

Report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 17 April 2018

Subject: Epping Forest Youth Council

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Committee Secretary: A. Hendry (01992 564246)



Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- 1) That the Communities Select Committee recommends a proposal to Overview and Scrutiny Committee to allocate a DDF sum of £5,000 to the Youth Council for projects during 2018/19.
- 2) That the Communities Select Committee recommends a proposal to Overview and Scrutiny Committee to allocate a DDF sum of £3,000 to the Youth Council for the MiLife project during 2018/19.
- 3) That the Communities Select Committee recommends that the Youth Council makes an annual presentation to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Report:

Background:

1. One of the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Review of Youth Engagement back in 2016 was for the Epping Forest Youth Council, to deliver a presentation to Members twice a year on the activities and achievements of the group and potential plans for the next 12 months. Since this recommendation was made the Youth Council has been giving a couple of presentation a year to the Communities Select Committee on their ongoing work programme, projects and successes.

2. At the last Communities Select Committee meeting on 13 March 2018 they gave an end of year presentation to the Committee asking for an £8,000 allocation from the DDF and requesting that the number of presentations be reduced from two to one per annum.

The Youth Council

3. Youth Councillors are elected for a term of office of two years and depending on their age at the end of this period, can be re-elected for a further term. Authentic elections take place in local secondary schools, under formal electoral conditions and include printed ballot papers and a secret ballot process with staff from the Council's Democratic Services Team leading on this work.

4. The Youth Council has a Continuing Services Budget of £12,000 per annum, which is used to cover all travel, training and education expenses, but projects and events need to be funded through external funding bids or DDF.

Project work

5. The further recommendation of the Youth Engagement Task and Finish review in 2016 was to enable Epping Forest Youth Council to apply for £8000 project funding in any one year, to be agreed via the Communities Select Committee.

6. Over the past 2 years Epping Forest Youth Council has delivered a number of high impact projects. These include:

- MiLife: An emotional health and wellbeing project, which aims to promote positive mental health, remove the stigma surrounding mental health and give young people the tools to support themselves and their peers. This successful project has been delivered to over 6000 young people to date, via a workshop experience and using real life scenarios of issues facing our young people. Members of the Community Select Committee will be receiving a separate report on the MiLife report on 13th March 2018
- 'Don't Open the Gate' – This is a drugs awareness project, based on the concerns facing young people within the local community. The Youth Councillors carried out research online regarding this subject and also spoke to their peers. Drug taking and it's impact was of real concern within the school community and the impact of drug taking – such as the N20 canisters impacted on the local community. This led to a clean-up campaign where over 500 of the silver canisters were cleaned up from sites within the district. As a result the Youth Councillors designed and developed a poster and bus campaign highlighting the dangers of taking drugs to young people. Additionally an anonymous on-line survey has been developed to ask young people about their awareness and of any issues they are conscious of. To date approximately 3000 young people have completed the survey.

7. Other EFYC projects over the review year have included:

- Youth Volunteering
- Community Clean up
- The Epping Youth Market
- NELFT Volunteers
- The Essex Records Office Listening Bench
- School Dementia Awareness training
- Supporting Inter-generational schemes such as the Senior Safety Days

Communities Select Committee's Response

8. At their 13 March 2018 meeting the Communities Select Committee received the Youth Council presentation and heartily endorsed the Youth Council's request for an extra £8,000 for 2018/19 from the District Development Fund. This was broken down to £5,000 for various projects during the year and £3,000 specifically for the successful MiLife initiative, focusing on positive mental health and emotional wellbeing for children and young people in the district (see paragraph 6).

9. The Committee considered the Youth Council's request to reduce the number of presentations they would give to just one a year, to which the Committee was sympathetic, however a counter proposal was made that in reducing the presentation to once a year they should give it to the main Overview and Scrutiny Committee so that it would be webcast and their work would be available to many more people, such as pupils, teachers and parents, who could be informed about it so they could watch to get an insight as to what the Youth Council did. This was not possible if the presentation was only given to the Communities Select Committee, which was not webcast. Youth Councillors present at the meeting were in full agreement with this.

Conclusion

10. The Select Committee resolved that the request for £8,000 DDF allocation be agreed and so recommended to the O&S Committee; and also to recommend that in future years the Youth Council should give a yearly presentation to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in order that it could be webcast.

Reason for decision:

In order to allow Epping Forest Youth Council to focus their time on project work a presentation once a year would be sufficient. However, Epping Forest Youth Council would be happy to come along to talk about specific projects and actions as required.

Project funding would allow Epping Forest Youth Council to drive forward peer led projects and continue the MiLife scheme across the district.

Options considered and rejected:

N/A

Consultation undertaken:

N/A

Service review:

Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Review of Youth Engagement.

Resource implications:

Personnel:

Officers from the Council's Community, Health and Wellbeing Team organise, manage and facilitate the Epping Forest Youth Council and liaise with partner agencies that may wish to become involved.

Financial resources:

£5000	- Epping Forest District Council DDF
£2100	- ECC Epping Forest Youth Strategy
£2550	- Jack Petchey Funding
£300	- Think Big O2
£750	- Safer Community Partnership

Land: N/A

Community Plan/BVPP reference:

Corporate Plan Objective: 1.1.2 – Promote mental health and emotional wellbeing

Relevant statutory powers: N/A

Background papers: N/A

Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications: N/A

Key Decision reference: (if required)

N/A