

PROPOSED ARRANGEMENTS FOR ELECTED MEMBER, COUNCIL OFFICER AND PARTNER AGENCY ENGAGEMENT WITH THE YOUTH COUNCIL

Cabinet Member	Councillor David Simmonds
Cabinet Portfolio	Education & Children's Services
Officer Contact	Tom Murphy
Papers with report	Appendix

HEADLINE INFORMATION

Purpose of report	This reports seeks Cabinet approval to establish arrangements for Elected Member and Officer engagement with the Youth Council
Contribution to our plans and strategies	The Council Plan; The Children and Families Trust Plan; and The Sustainable Community Strategy 2008 – 2018
Financial Cost	There are no anticipated financial costs
Relevant Policy Overview Committee	Education and Children's Services
Ward(s) affected	All

RECOMMENDATION

That the Cabinet endorses:

1. The proposed arrangements for Council Officer, Elected Member and partner agency liaison with the recently elected Youth Council;
2. The Terms of Reference and the proposed Link Officers / respective Cabinet Member portfolios to the corresponding Youth Council portfolios as detailed in the Appendix.

INFORMATION

Reasons for recommendation

The recommendations are offered so that the Council and Cabinet may benefit from a structured relationship with the Youth Council. The newly elected Youth Council affords the Council and its partners with an opportunity to engage with a representative body of young people with the capacity and insight to positively influence service development and

improvement. The active involvement of young people is a core theme within a range of national and local policy requirements. Hillingdon Youth Council has been nationally recognised as model of good practice. Recent strengthening of the Youth Council offers an opportunity for the Council to improve its engagement with young people through an elected consultative body.

Alternative options considered / risk management

The option to continue with the current, less structured arrangements has been considered. Young people and adult stakeholders involved in the development of the Youth Council have identified that this would not secure the level of focus required to enable young people to effectively work with adult decision-makers in improving services.

Comments of Policy Overview Committee(s)

None at this stage.

Supporting Information

1. Hillingdon Youth Council has been in existence for over eight years. Its stated purpose is:
 - To represent and advocate on behalf of the young people of Hillingdon, working with local communities, services providers and policy makers to enable and ensure their views, interests and concerns are heard; and
 - To work in partnership with adult decision-makers, assisting in the development and strengthening of services and communities by ensuring young people's views and opinions help shape policy and provision.
2. The Youth Council previously comprised between 8 and 15 young people who have put themselves forward to work with the Youth and Connexions Service Active Involvement Team to fulfil the abovementioned purpose.
3. In general terms the Youth Council has been successful and has achieved a great deal since its inception. Achievements include nationally recognised campaign projects addressing issues such as sexual health and the environment and advocacy work on behalf of young people in care. In addition the Youth Council have established relationships with the Corporate Management Team through regular meetings and a range of other bodies including council services and partner agencies which has led to young people's views and opinions shaping decisions and policies.
4. Although the Youth Council has been successful in general terms, the group have identified a number of deficiencies in current arrangements. These include:
 - The absence of a clear mandate to represent the views of others;
 - Inconsistent representation of vulnerable groups such as young people in care and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities;
 - A lack of focus in representation. Reoccurring themes and issues relating to a particular subject such as crime and disorder or a given locality were not being addressed as well as they might be; and

- Inconsistent engagement with key adults at the right times. Interactions tended to be short-term and re-active with adults seeking to consult with the Youth Council on a given issue with no structure or context to the process.
5. Given the deficiencies identified the Youth Council initiated a re-structure in the autumn of 2008. The re-structure aimed to create a structure which supports the Youth Council in being able to effectively represent the views of the young people of Hillingdon and advocate on their behalf.

Youth Council Portfolios

6. In order to achieve this aim the existing Youth Council agreed an election process in December 2008 in order to create a new elected Youth Council of 24 young people. The new members have been elected to represent one of three locality areas as well as having a portfolio lead area. Over 1,400 young people voted using the web-based Mi-vote system. 64 young people stood for election. The process was supported by a range of institutions including schools and young people's centres. 24 young people were elected as a consequence with 8 designated as representatives of each geographical area. A training programme for the new Youth Council is currently in progress. The Youth Council have decided upon the following themes as portfolio leads for their members:
- Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour;
 - The Youth & Connexions Service;
 - Sport and Leisure Services;
 - Health;
 - Housing;
 - Safeguarding and Looked after Young People;
 - Schools;
 - Green Spaces & the Environment;
 - Transport; and
 - Voluntary Services.
7. The following accountabilities have been drafted for Youth Council portfolio leads:
- To represent the views, interests and concerns of young people as they relate to the portfolio area;
 - To actively engage with young people, local community groups and adult decision makers with a view to ensuring that the views of young people are taken into account when decisions are being made; and
 - To work in partnership with peers and adults in order to strengthen communities and services by pro-actively participating in planning, delivery, review and evaluation processes.
8. The Youth Council has now completed their restructuring process. The final part of the re-organisation is to agree and establish the most appropriate structural arrangements to support the interface between the newly elected Youth Council and adult decision and policy makers. The Active Involvement Steering Group, the Officer and partner body overseeing this area of work, have given detailed consideration to this aspect of the process. These proposals have been arrived as a consequence.

Link Officers

9. It is proposed to identify an appropriate 'link officer' within the Council or partner agency to work in partnership with a corresponding member of the Youth Council. Their purpose will be to act as the portfolio liaison officer between the Youth Council and the service area in question.
10. The following accountabilities have been drafted for Link Officers:
 - To actively involve the Youth Council Portfolio Members, and other Youth Council members where appropriate, in processes and activities which will enable them to understand and advise on key service development issues from a young person's perspective;
 - To pay particular attention to relevant, appropriate, systematic and timely involvement which facilitates purposeful engagement and outcomes (Annual Planning and Evaluation); and
 - To work in partnership with the Youth Council Portfolio Members specifically, and the Youth Council in general, to ensure young people's views, opinions, interests and concerns contribute to service and community development and improvement

Cabinet Member engagement

11. It is further proposed the Cabinet members participate in the revised arrangements by meeting regularly with respective Youth Council Portfolio members and Link Officers. It is proposed that these forums occur on a quarterly basis. The proposed process mirrors the method for Link Officer engagement.

Terms of reference

12. The proposed terms of reference for both Link Officer and Cabinet Member engagement with Youth Council portfolio Members are attached in the appendix to this report, for Cabinet to endorse.

Financial Implications

13. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The "link officer" role will be provided within existing staffing resources.

EFFECT ON RESIDENTS, SERVICE USERS & COMMUNITIES

14. The recommendations made in this report are offered in order to ensure the Council and its partners benefit from the expertise and insight of young people. Young people's participation in the planning and evaluation of services will strengthen the services provided to local residents.
15. Working in partnership with the Youth Council will enable Elected Members and Officers to determine and effectively respond to the needs and concerns of young people in a consistent way. Establishing the inter-face proposed will ensure that community needs are more fully understood by obtaining a young people's perspective on issues as well as drawing upon their specialist knowledge when seeking solutions.

16. Proposed arrangements will lead to the creation of a cohesive mechanism for consulting with young people on a range of issues aligned to the portfolio areas as detailed. The dialogue between young people and the Council and its partners will be facilitated more effectively than it is at present as a consequence.

Consultation Carried Out or Required

17. The recommendations made in this report have been informed by a range of consultation processes. Youth Council development is overseen by a range of steering groups concerned with the development of integrated youth support including the Active Involvement Steering Group (AISG). These groups comprise a broad range of partners and stakeholders all of whom have been engaged in the process of overseeing the Youth Council structure and proposing arrangements for the young people / adult inter-face. In addition, young people have been consulted on the process through the existing Youth Council. Corporate Management Team has also been consulted on the development and associated proposals.

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Finance

18. A corporate finance officer has reviewed the report and its financial implications and is satisfied that there are no resource implications for the Council beyond the use of current officers' and Members' time to achieve effect engagement with, and service development outcomes for, young people in the borough.

Legal

19. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Relevant Service Groups

Council Directorates have been consulted through Corporate Management Team

Terms of Reference for Liaison with the Youth Council

A: Youth Council and Link Officer Liaison

1. Aim

- 1.1 To nominate an appropriate officer with a suitable level of seniority to be able to work effectively with the Youth Council and respective portfolio holders in order to illicit their advice on matters of relevance and interest and facilitate their pro-active involvement in the given theme area as a representative consultative body.

2. Purpose of relationship

- 2.1 To actively involve the Youth Council Portfolio Members, and other Youth Council members where appropriate, in processes and activities which will enable them to understand and advise on key service development issues;
- 2.2 To pay particular attention to relevant, appropriate, systematic and timely involvement which facilitates purposeful engagement and outcomes (Annual Planning and Evaluation); and
- 2.3 To work in partnership with the Youth Council Portfolio Members specifically, and the Youth Council in general, to ensure young people's views, opinions, interests and concerns contribute to service development and improvement

3. Officer role

- 3.1 To work in partnership with the Youth Council and the respective portfolio representatives to identify the most appropriate forums and processes to work together in. These may include regular attendance at established meetings or the creation of new forums. The key principle is to ensure the processes are relevant and accessible to the Youth Council and enable young people's meaningful participation. Due reference should be paid to supporting young people's participation at appropriate times as well as key points of influence in the annual planning cycle.

4. Youth Council member role

- 4.1 To work in partnership with the assigned Link Officer and act as the Youth Council leads in the given theme area. The portfolio holders should seek to identify a key topic of or issue of particular interest to the young people they are representing with a view to supporting the Link Officer and associated service area in improving outcomes by considering and acting upon young people views and concerns. The portfolio holders, together with the Link Officer, will have responsibility for advising the full Youth Council of matters they are considering and reporting on progress.

5. Frequency of engagement

- 5.1 Frequency and method of engagement should be determined by the Youth Council portfolio holders and the Link Officer. Participation is expected to be variable but not ad hoc. A programme of engagement should be scheduled in order to meet the needs of both the Youth Council portfolio members and the Link Officer.
- 5.2 A quarterly meeting between the respective Youth Council portfolio holders, Link Officer and Cabinet Member will be scheduled as a standing meeting. This meeting will provide an opportunity for all parties to consider themes and issues of importance and identify and act upon any matters arising.

B: Youth Council and Cabinet Member Liaison

1. Aim

- 1.1 To identify Cabinet Member portfolio holders to liaise with the Youth Council and their respective portfolio holders and associated link officers in order to illicit their advice on matters of relevance and interest and facilitate their pro-active involvement in the given theme area as a representative consultative body.

2. Purpose of relationship

- 2.2 To actively involve the Youth Council Portfolio Members, and other Youth Council members where appropriate, in processes and activities which will enable them to understand and advise on youth issues;
- 2.2 To pay particular attention to relevant, appropriate, systematic and timely involvement which facilitates purposeful engagement; and
- 2.3 To work in partnership with the Youth Council Portfolio Members specifically, and the Youth Council in general, to enable young people's views, opinions, interests and concerns to be heard.

3. Cabinet Member role

- 3.1 To work in partnership with the Youth Council, the respective portfolio representatives and link officers to identify the most appropriate forums and processes to work together in. These may include regular attendance at established meetings or the creation of new forums. The key principle is to ensure the processes are relevant and accessible to the Youth Council and enable young people's meaningful participation. Due reference should be paid to supporting young people's participation at appropriate times as well as key points of influence in the annual planning cycle.

4. Youth Council member role

- 4.1 To work in partnership with the assigned Link Officer and associated Cabinet Members and act as the Youth Council lead in the given theme area. The portfolio holder should seek to identify a key topic of or issue of particular interest to the young people they are representing with a view to supporting the Cabinet Member Link Officer and associated service area in improving outcomes by considering and acting upon young people views

and concerns. The portfolio holder, together with the Link Officer, will have responsibility for advising the full Youth Council of matters they are considering and reporting on progress.

5. Frequency of engagement

- 5.1 Frequency and method of engagement should be determined by the Youth Council portfolio holder, Link Officer and Cabinet Member. Participation is expected to be variable but not ad hoc. A programme of engagement should be scheduled in order to meet the needs of both the Youth Council portfolio member, Cabinet Member and Link Officer.
- 5.2 A quarterly meeting between the respective Youth Council portfolio holder, Link Officer and Cabinet Member will be scheduled as a standing meeting. This meeting will provide an opportunity for all parties to consider themes and issues of importance and identify and act upon any matters arising.

C: Youth Portfolio areas, proposed Link Officers and Cabinet Members

Youth Portfolio: Youth and Connexions Services

Link Officer: Tom Murphy
Cabinet Member: Education & Children's Services

Youth Portfolio: Sport & Leisure Services
Link Officer: Sue Drummond
Cabinet Member: Culture, Sport & Leisure

Youth Portfolio: Arts & Culture
Link Officer: Pat Blackshire
Cabinet Member: Culture, Sport & Leisure

Youth Portfolio: Transport
Link Officer: Jales Tippell
Cabinet Member: Planning & Transportation

Youth Portfolio: Green Spaces and Environment (including Planning)
Link Officer: Mary Worrall
Cabinet Members: Environment & Planning and Transportation

Youth Portfolio: Crime and Anti-social Behaviour
Link Officer: Ed Shaylor
Cabinet Member: Improvement, Partnerships & Community Safety

Youth Portfolio: Safeguarding and Looked After Young People
Link Officer: Debbie Haith
Cabinet Member: Education & Children's Services

Youth Portfolio: Schools
Link Officer: TBC
Cabinet Member: Education & Children's Services

Youth Portfolio: Housing
Link Officer: Neil Stubbings
Cabinet Member: Social Services, Health & Housing

Youth Portfolio: Health
Link Officer: Theresa Chisholm
Cabinet Member: Social Services, Health & Housing

Youth Portfolio: Voluntary Services
Link Officer: Ian Edwards / Kevin Byrne
Cabinet Member: Improvement, Partnerships & Community Safety
