

To: Communities Housing and Planning Policy Board

On: 14 January 2020

Report by: Director of Communities, Housing and Planning Services

Heading: Sustainable Duke of Edinburgh Delivery Model

1. Summary

- 1.1 Following a review, this paper proposes changes and improvements to the current delivery model for the Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) Award programme, delivered in partnership with schools. The revised programme seeks to deliver a more effective and efficient operating process, is sustainable and will meet the growing demands of young people in Renfrewshire.
- 1.2 The Duke of Edinburgh programme offers a significant opportunity for young people to build confidence, build their CV, and gain experiences and opportunities to participate in activities that otherwise they would not achieve. It is proven to support the positive development of young people and has been participated in by over 1200 young people in Renfrewshire over the last 3 years. Delivery of the programme on this scale however has put significant demands on the resources of schools and Council support teams and has relied very heavily on the goodwill and voluntary support of a range of officers across the Council. The review has sought to support the development of a new model of delivery that reflects the changing and adapting needs of young people, their parents, communities and schools and is flexible enough to cope with the increased pressures associated with competing priorities for resources in schools.
- 1.3 Renfrewshire Council's Youth Services holds both the Duke of Edinburgh and Adventurous Activities Licencing Authority licences and these require rigid adherence to stringent health and safety and performance protocols, including regular scrutiny through annual reviews and bi-annual inspections. Meeting the needs of these license conditions has been a significant factor in shaping the new DofE programme.

- 1.4 A recent review of the current DofE Award programme highlighted differences across the authority regarding participation figures, completion numbers and consistency of offer and opportunities in individual centres. Differences were also noted in the levels of fee being charged by various establishments to access the programme and that the types of equipment and experience offered to young people varied from centre to centre. Running the programme in its current form also relies heavily on volunteers and the goodwill and enthusiasm of teaching staff who are required to give up significant periods of their own time to support the delivery of the programme. This leads to a high turn-over of volunteers and can impact on access to specialist resources and support including qualified expedition leaders.
- 1.5 If Renfrewshire is to continue to achieve its ambition for the high numbers of young people starting and completing the award at all levels then a corporate approach to the delivery of the Duke of Edinburgh programme is required which includes partner providers, implements equitable and consistent costs and supports clear governance and health and safety processes. This proposal will support current and future growth in this worthwhile and widely recognised youth achievement award.
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2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the board:
- (i) approves the development of a revised Duke of Edinburgh Awards Scheme model which will support the renewal of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award licence for Renfrewshire Council for a further 5 years; and
 - (ii) requests a further report be brought back to a future meeting on progress with the development and implementation of the model including charging framework and other resource implications.
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3. Background

- 3.1 The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is an accredited award for young people aged 14 to 25 years old. The award has three award levels: bronze, silver and gold, each more challenging than the next. Every award comprises of four sections: volunteering, skill, physical activity and expedition. The gold award includes a fifth element: a residential. The bronze award takes a minimum of 6 months, silver 9 months and gold 12 months to complete.
- 3.2 The Award brings a range of benefits to young people:
- Self-belief and self-confidence
 - A sense of initiative
 - A sense of responsibility
 - A real awareness of their strengths
 - New talents and abilities
 - The ability to plan and use time
 - The ability to learn from and give to others in the community
 - New friendships
 - Problem solving, presentation and communication skills

- 3.3 The Award can have a transformative effect on young people. It can help young people disadvantaged by poverty fulfil their potential. Young people's experience of the Award improves their physical and mental wellbeing, provides additional opportunities of attainment and enhances young people's employability skills.
- 3.4 The Award is highly valued by employers for employability skills, as it evidences independence and commitment from young people. A recent Charter Institute of Personnel and Development IPD report stated that the Award was the most recognised programme a candidate can reference when applying for a job. A wide range of employers formally endorse the Award and offer a guaranteed interview for candidates. Among the employers endorsing the Award are AMEY, Royal Mail, British Gas and Halfords.
- 3.5 The new revised model will aim to provide the following:
- a) Renfrewshire DofE Operational Manual which will lend clarity to safe and robust operational guidance and quality moderation;
 - b) Partnership Agreements which clarifies the roles and responsibilities, and manage the expectations of all parties involved;
 - c) Support equity in cost to participants, and reduce barriers to participation for young people across the authority;
 - d) Increase numbers of participants at Bronze level, with clear pathways for young people to achieve Silver and Gold levels in the community;
 - e) Support community capacity and volunteer development to support the delivery of the programme;
 - f) A link to local employers and partners who will endorse and support the DofE participants to achieve their awards;
 - g) A parity of benchmarking with other local authorities, and to support Renfrewshire to sustain high completion rates.
- 3.6 It is proposed therefore that a revised model is adopted which provides clear operational guidance from covering the registration and engagement through to completion for young people and volunteers; directs the requirements in terms of health and safety, compliance and competency for each role within the award; explicitly directs the protocols for engaging support including approved activity providers and offers consistency and equality in terms of pricing and costs. The new model will promote a sustainable resource which monitors school and community requirements and offers parity in relation to access and participation and progression in the Award.
- 3.7 The Duke of Edinburgh programme within Renfrewshire has enjoyed a great deal of success over recent years. This has been achieved through a collaborative working and support programme between schools, communities, Duke of Edinburgh and Renfrewshire Council's Youth Services team. The new model will strengthen these partnerships through Partnerships Agreements and seek best value in delivery which will demonstrate effective targeting of resources.

The costs associated with each section of the award and in each school can vary and costs of Progression to the higher awards such as silver and gold are inevitably higher and this can lead to a disadvantage of opportunity for some young people. In developing the new model, the aim will be to seek to provide a consistent pricing framework linked to an acceptable level of fee to ensure all children are able to participate. The framework will provide support for centres to work towards reducing participation fees through capacity building and fundraising initiatives. The charging model will also seek to cover the costs of participation including the supply of essential personal protective equipment and other resources to all participants and support staff / volunteers.

- 3.9 In Renfrewshire the number of young people gaining a silver and or gold award had risen significantly, while the bronze continues to attract large numbers. The new model will allow schools to continue to provide a specific focus on entry level bronze and also support growth in silver and gold award participation. In addition, where appropriate to support smaller groups of silver and gold awards, we will develop cross boundary units. Young people from across the authority wanting to achieve the higher awards will be able to be supported together as an area group to ensure no one misses out.
- 3.10 Communities and schools directly benefit from the award in terms of the level of long-term commitment to volunteering from young people who are actively engaged in the life of their school or their local community. The new operating model will provide a wider scope of community based social action projects and initiatives that young people could consider volunteering on. Similarly, the value of adult volunteers will be recognised and endorsed through a refresh of recruitment and support opportunities. There is potential to further harness people's interest in the outdoors and environment and to provide a connection to the DofE Programme where they can support young people to participate in all sections, but especially through the expedition experience. A training and skills development programme will be offered in partnership with DofE Scotland which will enhance the sustainability model framework.
- 3.11 Suitable equipment has long been an issue both in terms of maintenance and replacement. A revised model will allow a reinvestment in personal protective equipment which is fit for purpose and regularly replenished for young people and volunteers. This will increase the levels of central resources which have over the years been offered to centres to supplement their own equipment and standardise the delivery of regular checks and maintenance to ensure safety standards are met.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial –**
2. **HR & Organisational Development -**
3. **Community/Council Planning –**
 - *Our Renfrewshire is thriving* – Young people are achieving and supporting community involvement through volunteering.
 - *Our Renfrewshire is well* – Young people are engaged and making healthy choices through participation.

- *Our Renfrewshire is fair* - Opportunities to participate are consistent and take account of barriers such as poverty.
 - Building strong, safe and resilient communities – Young people are actively engaged in community volunteering and making a difference.
 - Tackling inequality, ensuring opportunities for all -Equity of access, participation and experience are at the heart of the new delivery model.
 - Working together to improve outcomes – Partnerships are strengthened to ensure greater impacts and better outcomes for the young people undertaking this Award.
4. **Legal** - None
 5. **Property/Assets** - None
 6. **Information Technology** - None
 7. **Equality & Human Rights** -
 - (a) The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.

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 8. **Health & Safety** - None
 9. **Procurement** – None
 10. **Risk** - None
 11. **Privacy Impact** - None.
 12. **COSLA Policy Position** – Not Applicable
 13. **Climate Risk** – None

List of Background Papers

- (i) The foregoing background papers will be retained within Communities, Housing and Planning for inspection by the public for the prescribed period of four years from the date of the meeting. The contact officer within the service is Angela Conboy, Education Manager, angela.conboy@renfrewshire.gov.uk.
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