

Report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 18th April 2017

**Select Committee: Communities
(Chair - Cllr Y. Knight)**

Subject: Co-option of Youth Council Representative to the Communities Select Committee

Officer contact for further information: Alan Hall – Director of Communities (01992 564004)

Committee Secretary: Adrian Hendry



Recommendation:

That a recommendation be made to the Council that:

- (1) A representative of the Epping Forest Youth Council be appointed as a non-voting co-optee to the Communities Select Committee from the 2017/18 Municipal Year; and**
- (2) That the representative be either one person or rotating representatives, as agreed by the Youth Council.**

Report:

1. As requested by the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee, at our meeting held on 14th March 2017 we received a presentation from four members of the Epping Forest Youth Council on the use of the Council's District Development Fund (DDF) funding of £8,000 for projects in the current year and, subject to our agreement, their proposed use of the allocated £5,000 DDF funding for next year (2017/18). They also gave a very informative and inspirational presentation on the operation and work of the Youth Council generally.

2. We were very impressed with the range of projects that the previous Youth Council cohort had undertaken over the past year, and were pleased to learn that the Youth Council had been successful in securing additional external funding from a range of organisations during the year, to supplement the Council's funding.

3. In particular, we heard about the highly successful and commended MiLife Project, which was a project initiated in response to the issue of young people's mental health being ranked as the most important issue currently facing young people at last year's Epping Forest Youth Conference. The MiLife Project is a project devised by the Youth Council, in partnership with the Red Balloon Family, to deliver an interactive, thought-provoking and supportive session in all secondary schools in the District, highlighting the issues facing young people with mental health issues and how they can access help and support.

4. We also heard about the ideas for projects that the new Youth Council cohort has for the forthcoming year, including the digitalisation of the MiLife Project to extend its reach,

through a web-based project, to a much larger audience (at little additional cost), and a number of projects to highlight the issues facing young people in relation to alcohol and substance misuse.

5. We were so impressed with the Youth Council's presentation, and how the youth councillors presented themselves and answered questions at the meeting, that we agreed that we would like to invite a representative of the Youth Council to be co-opted to attend every Select Committee meeting from the 2017/18 Municipal Year. This possibility was briefly discussed with the youth councillors attending the meeting, whose response was that they thought this would be very much welcomed by the Youth Council, and that they would be happy to consider whether this should be one youth councillor co-opted for all the meetings in a Municipal Year or different youth councillors attending each meeting.

6. Our view is that we see this proposed co-option resulting in a "win-win" situation. We feel that the Select Committee would benefit from having the views of a young person at each of our meetings and, indeed, potentially suggesting issues for discussion – and we feel that the youth councillor(s) who attend our meetings would benefit from experiencing and being involved with a formal Committee of local government.

7. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be aware that we already have one co-opted member of our Select Committee, who is Wyn Marshall, the Chair of the Epping Forest Tenants and Leaseholders Federation, who attends every meeting.

8. We therefore hope that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is able to agree to our proposal that a representative of the Epping Forest Youth Council be co-opted to the Communities Select Committee from the 2017/18 Municipal Year. This could either be one person or rotating representatives, as agreed by the Youth Council.

9. We understand that the appointment of non-voting co-opted members to Select Committee requires the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to make a specific recommendation to the Council and we therefore recommend this accordingly.