

Request by Member for Scrutiny Review



Please complete the form below to request consideration of your issue by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Proposers Name: LYNDSAY SWAN	Date of Request August 2014
Supporting Councillors (if any): COUNCILLOR HELEN KANE	
Summary of Issue you wish to be scrutinised: A review of the Council's Grant Aid Scheme for Sports, Arts, Leisure and Community Groups in terms of the overall policy/guidance and procedures for Major Grants and Service Level Agreements including those for the determination of applications, and those for the pre and post determination stages (as requested by Councillor Syd Stavrou, on behalf of the Cabinet, at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 1 July 2014).	
NOTE: ENTRIES BELOW RELATE TO ISSUE CATEGORIES OF THE PICK PROCESS. PLEASE REFER TO THE EXPLANATORY NOTES TO THIS FORM FOR FURTHER INFORMATION	
Public Interest Justification: The voluntary and community sector is vital to the prosperity and well-being of the Epping Forest District. It has a long tradition of providing services directly, and in partnership with the Council, to the community and to specific client groups. It has built a reputation for diversity and innovation. The Council wishes to maintain its respect for the independence of voluntary and community organisations whilst providing opportunities for increasing their role and scope. The review will increase the knowledge and understanding of Panel Members regarding the 'Third Sector' and the Members can, in turn, impart that to other Councillors and residents. The review will also provide assurances that the policies and practices of the Grant Aid Scheme continue to meet local needs to an acceptable standard.	
Impact on the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area: The voluntary and community sector makes a valuable contribution to the economic and social well-being of the District. Funding approved under the Scheme tends to enhance equality and diversity as many of the applicant groups and their clients suffer the effects of being socially excluded or disadvantaged. The Scheme's aims are in common with those of the Groups receiving support and, indeed, the Council's wider objectives in terms of finance	

and value for money, culture and heritage, a healthy lifestyle and support to younger and older people. Locally the Council has a long history of supporting, working and consulting with individual voluntary groups and VAEF the 'umbrella' body for the voluntary sector in the District. The review will provide an opportunity to ensure that the strategic and operational linkages between the voluntary and community sector, the Council and other partner bodies are strengthened further.

The sector plays key roles as follows:

- Building 'social capital' by promoting self-organised communities and by encouraging volunteering and active citizenship;
- Providing services to local people and to particular groups in the community, thereby meeting social and individual needs;
- Advocacy on behalf of communities;
- Contributing expertise on policy formulation through dialogue with the Council and the wider statutory sector;
- Providing employment and income, thereby contributing to economic output; and,
- Delivering public services and offering greater customer choice.

Council Performance in this area (if known: Red, Amber, Green):

Green

Keep in Context (are other reviews taking place in this area?)

There is an internal review of the Scheme taking place at present which has already identified a number of areas for potential enhancement. Indeed, the officers responsible for the Scheme monitor it and other similar schemes, both those of other local authorities and a variety of funding bodies such as the National Lottery, on an ongoing basis to identify areas of 'good practice'. However, it is always good to have the perspective from those 'outside' the operation of the Scheme, and any comments and suggestions they make can be used to indicate where further improvements might be made.

Since the recent Corporate restructure the new Communities Directorate is now responsible for the Grant Aid Scheme. There are plans in place to extend the ISO and Customer Service Excellence accreditations held by the former Housing Directorate to all parts of the new Communities Directorate by 2016.

Office Use:

Pick score:

Considered By OSCC: