

Classification: Public

Key Decision: No

Gravesham Borough Council

Report to: Community & Leisure Cabinet Committee

Date: 26 September 12019

Reporting officer: Service Manager (Communities)
Committee & Scrutiny Assistant

Subject: The Gravesham Youth Democracy Scheme 2020

Purpose and summary of report:

Members are asked to consider and comment on the:

- Gravesham Youth Democracy Scheme 2020 which will run in conjunction with the Local Councillor Shadowing Award
- The proposed draft schedule attached at Appendix Two

Recommendations:

1. The Committee are requested to endorse the Council's participation in the Gravesham Youth Democracy Scheme run in conjunction with the Local Councillor Shadowing Award

1. Background

- 1.1 A rolling annual programme will be created under the name of the 'Gravesham Youth Democracy Scheme' and run in conjunction with the Local Councillor Shadowing Award. The scheme is being created to increase Gravesham's involvement with youth in the Borough and the award provides an accreditation that the participants can use for their CVs/UCAS applications.
- 1.2 The Local Councillor Shadowing Award was created by the British Youth Council (BYC) to recognise young people's understanding and involvement in local democracy
- 1.3 Through the creation of the programme it is hoped that participants will gain knowledge and skills which will facilitate their involvement in the democratic process and help them influence decision making. It also provides a unique opportunity for young people to engage with councillors face to face.
- 1.4 It is also expected that the programme will be equally rewarding for councillors by exposing them to the issues faced by young people coupled with their hopes and aspirations. The programme also gives councillors the chance to work with young people from a range of backgrounds to help them develop their talents and skills.

2. Details of the Programme

- 2.1 The scheme is planned to take place between January 2020 – March 2020
- 2.2 The target audience is young people aged 16-18. Through previous similar schemes we have seen that this is the age group most suited to these types of programmes. The group for 2019-2020 will consist of a group of 18 students.
- 2.3 It is anticipated that a number of Councillors from different political groups will take part in the programme so that the participants have a varied political outlook at each meeting. The main Councillors involved will also be invited to attend the workshop day and will be encouraged to attend a planned Parliament trip and talk with the Mayor.
- 2.4 The participants can achieve accreditation by providing evidence of their involvement in local democracy for a total of 10 hours by completing a logbook. A draft schedule of the proposed activities is attached at Appendix Two.
- 2.5 The logbook encourages participants to write down their experiences detailing what activities they did, how long they lasted for and what they learnt. The logbook also has other questions which the participants must answer from sources such as council information and questions about themselves. A copy of the logbook is attached at Appendix Three; page 11 in the logbook shows an example of a completed programme sheet.
- 2.6 Upon completion, the logbooks are then submitted to the British Youth Council for moderation and in turn submitted to the examination board (ASDAN).
- 2.7 Once submitted, the BYC take roughly one week to process the logbooks and then they are forwarded onto ASDAN. They advise that it takes up to one month for the certificates to arrive at the BYC; a 5-6 week return period is anticipated
- 2.8 For meetings at the Civic Centre participants will be expected to arrange their own transportation however for those that are unable to afford the cost or do not have the means to travel, the Council will reimburse the cost of a bus ticket or taxi fare.

3. Tour of the Houses of Parliament

- 3.1 A tour in the Houses of Parliament will be arranged as a conclusion to the programme. All of the participants and Councillors involved in the Scheme will be invited, although due to the limits on group size only four will be able to attend. Travel to this will be by train.
- 3.2 The tour is called the 'Story of Parliament' Tour and it is free of charge for schools and children of school age (6-18).
- 3.3 An application has been submitted to the Education Tours department and five possible dates have been requested; 09, 10, 11, 16 and 17 March 2020. These are normal school days so it will require permission from their schools and parents for a trip.
- 3.4 The Education Tours department will be reviewing all applications after the closing date on Monday 16 September 2019. All applications are randomised after the closing date and allocation normally takes between 2-4 weeks. The team will try and allocate as close to the preferences specified as possible depending on availability.

- 3.5 Contact has already been made with Adam Holloway MP who has expressed an interest in attending the tour if he is available on the day. In the unlikely event that an Education Tour place is not offered then it is hoped that Adam Holloway will be willing to organise a 'Democratic Access Tour'.
- 3.6 At the request of the Portfolio Holder, the Education Department has been contacted to see if subsidised lunches can be purchased in Parliament. If not, alternative options will be explored.

4. Advertisement of the Programme

- 4.1 Following consultation with the Senior Youth Work Manager based at the Gr@nd it was agreed that an advertisement programme for the scheme would be created. The scheme will also be advertised through the Council's website and social media accounts.
- 4.2 The Senior Youth Work Manager advised that she will attend a Head Teachers meeting to inform them of the proposed scheme and its associated benefits. The Senior Youth Work Manager will also make them aware of the proposed Houses of Parliament Trip in early March.
- 4.3 The eight secondary schools and college that will be included in the scheme are:
 - Gravesend Grammar School
 - Mayfield Grammar School
 - Meopham Secondary School
 - Northfleet School for Girls
 - Northfleet Technology College
 - St John's Secondary School
 - St George's Secondary School
 - Thamesview Secondary School
 - North Kent College (Gravesend)

5. Selection of Participants

- 5.1 The proposed recruitment process entails utilising the Senior Youth Work Manager's youth network; she will contact students from Gravesham's eight listed secondary schools and college with an email detailing the Scheme and the work they would need to carry out as well as what it can provide for them (it is a fully recognised accredited award and would stand out on UCAS applications).
- 5.2 The Senior Youth Work Manager will then respond to any interested young people with an emailed application form, attached at appendix four, asking them to fill out their contact details as well as answer a short question on why they feel they should be selected for the scheme.
- 5.3 The deadline for responses will be Friday, 29 November 2019 at 5pm.

- 5.4 Applications will be reviewed by the Senior Youth Work Manager and the two best applicants from each school will be chosen and emailed to inform them of their success on Monday, 09 December 2019.
- 5.5 The selected young people must be willing to complete the Scheme in its entirety and be committed to attending the evening meetings.

6. Councillor Involvement

- 6.1 It is hoped that once the Committee has been fully briefed on this scheme, all ten Committee Members will commit to signing up to it
- 6.2 Following the meeting, an email will be sent out to all Councillors advising them of the scheme and asking them to consider taking part; at least five Councillors' will be needed to move the scheme forward with a maximum of eighteen Councillors
- 6.3 A meeting will be held with the Councillors taking part in December/ January to further advise them on the process, inform them of their role in the Scheme, and show them the logbook that each participant will be completing and answer any general questions. They will also be briefed on the planned induction session between them and the participants.

7. Post Programme and Certificates

- 7.1 To ensure that the programme is as sustainable as possible, participants will be encouraged to pursue voluntary work in their local community and remain involved in local democracy such as through Gravesham's Youth Council.
- 7.2 It is planned that the certificates of completion will be received in May 2020 in time for them to be awarded to all participants at the Annual Council meeting. During the awards ceremony, all of the participants will be invited to the stage for a presentation of certificates. Further promotion on the success of the scheme will then be possible.

8. Financial Considerations

- 8.1 A budget of £1500 has been assigned to the scheme which will cover the cost of logbook submissions, travel and food expenses

9. Risk Management

- 9.1 The BYC advise that there is not a mandatory need for DBS checks and it is down to the discretion of the council. As the proposed scheme doesn't involve any periods where officers or members will be alone with participants there will be no DBS checks
- 9.2 The participants will be covered under the Council's public liability insurance policy.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 Anyone wishing to inspect background papers should, in the first place, be directed to Committee & Electoral Services who will make the necessary arrangements

IMPLICATIONS	APPENDIX 1
Legal	There are no legal implications.
Finance and Value for Money	There will be a minimal cost to the Programme which is laid out within the report but it will promote youth engagement in the Borough and portray Gravesham Borough Council as an inclusive forward thinking organisation.
Risk Assessment	The risks have been identified and explained in the report.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	<p><i>A data protection impact assessment (DPIA) should be carried out at the start of any major project involving the use of personal data or if you are making a significant change to an existing process.</i></p> <p>a. Does the project/change being recommended through this paper involve the processing of personal data or special category data or criminal offence data? A definition of each type of data can be found on the Information Commissioner’s Office website via the above links.</p> <p>b. If yes to question a, have you completed and attached a DPIA including Data Protection Officer advice? N/A</p> <p>c. If no to question b, please seek advice from your nominated DPIA assessor or the Information Governance Team at gdpr@medway.gov.uk. N/A</p>
Equality Impact Assessment	<p>a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community? If yes, please explain answer. N/A</p> <p>b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality? If yes, please explain answer. Yes - Children of all backgrounds, ethnicity and capability will be encouraged to volunteer for the Programme.</p> <p><i>In submitting this report, the Chief Officer doing so is confirming that they have given due regard to the equality impacts of the decision being considered, as noted in the table above</i></p>
Corporate Plan	None
Crime and Disorder	None
Digital and website implications	The Programme would be promoted on the website and social media.
Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults	The steps taken to ensure the safety of the children taking part has been covered in the report.