

Surrey Heath Borough Council
Executive
5th December 2023

Youth Council Options

Portfolio Holder:	Housing and Inclusion Cllr Lisa Finan-Cooke
Strategic Director/Head of Service	Sally Kipping – Head of HR, Performance & Communications
Report Author:	Renée France – Community Development Manager
PH Sign off:	Yes
Key Decision:	No
Wards Affected:	All

Summary and purpose

Following the resolution of the Executive on 17 October 2023 (please see Annex 1 attached for the full resolution), to continue to explore options for the continuation of the Youth Council.

Recommendation

The Executive is advised to RESOLVE that:

- i) officers move forward with work to develop an agreement with the identified provider to reestablish Surrey Heath Youth Council.
- ii) bring a progress report back to the Executive at the conclusion of the 2023/24 academic year, in Summer 2024, including proposals regarding future funding.

1. Background and Supporting Information

- 1.1 The Youth Council for Surrey Heath Borough Council has previously been run by an external supplier (Eikon) however they have not been able to continue with this service in the first part of the 2023-2024 academic year. The Executive meeting of 17th October 2023 agreed to continue to explore options to identify a potential external supplier to support the Youth Council, together with funding options.
(Please see Annexe 1)

1.2 This paper confirms that a potential appropriate provider has been identified. Establishing criteria for the Youth Council supplier

1.3 It is essential that the Youth Council is a safe and positive experience for the participants. Therefore, the following criteria for any future supplier has been developed:

Essential	Desirable
Significant experience in setting up/creating youth groups	Can provide pastoral support
Experts in safeguarding and child protection with appropriate policies and working practices	Can support the development of young people (11 – 18 years old)
Inclusive and secular	Are linked into local schools (or with the ability to partnership with schools)
Support the recruitment of younger people to sit on the Youth Council	
Manage the day-to-day administration and running of the Youth Council including enquiries from young people and their parents or guardians	
Resolve any issues and sign post young people to additional support as needed	
Arrange meetings and facilitate them so that younger people genuinely contribute to providing a voice into the Council and have a say in issues that affect them	
Take part in regular contract reviews and provide statistical information to the Council about the operation of the Youth Council	

1.4 Were a suitable supplier to be identified, the Council would be able to support the Youth Council by:

- Enabling the Youth Council to have use of the Council Chamber or other meeting space within Surrey Heath House
- Allowing them to address full Council once a year
- Allowing the Youth Council to ask questions at full Council

- Having defined levels of input/engagement with some senior Members and Officers during the year

2. Funding and Resourcing

- 2.1 Temporary funding has been identified from the UK Prosperity Fund amounting to £15,000 for the 2023 – 2024 financial year only, this funding would be allocated under Year 2, project 3 ‘funding for impactful social action projects to develop social and human capital in local places. The Council would need to work in partnership with the provider to identify a more long-term source of funding to ensure stability and sustainability.

3. Supplier Options

- 3.1 Officers have identified a potential supplier with experience in youth voice work and the capacity to support regular in-person meetings as well as the other essential criteria outlined above.
- 3.2 Discussions have progressed beyond the initial stage and both the provider and officers are in a position to move to developing an agreement for the establishment of the Youth Council, and a meeting between the provider and the Chair and Co-Chair of the previous Youth Council has been facilitated.

4. Proposal and Alternative Options

- 4.1 The Executive has the option to:
- i. move forward with the work to develop an agreement with the identified provider to re-establish the Surrey Heath Youth Council
 - ii. not move forward with the work to develop an agreement with the identified provider to re-establish the Surrey Heath Youth Council

5. Contribution to the Council’s Five-Year Strategy

- 5.1 Health and Quality of Life:

5.1.1 Nurturing a strong sense of community across the whole borough lies at the core of the services that the Council provides to its residents fostering a sense of respect and consideration.

5.1.2 We will take a positive approach to supporting all sectors of our community, including those who are most vulnerable. We will promote active and healthy lives for all and a rich programme of cultural and community events.

- 5.2 Responsive Council:

5.2.1 Surrey Heath Borough Council engages meaningfully with our community on all key policies.

5.2.2 We provide accessible services for all to meet the needs of the diverse communities we serve.

6. Resource Implications

6.1 There will be resourcing considerations which are yet to be finalised as discussions are at an early stage with the identified provider (please see resourcing section).

7. Section 151 Officer Comments:

7.1 The Council is facing a difficult budget setting position and any decision to provide additional budget should be considered in light of this financial position.

7.2 Ongoing base budget allocation to support this will be either from an approved growth bid or by repurposing existing budgets under the Council's virement policy.

7.3 Engagement of a supplier should be in accordance with the Council's procurement regulations.

8. Legal and Governance Issues

8.1 No matters arising.

9. Monitoring Officer Comments

9.1 The development of a Youth Council may lead to changes to the Constitution, depending on the outcome of discussions from the Governance Working Group.

10. Other Considerations and Impacts

Environment and Climate Change

10.1 No matters arising.

Equalities and Human Rights

10.2 There is a strong need for the council to ensure that diverse communities across the borough are supported to engage with and feed in to Council processes. The re-establishment of the Surrey Heath Youth Council will provide a way for the Council to ensure that the voices of young people in the borough are heard and that young people are given the opportunity to be involved in Council processes and to provide feedback where appropriate.

- 10.3 Consideration will need to be given to how young people are recruited for the Youth Council by the provider to ensure representation for diverse communities and equity of access.

Risk Management

- 10.4 The risks associated with working with young people under the age of 18 can be mitigated by the Council working with an organisation experienced in this field and with the appropriate policies and operational working practices to safeguard the welfare of all those taking part.

Community Engagement

- 10.5 The proposals set out in this paper would enable greater engagement with young people, who are a key part of the local community but have historically had less of a voice in the work of the Council and therefore in shaping priorities and policies that will impact on their future lives.

Annexes

Annex 1 Resolution of the Executive 17 October 2023

Annex 1: Resolution of the Executive 17 October 2023

The Executive RESOLVED that:

- (i) Officers continue to explore options to identify a potential external supplier to support the Youth Council together with funding options and report further progress back to the December Executive Meeting; and
- (ii) The establishment of the Young Mayor be referred to the Governance Working Group for further consideration after the December Executive Meeting, once the outcome to (i) is known.