
MEETING	YOUNG PEOPLE'S WORKING GROUP
DATE	14 APRIL 2010
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS LOOKER (CHAIR), RUNCIMAN (VICE-CHAIR), AYRE AND ASPDEN
IN ATTENDANCE	COUNCILLOR ALEXANDER HARRY LUCK - REPRESENTATIVE OF YORK YOUTH COUNCIL
APOLOGIES	COUNCILLORS BOWGETT AND DOUGLAS

15. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were invited to declare at this point in the meeting, any personal or prejudicial interests they might have in the business on the agenda. No declarations were made in addition to the standing declarations which had been attached to the agenda.

16. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Young People's Working Group held on 19 October 2009 be approved and signed by the Chair.

17. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak under the council's Public Participation Scheme.

18. OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S CHAMPION

Members received a report that invited exploratory discussion on the future of the Children and Young People's Champion, now that the previous incumbent's term of office had expired. It was noted that if Members wished to recommend a change to the existing arrangements these would be put to the Executive and ultimately to Full Council, if they involved changes to the constitution.

Members noted that the post of Champion for Children and Young People had been established following a scrutiny review which had concluded that young people's opinions were given insufficient weight in decision-making. Since that time there had been developments in the way in which young people had been given a voice in decision-making, including the setting up the Youth Council and its associated membership of the UK Youth Parliament.

Councillor Alexander stated that the Champion for Children and Young People was now one of many voices on behalf of young people and he believed that changes to the current arrangements were needed. He detailed concerns regarding the role of Member Champions in general. Councillor Alexander informed Members that he believed that it was important that a mechanism was in place whereby motions could be put forward to Council on behalf of young people. He believed that the current arrangements whereby the minutes of the Young People's Working Group meetings were considered by the Executive did not ensure that the views of young people were heard by all political parties and at the highest level.

Consideration was given to the options detailed in paragraph 8 of the report.

Members suggested that the following factors should be considered when recommendations were made regarding changes to the current arrangements:

- There was a consensus that changes were required to the current arrangements.
- There needed to be a clearly defined route as to how issues raised by young people were heard by decision-makers and responses and explanations were provided to the requests they put forward.
- Young people should be invited to attend meetings of the Young People's Working Group and be involved in the setting of the agenda.
- The role of the Youth Council and Youth Parliament should be acknowledged when considering changes to the current arrangements. It was also important to ensure that younger children's views were heard e.g. through the primary school councils
- The Executive Member for Children and Young People had legal responsibilities to champion the rights of children and young people. The Chair of the Young People's Working Group also had a role to play.
- Reservations were expressed regarding the option in the report to appoint an independent member to champion the rights of young people. There were concerns that this may become political.
- The voluntary and community sector provide a wealth of opportunities for young people in the city and consideration should be given as to how they were represented.
- The Young People's Working Group should ensure that the needs of children and young people were considered in the broadest terms, including issues relating to housing, planning and road safety as well as matters more specifically targeted at young people.
- Full Council may not be the most appropriate body for young people to put forward their views. It was, however, noted that there was an opportunity under the Council's Public Participation Scheme for views to be put forward although this would not provide an opportunity for debate.
- Consideration could be given to a report, prepared by young people, being presented to full council by the Executive Member or Chair of the Young People's Working Group on an annual basis.

- Age was one of the strands represented on the Social Inclusion Working Group (SIWG) and discussions had taken place as to how to ensure that the views of young people as well as older people were taken into account. It was noted that the Chair of SIWG was also a member of the Young People's Working Group.

The representative of the Youth Council was asked for his views regarding some of the suggestions that had been put forward. He supported the proposal for young people to attend the Young People's Working Group but stated that, because of exam commitments, it may not be possible for the same representatives to attend each meeting. The use of substitutes would be a way forward but it was also important that there was a level of continuity. It would be beneficial to have a Member speaking on behalf of young people but they should be above politics. It would also be helpful for young people to have a mentor who could advise them on council procedures and how to make their voice heard most effectively.

- RESOLVED: (i) That, taking into account the views expressed at the meeting, officers prepare a further report on possible ways forward in developing the role of young people in decision-making.
- (ii) That representatives from the Youth Council and Youth Parliament have a standing invitation to attend meetings of the Young People's Working Group and to put forward agenda items for its meetings.

REASON: To ensure young people's views are taken into account in council decision-making.

19. AN UPDATE ON THE YORK YOUTH COMMUNITY ACTION PILOT

Members received a report that provided an update on the new pilot project to promote community volunteering opportunities amongst York's 14-16 year olds. The bids for funding under Round One had been considered by a multi-agency Assessment Panel. The recommendations of the panel had been approved at the Executive Member – Children and Young People's Services decision session on 13 April 2010. The list of successful projects is attached as an annex to these minutes.

It was noted that the Youth Council would play a key role in engaging young people with this initiative. The Youth Council had submitted two bids. One of the bids had been for funding for the café and had not been approved as this was a capital project and therefore did not meet the requirements of the funding allocation. The second bid related to the costs of running of the Youth Council and it had been agreed to access funding that could be used to support this request.

The representative from the Youth Council informed Members that there was considerable interest in the events that were being arranged to raise young people's awareness of the types of volunteering opportunities that were available.

- RESOLVED: (i) That the update report be noted and that the Youth Community Action Pilot be supported.
- (ii) That the Working Group be kept updated on the York Youth Community Action Pilot.

REASON: The project is in line with corporate priorities, and represents a marvellous opportunity for York.

20. AN ORAL UPDATE ON THE POSSIBILITIES FOR DEVELOPING YOUNG PEOPLE'S FACILITIES IN THE CITY CENTRE.

Members received an update on the development of young people's facilities in the city centre. It was reported that a building had been identified in Walmgate which could be developed as a Youth Café. Challenges remained in terms of raising the necessary financial support for the project. A voluntary partnership had been established and support was being sought from various organisations, including the Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust. A trustee group was being set up and the intention was to seek charitable status. Members were pleased to note that the project was receiving good media coverage.

- RESOLVED: (i) That the verbal report be noted.
- (ii) That the Working Group be kept updated on developments.

Councillor J Looker, Chair
[The meeting started at 5.00 pm and finished at 6.35 pm].