
MEETING	YOUNG PEOPLE'S WORKING GROUP
DATE	12 JULY 2007
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS ASPDEN (VICE-CHAIR), HOLVEY, GUNNELL, ALEXANDER AND VASSIE (SUBSTITUTE)
APOLOGIES	COUNCILLORS BLANCHARD(CHAIR) AND RUNCIMAN

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

At this point in the meeting The Chair invited Members to declare any personal or prejudicial interests they might have in the business on the agenda.

Councillor Alexander declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 6 (Children & Young People's Plan 2007-2010) as he worked at St John's University.

Councillor Aspden declared a general personal non-prejudicial interest as he was a teacher in North Yorkshire and also a member of the National Union of Teachers (NUT).

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Young People's Working Group held on 25th October 2006 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

Councillor Scott spoke on Agenda Item 4 (Options for the Selection of the Children and Young People's Champion). As he was the current Children's and Young People's Champion he felt that the next Champion ought to be an elected member rather than an independent member as they would have opportunities to speak at Council meetings and the ability to move motions at Full Council meetings. He also mentioned that the young people he had met in his term of office as Champion wanted to be part of an election and to understand and be involved with the process. Taking all the above into consideration he felt that Option 1 in the report should be the one recommended to the Executive Member at the next meeting of the Executive Members for Children's Services and Advisory Panel.

Councillor Scott also commented on the fact that constitutionally the Champion had to be an elected member and if an independent member

were to be elected then there would need to be a change to the Council's Constitution. He referred to the fact that he was not consulted regarding this report and felt that in the future the Children's and Young People's Champion needed to be involved.

4. OPTIONS FOR THE SELECTION OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S CHAMPION

Members considered a report regarding the selection of the Children and Young People's Champion

Officers reported that manpower in the department had decreased dramatically and Option 1 in the report would be very difficult to implement as it would need the equivalent of another full time employee to instigate. It was reported that there were already very tight time constraints on schools and running an election would be extremely difficult. Therefore option 2 was the preferred and recommended option.

The following points were raised and discussed:

- Some Members felt that did not have a problem with appointing an independent person as Champion
- Members felt that Option 1 was the better option
- Members had very positive views regarding holding elections for the Children's and Young People's Champion and felt that the whole process should be run as if it were a real election
- The general agreement was that, if an election were held, it must be run properly, however costly, as it was an aid to preparing young people for democracy when they leave school
- Some Members believed that young people putting themselves forward for this post would need a clearly defined freedom to campaign
- Some Members thought that an independent person would not be able to push an agenda forward
- Some Members were of the opinion that there were other opportunities for an independent person to represent youth topics
- It was very important to investigate other voting alternatives such as online voting or texting
- It was important to try and reach as many young people as possible
- The difficulty children had accessing computers at school; during lessons use of IT equipment was restricted to lesson related material and during break times the computers were often out of bounds therefore it was thought most

children who used online voting (if this was introduced) would be using a home computer.

- Some Members thought that the selection/election process should be channelled through schools if at all possible
- It was generally felt that the process of changing the Constitution to allow an independent person to be elected would be too time consuming

The report set out the following options:

Option 1: Full election process run in all schools

Option 2: Hustings at the school council conferences followed by a simpler voting process in schools

Option 3: Election at the primary and secondary school council conferences

RESOLVED: That the Members of the Young Person's Working Group make the following comments to the Executive Members for Children's Services and Youth and Social Inclusion:

1. That, due to the Council's Constitution, the Children's and Young People's Champion should be an elected Member, as the Constitution could not easily be changed
2. That Councillor Scott's term as Children's and Young People's Champion be extended until May 2008 until the process of selection has been approved
3. That the election of the Children's and Young Person's Champion be moved to May rather than October
4. That Officers bring a report to the next meeting of the Young Person's Working Group regarding other options for the selection of a Children's and Young People's Champion including the possibility of electronic voting, making option 1 in the current report more feasible (especially financially)

REASON: This ensures a cross section of children and young people have an opportunity to talk with the candidates face to face as well as extending the option to vote to the maximum amount of children and young people.

5. FUTURE OF THE CONNEXIONS SERVICE

Members considered a report that informed them of the future of the Connexions Service. From April 2008 the City of York Council will receive a Government grant previously paid to the Connexions Service and will also acquire the responsibilities attached to the funding. The report was

approved by the Executive on 27th February 2007 and was brought to the Young People's Working Group in order to inform discussions in advance of a further report to Urgency Committee in late July 2007 which will seek approval for a staffing structure for the new service.

There would be a new young people's service comprising Connexions and the Youth Service and it would be directly managed within the proposed new service arm of Learning, Culture and Children's Services (LCCS) (Partnerships and Early Intervention).

Operational delivery would be through 3 localities with a preferred co-location of multi-disciplinary staff teams where possible. The draft structure indicates that there will be a Head of Service and three senior managers in the first instance. Each of the senior managers would be responsible for a geographic area of the City and would also have City wide responsibility for specific portfolios.

There would also be opportunities for a combined new service to collaborate with schools and colleges in curriculum initiatives and activities such as early support to young people at risk of NEET (Not in education, employment or training), sexual health, drugs and alcohol. There will also be opportunities to collaborate with North Yorkshire County Council to continue providing support through an 'information management system'.

Members raised concerns about potential budgetary constraints once the City of York Council took over the management of the Connexions Service. Officers said that the initial budgets had been set and there was an additional cut of £33,000 to take into consideration over the next three years. They thought this would be manageable. Members asked that these figures be clarified after the Urgency Committee had met. Members agreed that there would be some very challenging targets to meet regarding health, teenage pregnancy and Neet in the future.

RESOLVED: The Young People's Working Group made the following comments regarding the transfer of the Connexions Service responsibilities to the Local Authority from April 2008.

- (i) Noted progress on the proposed new service for young people
- (ii) Raised concerns regarding the cuts to allocated funding to services for young people
- (iii) Requested to see future financial details and the management structure after the Urgency Committee.

REASON: In order to provide further advice to the Urgency Committee which will be meeting to approve a management structure for the new service

6. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN 2007-2010

Members considered a report regarding the Children and Young People's Plan 2007-2010. The Children and Young People's Plan (England) Regulations 2005 require that Local Authorities prepare and publish a Children and Young People's Plan outlining 'the Authority's strategy for discharging their functions in relation to children and relevant young persons.' The guidance requires that plans should include:

- A statement of the Authority's vision for children and relevant young persons
- A needs assessment against the outcomes
- An outline of the key actions planned to achieve the improvements so far as relating to the outcomes
- A statement as to how the authority's budget will be used to contribute to those improvements
- A statement as to how the plan relates to the Authority's performance management and review of services for children and relevant young persons

Although the Children and Young People's Plan is fairly new, the vision that the City of York Council has about the way in which they support children and young people is not; 'The ultimate goal for everybody engaged in providing services for children and young people is that their work should contribute towards high levels of personal achievement for all children and young people, both as individuals and as citizens, contributing towards the greater good.'

The draft plan was sent out for consultation with parents, children and young people and partners. At the end of this process the following six priorities emerged as strong themes:

- Success for all
- A healthy start in life
- A safe place to grow up
- Children and young people in their communities
- A good deal for disabled children and young people
- Knowledgeable adults

Officers reported that it had emerged that bullying was still one of the major problems for children and young people.

Members congratulated Officers on the Children and Young People's Plan. They were concerned that there were still further steps that needed to be taken to raise young people's aspirations and to encourage them to pursue further and higher education. It was noted that the University had a member of staff whose role it was to increase access to further education (including vocational qualifications) and that the current Connexions service also ran an 'aspirations' scheme.

RESOLVED: That the Young People's Working Group note the Children and Young People's Plan.

REASON: To influence the direction of policy development for young people.

7. CHAIR'S REMARKS

The Chair suggested that a workplan be put in place for future meetings. It was suggested that a report be brought to the next meeting of the Young People's Working Group (24th October 2007) regarding selection of the Children's and Young People's Champion. For the following meeting on 17th January it was suggested that Officers address the points, by way of a report, set out in minute 11 from the minutes dated 25th October 2006.

Cllr K Aspden, Chair
[The meeting started at 5.00 pm and finished at 7.00 pm].