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Agenda Item 3(e)

**DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**CABINET MEMBER FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**

**5 November 2019**

**Report of the Executive Director for Children’s Services**

**REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL NON SCHOOL BASED PROVISION FOR THE  
DUKE OF EDINBURGH’S AWARD**

**1. Purpose of Report**

To highlight the recent review and consultation process in regard to the existing Duke of Edinburgh’s Award (DofE) council led provision and to recommend an alternative strategy for supporting and delivering the Award scheme outside of schools.

**2. Information and Analysis**

The County Council’s support for the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award (Derbyshire) is administered by the Sports and Outdoor Education Services (SORE). Until April 2018 the service administered the county-wide award for DofE under licence from the central charity.

However, in 2018 the Charity created some major changes to the delivery process of the Award throughout the country, switching from geographically administered awards (i.e. Derbyshire County wide) operated by local authorities under licence, to a new system of directly licencing individual schools for the delivery of DofE award scheme.

At the same time as changing to the afore mentioned school-based licences, the DofE also informed the council that it would need to obtain a Derbyshire targeted licence to continue any work with existing voluntary or open award centres or continue its work with targeted groups of young people outside of any provision in schools.

The above changes fundamentally changed the cost benefit analysis of operating the Award scheme in Derbyshire. Though licence costs are approximately £2,500; because of the associated support and staffing costs to operate the infrastructure for a relatively small amount of young people the Council is now faced with high level costs for providing support services to the significantly reduced cohort of young people. The total cost of this is currently estimated at an annual budget figure of approximately £35,000 - £38,000 (see section 3 for further financial details).

As a result the Council has needed to review the award scheme changes by negotiating a current licence period of six months, with a renewal option to either extend this or to renew a full 12 month licence with DofE regional office subsequent to a review outcome. This timeframe has enabled the SORE Service to review the current situation and undertake a consultation process and impact analysis to inform long term decisions by the County Council regarding the sustainability of maintaining the current council led provision and targeted licence.

The consultation has now been completed and the service has collected information from all operating DofE groups and leaders, as well as obtaining submissions from a number of parents in regard to their concerns over the impact of any changes.

The overwhelming response to the consultation has indicated that award scheme leaders, young people and their parents / carers, would like to see a continuation of some form of non-schools based provision in Derbyshire. However, they identify a potential sustainability issue with the current provision and support for voluntary groups. The annual renewals and financial sustainability constraints for the Council is, they feel, inhibiting recruitment and the growth of voluntary groups; with the consensus of responses identifying that they would like to have a period of sustainable operation of at least 2-3 years to enable groups to recruit, deliver activities and follow participants through to completion of their awards.

These leader responses are reflected in our impact analysis of groups identifying less than 100 young people are currently undertaking the Award with voluntary or targeted groups. The analysis also identifies a small number of young people currently undertaking Awards who will not have achieved completion by 31 September 2019.

Indicated impact numbers are: Bronze – 10, Silver – 11, Gold – 17.

However, mitigating this impact approximately 12 of the Bronze and Silver participants could transfer back to school groups, as they attend a

school that holds a current direct licence. In addition to this the gold participants are able to transfer to DofE Direct to complete awards

In summary the impact investigation and analysis indicates a total estimated number that are directly affected if the current licence is not renewed in 2019/20 would be approximately 10 – 12 participants.

In conclusion the major changes to the national DofE Award appear to be directly impacting young people who either do not have access to directly licenced schools or for whom a school based award is not necessarily appropriate to meet their needs. In addition to this the current licence system and the need for ongoing financial reviews for non-statutory provision, due to the cost of the support provision and its impact on Council financial constraints, are also impacting voluntary and community led groups and currently is affecting the long term sustainability of developing opportunities for young people.

In view of the above factors it is considered that the current licence and model of council led provision for non-schools groups is not currently the best available model. It is recommended that a community development approach be adopted to support the existing voluntary centres to create a directly licensed provision, thereby creating a community based independently operating structure. This would achieve a more sustainable framework in which to develop long term opportunities for young people to access the Award.

### **3. Financial Considerations**

With effect from 1 April 2018 the DofE charity have directly licenced and charged schools for access to the award scheme, including Derbyshire secondary schools. This has in effect transferred any income from schools, used to offset council support costs, directly to the central award scheme.

Whilst this has increased central charity income from approx. £6,000 to approx. £48,000 annually. It has also had the effect of significantly reducing the 'economy of scale' for the existing council support costs which remain largely the same at approximately £32-35,000 per year.

During the last 12 months officers have undertaken significant investigation into attracting external funding for Award based work. Unfortunately it does appear that we have not been able to identify any funding bodies that will fund local authority costs for the delivery of existing services. This has created significant funding issues for the service.

The SORE Services are tasked with achieving the target of becoming financially self-sustaining as outlined to Cabinet within the Enterprising Council Strategy as presented by the Strategic Director – Commissioning, Communities and Policy (31 January 2019).

It is identified that changes undertaken by the Duke of Edinburgh's Award charity presents a significantly increased financial risk for the council going forward, with little apparent opportunity of creating a cost effective support structure outside of some form of corporate or charitable sponsorship agreement.

#### **4. Other Considerations**

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered – Legal and Human rights considerations, prevention of crime and disorder, equality of opportunity, health, environmental, transport and property considerations.

#### **5. Background Papers**

DofE CONSULTATION FEEDBACK & IMPACT ANALYSIS SUMMER 2019 forms appendix A of this report.

#### **6. Key Decision**

No.

#### **7. Call-in**

Is it required that the Call-in period be waived in respect of the decisions being proposed within this report? /No.

#### **8. Executive Director's Recommendation**

That the cabinet member for Childrens Services approves a decision not to maintain the current licence structure and authorises officers to work in partnership with voluntary and community groups for a period of six months (to April 2020) to investigate creating a more sustainable community led provision for young people in Derbyshire to access the DofE Award scheme.

**Jane Parfremment**  
**Executive Director for Children's Services**

## Appendix a

### **DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S AWARD (DERBYSHIRE CC)**

#### **CONSULTATION FEEDBACK & IMPACT ANALYSIS** **SUMMER 2019**

All of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) groups currently operate successfully under the current licence held by Derbyshire CC and group leaders are complimentary of the guidance and support offered by the current Council provision. Volunteer leaders are clearly extremely committed to the groups that currently provide DofE opportunities away from the school setting. This includes provision for young people with additional needs, out of education or in financial hardship; many of those whom it is recognised may benefit most from the Award.

There is increasing concern from some parents and leaders over availability of DofE in areas where local schools do not hold a Licence, where schools limit numbers or where programmes are prohibitively expensive. Currently the voluntary groups in these areas have enabled groups of young people who would otherwise be disenfranchised to access DofE provision.

Whilst some of the existing groups (both special schools and other organisations) will be able to directly licence, they have concerns over the cost, increased workload and lack of local support available if they take this option. DofE, however, have indicated they cannot directly licence voluntary centres or independent participants to continue with their programmes.

In summary, the overwhelming response to the county wide consultation has indicated that DofE leaders, young people and their parents / carers, would like to see a continuation of some form of open provision in Derbyshire.

The difficulty they identify is that annual extensions to the current situation are very limiting and the consensus is that they require a period of commitment to the provision of at least 2-3 years to enable groups to recruit, deliver activities and follow participants through to completion of their awards during a sustainable period. In the current situation, whilst leaders are fully committed to their participants, the licence uncertainty has led to an inability to recruit and develop the existing provision.

Whilst the review has been ongoing, council officers and volunteers have continued to support local groups to fulfil a programme that will enable those young people recruited in the last 12 months to complete their awards. They have also been working to ensure that any timeframe would also allow the option for special schools and uniformed organisations to consider all available options to either register directly with DofE or link into their own wider organisational licence (this exists for uniformed organisations like scouts and guides), thus minimising the potential impacts of a licence reduction for all groups, should this prove to be the eventual outcome of the review.

The Derbyshire licence expired on 30th September 2019 Leaders have worked hard to facilitate the completion of awards by as many young people as possible before the current licence ended.

It is not possible to determine whether some young people are still active with the Award if they are no longer attending groups. However, current indications predict that a relatively small group of young people will be affected as long as they have participated in the programme in recent months:

Group	Level of Award	Predicted number of participants	Details
Chesterfield Open Award Centre	Bronze	2	Young people not started their activities or missed an expedition
	Silver	4	Young people not started their activities or missed an expedition
	Gold	8-10	Various stages of completion, most now at university. Could transfer to DofE Direct.
South Derbyshire Open Centre	Bronze	4	2 not yet ready for expeditions, 2 not started other activities.
	Silver	4	Young people not started their activities or missed an expedition
	Gold	4	Not done expeditions yet. Could transfer to DofE Direct.
Youlgrave DofE Group	Bronze	4	
	Silver	3	
	Gold	3	Could transfer to DofE Direct.

The estimated impact numbers affected indicate:  
Bronze – 10, Silver – 11, Gold – 17.

However, approximately 12 of the Bronze and Silver participants could transfer back to school groups, as they attend a school that holds a current direct licence. Coupled with this the over 18 year gold participants are able to transfer to DofE Direct to complete awards (note: all those listed above are over 18yrs).

**Therefore the total estimated numbers not able to complete their current Award if the ‘targeted’ licence is not renewed will be approximately 10 – 12 young people.**

Heather Staple, Award Manager  
Sports Outdoor & Residential Education Services  
Derbyshire County Council