

MEETING	YOUNG PEOPLE'S WORKING GROUP
DATE	21 JULY 2010
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS LOOKER (CHAIR), RUNCIMAN (VICE-CHAIR), AYRE, BOWGETT AND PIERCE
IN ATTENDANCE	REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE YOUTH COUNCIL AND YOUNG INSPECTORS
APOLOGIES	COUNCILLOR ASPDEN

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#### **1. 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 interests were declared other than those detailed in the standard declarations of interest for the group.

#### **2. MINUTES**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Young People's Working Group held on 14 April 2010 be approved and signed by the Chair.

#### **3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION/OTHER SPEAKERS**

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak under the council's Public Participation Scheme. Councillor Alexander had registered to speak on the role of Children and Young People's Champion (minute 4 refers) but was now unable to attend the meeting. Copies of a written statement from Councillor Alexander were circulated and the comments noted.

#### **4. CHAMPIONING THE VIEWS OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE: A POSSIBLE WAY FORWARD**

Members received a report that took forward the discussion at the previous meeting about the future of the Children and Young People's Champion, and of the Working Group, in the light of recent developments such as the establishment of the Youth Council. The report recommended that *all* members of the Working Group became "champions" of young people's views and interests; and that the Group's remit be revised to establish its primary role as being a conduit for such views.

It was noted that the Executive Member for Children and Young People had legal responsibilities to champion the rights of children and young people. It was therefore proposed that a recommendation be made that

the Executive Member's portfolio responsibilities be extended to include presenting an annual report to full Council. The report would be prepared jointly with the Youth Council.

The views of the Youth Council representatives were sought on this issue. They explained that the Youth Council had discussed the matter at a recent meeting and had put forward the following suggestions:

- Members of the Youth Council did not have the time available to make representation directly to Council or its committees but they did want to have a route to ensure that their views were heard. They had suggested that this could be done via their attendance at the Young People's Working Group. Issues that they raised could then be taken back by Members to the relevant committee or body.
- The Youth Council was aware that it did not currently represent the views of primary school aged children or of the under fives. To address this issue the Youth Council was offering to facilitate consultation with younger children, perhaps on a termly basis.
- The Youth Council would welcome the opportunity to have an input in council policies and had asked if it would be possible for copies of reports to be forwarded to them for consideration.

Members welcomed the Youth Council's proposal that they would facilitate consultation with younger children but highlighted specific challenges that may arise in consulting with the under-fives. It was suggested that advice be sought from early years specialists on this matter. Members confirmed that they would be willing to attend the consultation events facilitated by the Youth Council.

Discussion took place regarding the Youth Council's request that they receive copies of council reports. Whilst Members commended the Youth Council on their interest in having an opportunity to comment on council policies they explained that, in view of the volume of reports and the timescales involved, this might prove to be unmanageable. The report writing protocol required report authors to identify any equalities implications and, as age was one of the equality strands, this should highlight issues that would impact on children and young people. Officers agreed to reflect on other ways to ensure that young people were given the opportunity to give their views on matters that might affect them, without overwhelming them with paperwork.

It was suggested that, in particular, copies of those reports on which the Social Inclusion Working Group (SIWG) were consulted should be forwarded to the Youth Council for their consideration. Whilst it was acknowledged that the Youth Council representatives did not have the time available to attend SIWG meetings, it would nevertheless be very helpful to have their input on issues considered by the group.

RESOLVED: (i) That it be recommended that the remit of the Young People's Working Group be as detailed in minute annex 1.

- (ii) That it be recommended that the council's Constitution be amended to include a requirement for the Executive Member for Children and Young People to present to council on an annual basis a report jointly produced with the Youth Council.
- (iii) That, in view of the recommended changes to the remit of the Children and Young People's Working Group, it be recommended that the position of Children and Young People's Champion remain vacant at this time but that the position should be retained in the Constitution and the situation reviewed once the pilot arrangements had been trialled.
- (iv) That the Youth Council be included as a consultee in respect of reports and Equality Impact Assessments that might affect them, particularly those considered by the Social Inclusion Working Group.

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

## **5. YOUNG PEOPLE'S INVOLVEMENT**

Members received a report that invited them to have exploratory discussions with representatives from the Youth Council about issues that were a priority for young people at this time.

Representatives from the Youth Council brought the following issues to Members' attention:

### **Political Education**

A copy of a toolkit entitled "Future Decision Makers" was circulated. The training resource had been produced by the Youth Council and Youth Parliament for use in secondary schools. Members were asked for their help in promoting the resource in schools.

Members congratulated the representatives from the Youth Council on this excellent piece of work and offered their support by agreeing to raise awareness of the resource. Officers also offered their support in promoting the toolkit.

### **Funding the Youth Council**

Members' attention was drawn to the uncertainty regarding funding for the Youth Council from April 2011 onwards. It was noted that the funding for staffing from "Take Part" would cease in 2011. In addition to staffing, money was needed to fund residential activities, running costs for meetings and funds to attend regional meetings of UKYP.

The representatives from the Youth Council asked if it would be possible to use the facilities at the Explore centre without charge. They would wish to

use the building, on a Wednesday evening if possible, to hold Youth Council and campaign group meetings.

Members paid tribute to the way in which the Youth Council was working and the contribution that it was making to ensure that young people had a say in decision making. Concerns were expressed at the impact that the loss of funding may have on the group; however, it was not possible to offer certainty about any Council funded programmes from 2011 onwards. The position would be clearer in the Autumn. Meanwhile, officers agreed to look into the possibility of making the Explore centre available to the Youth Council as a contribution in kind. The Executive Member for Leisure, Culture and Social Inclusion would also follow this up.

### **City Centre Building**

An update was given on the city centre building project to provide a place for young people to socialise. Members were delighted to hear that good progress had been made and that an application for change of use had been made in respect of the building. Details were given of the fundraising that was taking place. Members congratulated those involved on having already raised £54k. Requests had been made for ward funding and for contributions from parish councils. Members suggested that Youth Council representatives should attend ward committee meetings to explain more about the project and how it would benefit young people in all parts of the city, not just those in the Guildhall Ward. Discussion took place as to charities and businesses that could be approached to seek donations. Details of the Twitter account for the youth café were circulated ([twitter.com/youthcafe4york](https://twitter.com/youthcafe4york)).

### **Social Networking**

Details were given of a request by the Youth Council to make use of opportunities presented by Social Networking Sites and in particular Facebook. The Youth Council had worked with council officers to develop a framework detailing how they would wish to use social networking sites. The framework was included as Annex A of the report. At the request of Members, details were given of the safeguards that would be in place and of the way content would be moderated.

- RESOLVED: (i) That the comments made by the representatives of the Youth Council be noted.
- (ii) That Members would seek to promote awareness of the training pack on democracy.
- (iii) That Officers would explore the possibility of Youth Council representatives being invited to give a presentation on the training pack at a meeting of heads or deputy heads during the autumn term.
- (iv) That the concerns regarding future funding for the Youth Council be brought to the attention of the Executive.

- (v) That the Executive Member for Leisure, Culture and Social Inclusion explore the request from the Youth Council regarding the use of facilities at the explore centre.
- (vi) That the framework detailing how the Youth Council planned to use social networking sites be endorsed.

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

The Youth Council representatives were thanked for their attendance at the meeting and for the contribution that they had made.

## **6. PRESENTATION BY THE YOUNG INSPECTORS**

Two of the young people who were taking part in the Young Inspectors programme gave an oral presentation to Members. They explained that this was a pilot programme that had been set up by the Department for Education to enable young people to inspect local services and activities and have a voice in assessing these services.

Details were given of an inspection that the Young Inspectors had carried out at a community centre. They explained how they reported on their findings and how they would be revisiting places they had inspected to assess whether their recommendations had been actioned. Future inspections would include Energise Sports Centre and Yearsley Swimming Pool.

The Young Inspectors answered Members' questions about the programme and the way in which they carried out their inspections.

Members thanked the Young Inspectors for attending the meeting and wished them well with the programme. The Inspectors agreed to attend a future meeting in order to provide an update on their work.

RESOLVED: That the Young Inspectors be invited to attend the meeting on 17 January 2011 in order to provide an update on their work.

REASON: To ensure Members are kept informed of the progress of the programme.

Councillor J Looker, Chair

[The meeting started at 6.00 pm and finished at 7.40 pm].