

Report from the Assistant Director, Partnerships and Early Intervention

## **Reflections on the first year's operation of the York Youth Council and the first Festival of Youth**

### **Summary**

1. This report allows members of the Young People's Working Group (YPWG) the opportunity to reflect further on the first year's operation of the York Youth Council and, in particular, on the first Festival of Youth last summer. Assuming we are able to maintain these initiatives into 2011, members' views and advice can be taken into account.

### **Background and Consultation**

2. York has had a Youth Council for just over a year: the first meeting was held on 13 October 2009. Fourteen schools, one youth centre and both colleges in York sent representatives. In all, thirty-two young people were involved in York Youth Council in the first year.
3. Full Youth Council meetings have been held every six weeks in the Guildhall. The full day meetings allowed local service providers to discuss issues with young people. In the first 12 months the Youth Council has:
  - developed a questionnaire about safer cycling in the city,
  - campaigned to extend the ages of the YorZone card,
  - worked to develop good practice and safety guidance for working with young people online, and
  - contributed to the development of the Climate Action Plan, Child Poverty Strategy, Involvement Strategy, Neighbourhood Policing, 0 – 19 Health Provision and Equalities Strategy.
4. The Youth Council planned and ran the first Festival of Youth in Rowntree Park over the weekend of the 26/27<sup>th</sup> June 2010. It involved 30 different acts, 18 stalls promoting activities available to young people, 8 different workshops available for people to take part in and 248 young people as event operatives, performers and stall holders. We estimate that there was an audience of around 1500 people over the course of the 2 days. Audience turnout on the Sunday was low as it was also an England World Cup match.
5. In addition, as reported at the last meeting of YPWG, York Youth Council has supported York Young People's Trust who are trying to establish a city centre

venue for young people. They have been fundraising for the facility – through a sponsored event and a non-uniform day at school. They have written to all the ward committees to ask for grant funding for the project and will be attending the next round of ward committee meetings.

6. Being part of the Youth Council has enabled the Youth Councillors to develop skills and knowledge, which will help them in the future. Twenty six AQA Awards have been gained. Feedback from those involved in the Council has been very positive; however, there is always scope for improvement, and this is reflected in the next section, which reflects consultation with members of the Youth Council

## **Options and Analysis**

### **Youth Council**

7. Feedback from the young people involved in the first year of the York Youth Council will lead to modifications in the way it will operate in the second year. The six weekly meetings of the Youth Council will take place on a Wednesday evening in the Council Chamber. This will hopefully enable professionals to attend meetings and talk with the Youth Council. It has been difficult to get service providers to attend Youth Council meetings at the weekend.
8. There will be weekly campaigns sub-group meetings between the full Youth Council meetings. These meetings will be open to young people to join and be part of the campaigns. This will allow more young people to be involved in the campaigns and work of the Youth Council.
9. The Youth Council will continue to work with its constituents through schools, colleges and youth centres. It also will facilitate meetings of the Change Champions to help young people aged 5 – 18 to work with the Children and Young People's Champions to improve York through agreed action plans – this new idea is covered in more detail in a separate paper.

### **Festival of Youth**

10. Following this year's event, a debrief session was held with the Youth Council planning subgroup, which considered the responses from those who had participated and sent back the evaluation questionnaire (17 responses) as well as the experience of the young people over the weekend. This meeting identified the following areas for improvement if the Festival is to happen again:
  - More needs to be invested in publicity prior to the event.
  - A programme on site would have been helpful (and could have generated income).
  - The event should just be over one day.
  - A more City Centre location might be better - possibly the Museum Gardens.
  - It would be good to have more participation from sports groups showing sports activities that are available to young people.
  - Some key arts providers were not represented at the event.

- There needs to be more co-ordination with similar events (school music festival, best of the bands, just 30/open weekend) and a more joined up approach.
  - A longer planning lead in would enable more cross department/ directorate planning and potentially broaden participation by groups.
11. Members of the Youth Council are realistic enough to consider that there are unlikely to be the resources available to hold another Festival of Youth in 2011 as a stand alone event. The 2010 Festival cost just under £10,000.
12. However, the Youth Councillors are keen to explore the option of linking to the “Just 30” event as this would offer the opportunity to join with the sporting providers to encourage more young people who might be involved with the Festival of Youth to get involved or find out about sporting opportunities in the City. The only concern is that it happens after the end of term, which will mean it is unlikely that many schools will participate.
13. They realise that they might need to raise some additional funds - they are looking at funding bids to the National Lottery Awards for All, and identifying other possible funding sources. If they are unable to gain funding then the event would probably not be possible. Youth Councillors are also fund raising for the City Centre Youth café – and, if they had to choose between the two, would want the latter to take priority.

## **Corporate Priorities**

14. The issues discussed in this paper are consistent with the Council’s objectives to encourage children and young people to become active citizens, and to consult them about decisions that affect them. Establishing a Youth Council and a Festival of Youth were specific objectives in York’s Children and Young People’s Plan.

## **Implications**

15. **Financial implications:** The continuation of the Youth Council will only be possible with some financial support. Resources are needed to hold meetings, for staff support and the training residential. Young People attend regional and national meetings of the UKYP. In addition, in their review of the first year’s work, it was noted that young people felt the Youth Council wasn’t well known. More time and resources ideally need to be spent on publicising the Youth Council, its work, and encouraging more young people to get involved.
16. That said, it is not possible to fully assess the financial implications in advance of understanding the outcome of the comprehensive spending review. Clearly the cost of supporting the Youth Council would have to come out of the base budget for Young People’s Services. A further report on this will be reported to the next meeting of YPWG when the overall context is clearer.
17. The financial implications of the Youth Festival were noted in paragraphs 11-13 above.

18. There are no Human Resources, Equalities, Crime and Disorder, IT or Property Implications; however, it should be noted that neither the Youth Council nor the Festival can take place without dedicated officer support.

## Risk Management

19. There are no specific risks associated with this report.

## Recommendations

20. That the Young People's Working Group discuss the issues identified in this report and support the continued development of the Youth Council and its activities.

Reason: To ensure the views of young people are taken into account in Council decision-making.

## Contact Details

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### Wards Affected:

All



For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers: None