

18th December 2017

Agenda Item: 12

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, YOUTH, FAMILIES AND SOCIAL
WORK****STAFFING RESTRUCTURE OF THE OUTDOOR AND ENVIRONMENTAL
EDUCATION SERVICE****Purpose of the Report**

1. This report seeks approval to develop a revised staffing structure of the Outdoor Environment and Education Service (OEE).

Information and Advice

2. OEE provides high quality outdoor learning experiences for over 30,000 young people per year, through day and residential provision. It offers support to the Duke of Edinburgh Award for targeted groups and individuals, and provides advice, guidance and approval for educational off site visits for schools and Local Authority services.
3. In November 2016 Policy Committee approval was given to invest £130,000 over two years to enable the OEE service to become cost neutral to the Council, whilst, continuing to deliver an extensive offer of challenging educational activities for the children and young people of Nottinghamshire. This formed part of the Commercial Development Unit's (CDU) remit to explore potential income generation opportunities of the Council's services. These include the following:
 - increasing the occupancy rate at Hagg Farm and St Michael's residential centres and the Mill Adventure base
 - increasing the Service's market share of contracts outside of the County's schools at full cost recovery, which will generate a surplus to reinvest in Nottinghamshire
 - developing further sold services for groups and individuals including local camps, Forest School events, holiday club provision and DofE Award management due to licensing changes.
4. OEE's gross budget for 2017/18 is £1,249,500 of which £891,500 is earned income target and a Nottinghamshire County Council base budget of £358,000. The CDU investment (2017/18) of £69,000 and a further £61,000 in 2018/19 aims to increase income to offset the base budget costs by 2020. To assist in delivering these targets, changes to the OEE staff structure is required, which will consequently generate savings of up to £50,000 per annum on management and operational costs from 1st April 2018. This provides a further option to reinvest the saving to enhance the Council's offer of open access youth provision in Nottinghamshire.

5. These proposals provide an opportunity to restructure OEE to provide improved management oversight and to align visits advice to reflect the current landscape.
6. The specific changes and rationale include:
 - ***Alter the management and provision of Visits Advice to better reflect other local authorities' provision nationally.*** The national guidance for Visits Advice has significantly changed since the original structure was put in place. There was previously a need for specialist Outdoor Education Advisors (OEA) who developed and reviewed local guidance and strategy. More recently, the national Outdoor Education Advisors Panel (OEAP) has produced 'National Guidance for the Management of Outdoor Learning' which local authorities have been encouraged to adopt, as well as the EVOLVE system (software package for online guidance, monitoring and approvals). These two initiatives have significantly reduced the strategic and developmental role of the OEA. Historically the Local Authority has employed an assistant to the OEA (Visits Officer) as the system was paper based and required strategic input into policy. The service provision is now online through EVOLVE, and does not require the same level of resources. The proposed changes still however exceed employers' responsibilities as set out in the National Guidance section 3.1a *Employers' Requirements* (**Appendix 1**).
 - ***Establish full time managers at both residential centres (Hagg Farm and St Michael's).*** This would allow continuity by having a centre manager on each site providing management direction to deal with day to day tasks, supporting staff and customers, and ensuring appropriate safeguarding and the health and safety of children and vulnerable adults. The Team Manager role would oversee and manage day centre provision which requires less day to day operational input than the residential centres and is local to Nottinghamshire.
7. The Committee is asked to approve further work to develop and confirm a revised structure making the required identified savings and subject to the normal engagement and consultation with individual staff and their recognised trades unions.
8. The proposed change of structure will not alter the offer to schools or reduce the number, or frequency, of children and young people attending residential or day centre activities. The current and a possible proposed structure is included as **Appendices 2 and 3**. Appropriate early engagement has started with affected staff and relevant trade unions and has assisted in design of the proposed structure. Relevant trade unions will be formally consulted once approval from the Committee for these proposals has been received.

Other Options Considered

9. Closure of OEE provision whilst moving Visits Advice to the Council's Health and Safety team. This would save the entire budget, but there would be considerable costs through lease commitments/Lottery Funding payback and staff redundancy. The service is well regarded and used by over 75% of the Council's schools and academies so closure would potentially attract adverse publicity.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

10. These recommendations support the CDU business case agreed by Policy Committee in November 2016, and retains an efficient and robust management structure, whilst fulfilling employers' obligations regarding Visits Advice and without reducing the volume or quality of service delivery.

Statutory and Policy Implications

11. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Implications for Service Users

12. There would be no implications for service users as there would be no reduction in volume or quality of the service provided.

Financial Implications

13. There would be a proposed saving on staff costs of up to £50,000 from the current OEE budget (from 1st April 2018) which will be reinvested back into the wider Youth Service.

Crime and Disorder Implications

14. Through increased recognition of local communities about the positive impact young people can achieve there may be a high degree of tolerance given to them and therefore a reduction in the reporting of low level nuisance behaviour when young people gather together in open spaces.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That the development work to achieve the identified saving through a revised staffing structure of the Environmental & Outdoor Education Service is agreed.

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Constitutional Comments (SLB 04/12/17)

15. Children and Young People's Committee is the appropriate body to consider the content of this report.

Financial Comments (SAS 07/12/17)

16. The financial implications of the report are contained within paragraph 13 above.

HR Comments (GME 28/11/17)

17. Any reduction or change to the staffing structure will be undertaken in line with the agreed consultation and employment procedures of the Council. Employees and their representatives will be fully engaged in the process prior to any requirement for more formal consultation.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Commercial Development unit - report to Policy Committee on 16 November 2016.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

C1058