

## **YOUNG ESSEX ASSEMBLY**

### **1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report seeks Members' agreement to the District Council entering into a proposed partnership arrangement with the County Council on the above.

### **2 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 The District Council has now been approached by the County Council with a view to seeking continued support in connection with the work associated with the UK Youth Parliament. It seeks the District Council's agreement to enter into a partnership arrangement whereby the District Council continues to support this initiative.

### **3 DETAILED CONSIDERATIONS**

#### **Young Essex Assembly Proposals**

- 3.1 Following the success of the UK Youth Parliament in giving young people a voice in both local/national Government and the increasing drive for consultation with young people, the County Council is looking to work in partnership with District Councils in setting up an Assembly of democratically elected young people mandated to represent the voice of young Essex.
- 3.2 Young people wishing to stand as candidates will be voted, by their peers to go forward as a candidate for the elections. During the 12<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> of January, County-wide elections will take place with the young people of Essex asked to vote for their local candidates.
- 3.3 With the Assembly mirroring the Essex County Council, with 79 members from the 12 Districts, there will be many opportunities for the Members to contribute and work with both County and District Councils, school/youth Councils, bringing County and local issues to the attention of those involved.
- 3.4 Members of the UK Youth Parliament will be voted from within the Assembly to continue to take the County's issues to the national stage.

- 3.5 With such large undertaking, the County Council are seeking partners to help with the logistics of the counting process, both for the loan of ballot boxes and with the subsequent vote counting. The County also suggest that the Leader of the Council might as returning officer for the local press and publicity surrounding the announcement of the elected members. The County have produced a draft partnership agreement, a copy of which is attached as Appendix 1.

**Officer Comment**

- 3.6 In the past, the District Council has provided both limited financial and staffing support to help support the development of the UK Youth Parliament and the young representatives from Essex who have been successfully elected. The current proposal is a further development of that initiative and it is hoped will make a positive impact on increasing young peoples' awareness to local democracy issues.
- 3.7 This Council is also active locally in terms of promoting each year a citizenship debate between the four secondary schools hosted by the Chairman and attempting to raise awareness within schools around a variety of issues e.g. community safety, recycling, community strategy, etc.
- 3.8 Looking at the detail of the draft Partnership Agreement, it appears that the key impact on the Authority relates to staffing and in kind support, rather than financial support as such. Given the wider aspirations which it is hoped this initiative will create in terms of increasing awareness around local democracy, it is recommended that it should be supported.

**4 RISK IMPLICATIONS**

**4.1 Resource Risk**

The District Council's participation in this initiative involves minimum funding but does involve support in terms of Member and officer time plus some support in kind in terms of the provision of ballot boxes, etc. The Member and officer support will very much be focussed around the time of the elections.

**4.2 Reputation Risk**

Clearly, the Council may suffer adverse comments if it does not participate in such an initiative. At the same time, there are positive benefits in terms of the Council's reputation from active participation and involvement in such initiatives. This would be seen in a positive way in the context of the CPA.

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**4.3 Information Risk**

The only IT issue may relate to the provision of a telephone/copier but further details are being sought in connection with this.

**4.4 Regulatory Risk**

There is no statutory requirement to participate in this initiative.

**5 RECOMMENDATION**

**5.1 It is proposed that the Committee RESOLVES**

To support this initiative and enter in to a partnership agreement with Essex County Council as outlined in Appendix 1, subject to clarification around the IT/Office support required. (CE)

Paul Warren

Chief Executive

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**Background Papers**

Letter from Stu Meese, Young Essex Assembly Worker, Essex County Council dated 20<sup>th</sup> August.

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**YOUNG ESSEX ASSEMBLY  
DRAFT PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT**

**Essex County Council will**

Provide support from the outset to enable candidates from all sectors of the community to participate irrespective of race, creed and abilities

Distribute the ballot boxes and ensure their return

Collect the votes cast by SMS Text Messaging and collate for the District Councils by Thursday 22 January at the latest

Provide dedicated workers to support the YEA/MYP's alongside 12 Youth Action workers in the districts to support the members at a local level

Set a requirement for the members to work with their local District forums and youth Councils

Provide training and development for the young people involved and options for continued participation for those not elected

Ballot papers – prepare and distribute to the electoral officers

**Support Needed from the District Council**

Continue to contribute £100 for the support of the MYPs.

Provide a named contact from the District Council to liaise with YEA office

Support the process with interaction with the media and work actively towards generating local positive publicity

Provide an adult speaker from the District Council for the Hustings/Candidate selection day to assist the ECC Youth Action work 15/16/22/23 November.

Loan of ballot boxes during the election week of 12-17<sup>th</sup> January (and possibly booths where required).

Provide a count of local votes to District Council offices by schools, youth groups etc – 18<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> January

Provide a Returning Officer to announce the local results of the elections on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> January. We would like this to be the Leader of the District Council wherever possible. Co-ordinate the local media for the declarations.

Once elected, support your local members of the YEA with 2 hours office support per week (phone, fax, copier, PC etc, but not personnel)