

COUNCIL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Local Councillor Shadowing Programme 12 November 2009

Report of Head of Democratic Services

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report provides further information to assist the Committee in taking its final decision regarding the request from 'The Youth of Today' to participate in the Local Councillor Shadowing Programme.

This report is public

RECOMMENDATION

That Council Business Committee consider whether or not the responses and new information from The Youth of Today presented in this report are satisfactory before approving its in principle decision that the Council participate in the Local Councillor Shadowing Programme.

(1) Background

At its meeting on 3 September 2009, the Committee considered a report accompanying a request which had been received from 'The Youth of Today', a consortium of leading youth organisations including the British Youth Council. The request explained that the consortium is working to increase the quality, quantity and diversity of opportunities for young people as leaders of change in their communities.

The initiative includes the Local Councillor Shadowing Programme, which was explained in the covering letter attached to the report (attached again for information at Appendix A).

The Committee raised a number of queries whilst considering the report and resolved:-

"That the Council's participation in 'The Youth of Today' Local Councillor Shadowing Programme be approved, in principle, subject to further information and satisfactory responses to the queries raised."

(2) Queries and responses

The queries raised were:-

- (a) ***Who selects/how are the young people selected for the programme? Will they be willing volunteers or young people who are told to go on the programme?***

The Youth of Today has now explained that the selection of young people will be done by the Council itself and sent a full explanation of what is expected (attached at Appendix B).

This is a factor which the Committee was not aware of when it made its in principle decision for Council to participate in the scheme at the September meeting. It would create resource implications for the Council in terms of officer time, for example approaching schools and promoting the programme to local youth organisations to find suitable young people. This is discussed further in the financial implications.

(b) Participating Councillors will have to undergo a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check. Is the £120 bursary provided with each young person intended to cover the cost of CRB checking the Councillor?

The Youth of Today has confirmed that there will be no additional funding to cover the cost of CRB checking Councillors taking part. The cost of a CRB check is currently £36 for an enhanced check and £26 for a standard check. An enhanced check would be required for this activity in line with the Council's policy and the Youth of Today's recommendation (see below).

(c) If a Councillor who has already been satisfactorily CRB checked wants to take part (because s/he is a teacher, for example) do they have to be CRB checked again for the Programme?

Regarding CRB checks, The Youth of Today stated that it will accept a CRB check that has been carried out in the last two years however they have emphasised that these must be approved by the Council's safeguarding officers in accordance with the Council's policy. "If the Council is satisfied that pre-existing CRBs can be used in a Councillor's work for the council then that is fine, otherwise they will require a new one. Standard level CRBs are accepted but we do recommend enhanced." It is not the policy of the Council to accept CRB checks that have been undertaken on behalf of other organisations (such as a school) and Members are advised, therefore, that a new, enhanced level check would be required for any Councillor choosing to participate in the scheme.

(3) Conclusion

The Committee is requested to consider whether or not the responses and further information from The Youth of Today presented in this report are satisfactory before approving its in principle decision to participate in the Programme.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

None arising from this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Any expenses incurred by the young person on food and travel expenses would be covered by the bursary of £120 which will be paid at the end of the scheme. The costs of the CRB checks for Members would be met from the Member Training budget.

The issue of officer input to seeking suitable young people to participate in the programme is more problematic. There is currently no capacity within the Children and Young People Team in the Council's Corporate Strategy service to take on this new area of work. If

members wished to participate in the shadowing programme it would therefore be necessary to identify resources and how it could be funded.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Original letter from Youth of Today attached at Appendix A
Agenda and Minutes of Council Business Committee meeting held on 3 September 2009.

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