the Council should set a threshold of £5,000 per annum below which specific Service Level Agreements would not apply. It would not make any difference to those national organisations which had financial resources more readily available, and for the smaller organisations the Council was not seeing that much return for its investment given the amount of time taken to fulfil all the Council's requirements for an Agreement.
10. It was agreed that simpler, clearly defined criteria such as production of an annual report citing the relevance and value for money from the funding provided by the Council would suffice for the smaller awards. It was felt that the Council should be making it as easy as possible for good organisations to receive Grant Aid funding from the Council and the Panel noted that Uttlesford District Council adopted a similar approach.
11. It was therefore agreed that the Service Level Agreements in their current form be terminated on 31 March 2016 and that from 1 April 2016, Service Level Agreements only be provided for those Voluntary Groups receiving £5,000 or more per annum. It was also agreed that the criteria for future Funding Agreements be revised by Officers to take account of local factors and that Groups in receipt of Grant Aid Funding continue to be determined by the Leisure and Community Services Portfolio Holder, regardless of whether a Service Level Agreement was required or not.

Presentation from Voluntary Action Epping Forest

12. As agreed at the scoping meeting, J Foile Chief Officer at VAEF was invited to give a presentation to the Panel, in order for members to gain a better understanding VAEF's operation. The Panel was advised that 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 and 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.
13. J Foile highlighted that VAEF worked with many agencies and received referrals from them. For example, referrals for the Handyman Service were received from the District Council. The services provided by VAEF were advertised where possible, including Doctor Surgeries and Dentists etc., but residents would also learn about them from their neighbours by word of mouth. VAEF was also independent from the statutory bodies, which could also help in reaching out to some people.
14. She also informed the Panel of the current key priorities for VAEF, which included: recruiting more volunteers; supporting more people with support needs themselves into becoming volunteers; enabling people to live in their own homes for longer and combating loneliness and isolation as people live longer; and partnership working and engaging with the thematic groups which emerged from the Local Strategic Partnership. VAEF was also looking to increase remote volunteering, for example from people with conditions such as Multiple Sclerosis who could make phone calls to people in an effort to reduce loneliness.
15. Following the presentation, and in response to questions from the Panel, J Foile stated that VAEF covered the whole District but some services could only be used by the elderly or disabled. The Befriending Service was currently only offered in three areas due to a lack of funding.

16. The Panel was also advised that VAEF were keen to establish a Community Hub, which could potentially be located anywhere in the District, but one of the market towns would probably be the best location. Access to the Hub by residents would be a key consideration when deciding where to locate it. A Community Hub would enable VAEF to set up a 'one-stop shop' for the whole District, and the building could be shared with other organisations. VAEF was always on the look-out for further funding, from the National Lottery and other funding bodies.
17. Following the presentation, Members were asked to consider the current funding arrangements for VAEF and make recommendations with regard to funding from 2016/17 onwards. It was agreed that 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. It was agreed that a series of targets would help with performance.
18. Although funding continuity for VAEF was important, it was equally important not to enter into a long term agreement at this stage, so that effective service monitoring could take place.

Presentation by Citizens Advice Bureau

19. On October 29th 2015, 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. This was regarding the services and activities of the CAB in Epping Forest.
20. It was explained that CAB clients generally experienced complicated problems and that 73% of clients were below the average income threshold. However following consultation with the CAB, 2 out of 3 clients had their problems solved. R Poulter provided a series of statistics related to the CAB provision, including;
 - 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.
 - A saving of £96,000 had been made in reducing homelessness by the CAB.
 - Epping Forest CAB had 56 volunteers and had recently recruited an extra 6 volunteers.
 - The Epping Forest CAB had provided advice to 2,497 people in 2014/15.
 - 33% of enquiries to the Epping Forest CAB concerned benefits and tax credits.
 - Over 25% of CAB clients had a disability or long term health problem.
 - 4 in 5 CAB clients felt less stressed after receiving their advice.
 - 2 in 3 CAB clients had their debt problem solved.
21. J Woods spoke next about the finances of the CAB and stated that 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.
22. It was explained that CAB branches provided face to face contact, which was preferred by 92% of the CAB's clients. R Poulter advised that the CAB was planning to move into new

offices within Loughton Library and a new site in Hemnall Street, Epping and confirmed that the CAB would be providing an outreach service at Limes Farm, Waltham Abbey and Abridge. They were also working with GPs and they had plans to use Ongar Library at some stage.

23. The CAB was also providing the services of two debt advisors that were additionally funded through the Council's Housing Revenue Account to the sum of £42,000 and it was planned to continue this service for a further year. These advisors were playing a crucial part in offsetting the potential impact from welfare budget cuts, helping to reduce homelessness. A close working relationship had been established between Housing officers and the CAB and they had quarterly meetings together.
24. At its penultimate meeting, the Panel discussed the details of the SLA with CAB for the amount of £113,840 and it was agreed that the same target setting and closer performance management should be applied, as with VAEF.

Conclusion

25. The Panel was 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.

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 except 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

The Contact Officer for the Grantee will be:

Name

Job Title

Address

Phone Number

Email

The Grantee will:

- 5.2 Provide EFDC with 2 copies of its Annual Report and audited accounts no later than 6 months after the AGM:
- 5.3 Provide EFDC with copies of the Agenda, Reports and Minutes of all General Meetings and of Business Plans as and when published or revised
- 5.4 Supply EFDC with a copy of estimated income and expenditure in advance of each financial year
- 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 acknowledgement of EFDC support on all letterheads, annual reports, newsletters and relevant publicity material.

6. REVIEW/TERMINATION OF AGREEMENT

- 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 the operation of this Agreement, which may lead to it being amended by mutual consent.
- 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
Epping Forest District Council:**

**Signed on behalf of
Grantee:**

**Portfolio Holder for
Leisure & Community Wellbeing**

Position:

Dated:

Dated:

SCHEDULE 1

Objectives:

- Xxx
- Xxx
- Xxx
- Xxx
- Xxx

SCHEDULE 2

Payment timetable:

Period:	Payable by:	Amount

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GRANT AID

MONITORING & EVALUATION FORM

All questions relate to your organisation's award for the _____ year.

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.

A List all the individual items or activities that your grant was spent on	B List the total amount you spent on each item	C List the total amount you spent on activities
Total amount spent:		

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.

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

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