

Report from the Assistant Director, Partnerships and Early Intervention

Children and Young People's Champion

Summary

1. This report updates members on the recent election for the role of Children and Young People's Champion and seeks reflections and feedback on the process.

Background

2. The voting process for the children and young people's Champion has been completed. In total we had 2233 votes cast (an increase of over 600 on last time 2round), with an increase in the number of schools that participated, particularly primary schools. York College also participated.
3. Cllr Alexander received 1331 votes, Cllr Ayre received 902 votes and there were 25 spoiled papers: therefore, Cllr Alexander has been elected as the next Champion. By the time of the meeting, the result will have been announced to schools and to the press, and we are planning a photo opportunity with young people to back this up. The appointment of the Children and Young People's Champion will be made by Council at the Annual meeting on 22nd May 2008.

Options

4. As this report is for information, it does not present options as such. Some may however emerge from the discussion.

Analysis (1): Reviewing the election process

5. Officers feel that the process ran more smoothly than the previous election, with the addition of previously agreed election rules and timetable contributing to this (Annex 1 and 2). There was an increase in the number of schools and children and young people participating. The college participated in the election for the first time. We had wider publicity coverage, including having information about the election on the Yor-Ok website for the first time. This had 102 visits during the election process. There was a Hustings event for the first time, with participation from children and young people from across the City. The DVD was professionally made, which resulted in a much higher quality product.

There were designated budgets for the production of campaign materials for candidates.

6. However there were still a number of parts of the process that could be improved in further years. In order to improve the process in future years we would like the group's feedback on the following:
 - a) What went well about the process?
 - b) What were the main stumbling blocks?
 - c) What could be improved?
 - d) What changes need to be made to the rules/ timetable/ roles?
7. We will record Members' views and ensure that they are fed into the process of planning for subsequent elections.

Analysis (2): Role of the Children and Young People's Champion

8. As Members are aware, there are a number of constitutional changes currently in the pipeline which may have an impact on the role and nature of Council Working Groups, including this one. It is nevertheless useful to reflect on the current remit of the group insofar as it might interact with, and support, the role of the Champion.
9. According to previously-agreed descriptions, the Champion has a dual role to act as an advocate of young people's views, and to promote a positive image of them:

Advocating

The Children and young people's Champion will:

- Act as a figurehead within the Council to promote children and young people's views on issues that concern them within the City of York.
- Represent children and young people's views and ideas, identify their concerns and raise awareness about their opinions and successes at appropriate strategic decision making bodies within the City and seek to address these.
- Liaise with the Young People's Working Group and relevant organisations within the City Council in order to have an overview of all involvement work that is taking place and the messages and required actions that are emerging.
- Actively listen to the desires of children and young people who want to play an active role in life in York.
- Work in accordance with good practice around involvement and participation work as set out in the Yor-OK Involvement strategy.
- Work with elected members to support them in engaging with the children and young people they represent and be responsive to their needs.

Promotion

- The Children and Young People's Champion should seek to promote a positive image of children and young people within the city.

- The Children and Young People’s Champion should ensure that Elected Members are given the opportunity to regularly meet children and young people in schools and other community settings.
- Promote a range of ‘informal’ events and opportunities for children and young people to share their views and ideas, including using information technology, such as websites.
- Raise awareness of mechanisms such as Ward Committees and Parish Councils to children and young people that encourage consultation.
- To work alongside Officers to raise awareness about facilities, provision, services and events run or supported by the Council, which enable children and young people to participate fully and make the most of living in the City.

Corporate Objectives

10. Involving children and young people in the selection of their Champion meets the Council objectives of:
 - Encouraging all Children and Young People to become Active Citizens
 - Consulting with children and young people about the future of the City and about provision by the council.

Implications

- **Financial** No implications.
- **Human Resources (HR)** No implications.
- **Equalities** No implications.
- **Legal** No implications.
- **Crime and Disorder** No implications.
- **Information Technology (IT)** No implications.
- **Other** No implications.

Risk Management

There are no risks associated with this report.

Recommendations

Members are asked to note the report and the recent processes for electing the Children and Young People’s Champion.

Reason: To ensure that the electoral processes continue to be relevant.

Contact Details

Author:

Carole Pugh
Voice & Influence Co-ordinator
Youth Service
552355

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Pete Dwyer
Director, Learning Culture and Children's Services

**Report
Approved**

 Yes

Date 9 April 2008

Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

All Yes

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

None

Annexes

Annex 1- Children and Young People's Champion Election Rules

Annex 2 – Children and Young People's Champion Election timetable