

| | | |
|---|----------------------|----------------|
| 10 March 2015 | | ITEM: 6 |
| Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee | | |
| Youth Cabinet Activity and Impact 2014/15 | | |
| Wards and communities affected: All | Key Decision: | |
| Report of: Patrick Kielty – Working with the Youth Cabinet | | |
| Accountable Manager: Michele Lucas, Interim Strategic Lead Learning & Skills | | |
| Accountable Director: Carmel Littleton, Director of Children's Services | | |
| This report is Public | | |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report sets out the activities and events carried out by the Youth Cabinet in the past year and will highlight the impact to young people and the wider community. The report will include the consultations carried out and the projects that the Youth Cabinet have focussed on during the year.

The report explores the work that the Youth Cabinet have undertaken as a result of the full Cabinet decision in August which looked at potential savings and asked the Youth Cabinet to undertake a consultation exercise to explore alternative delivery vehicles for the delivery of youth related activities across Thurrock.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS:

1.1 To continue to support the work undertaken by the Youth Cabinet thus enabling young people to remain at the heart of decision making regarding youth related activities.

1.2 To support members of the Youth Cabinet in the exploration of an alternative vehicle for delivering youth related activities recognising the need to secure savings going forward, whilst ensuring young people remain at the heart of the regeneration agenda.

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

The Thurrock Youth Cabinet was formed in 2006 with the aim of providing a voice for all young people in Thurrock. There are currently 33 members (between 11-19 yrs) representing local schools and youth groups. In addition since April 2014 a number of young people (11) have joined via the application process, which through the constitution, makes it open for any local young person to take part.

The Youth Cabinet carries out its work via a series of meetings, events and sessions. The following will have taken place between April 2014 and March 2015:

- 11 x monthly youth cabinet meetings
- 11 x monthly working groups
- 3 x UK Youth Parliament (UKYP) regional conventions
- 1 x UKYP annual sitting
- 1 x UKYP youth debate at the House of Commons
- 1 x youth debate at Thurrock Council (Democracy week)
- 1 x summer residential
- 1 x Thurrock Urban games
- 2 x teambuilding events
- 1 x civic dinner
- 2 x commissioning reviews
- 1x Youth Conference

The following are the key pieces of work the Youth Cabinet have undertaken in this time period:

Alternative Delivery Model

Following the proposal for a reduction in funds for the Youth Offer across Thurrock, the full Council meeting in August 2014 requested that the Youth Cabinet develop a questionnaire to seek young people's views around youth related activities across Thurrock.

A small task and finish group was set up with the questionnaire being approved by the full Youth Cabinet in September 2014. The consultation went live from 8th Oct to 14th Nov with 383 young people completing the questionnaire; the outcome of this consultation was presented to the Children's Overview & Scrutiny Committee in February 2015.

The questionnaire findings will support the development of services and activities being provided for young people in Thurrock.

One of the key areas of development is a Youth Hub in Grays. The building formerly known as the Connexions One Stop Shop has had some refiguration

on the ground floor and young people were asked to identify a name for the new Youth Hub.

The new name chosen was Inspire, Achieve came in second as a young person stated '*you need to be inspired first, before you achieve*' (quote from young person)

Events

YouthCon 2014

On 28th November 2014, the Youth Cabinet ran '*YouthCon*' – a conference for young people in Thurrock. Over 90 young people took part in the day which featured debates, workshops, presentations and a market stall area promoting local services. Thurrock secondary schools/academies were represented, along with both special schools and the pupil support service.

This work developed the Youth Cabinet members' event management skills and gave them a chance to consult with a large group of young people on a number of issues including: transport, skills for life, tackling bullying and youth activities.

The young people attending accessed a number of opportunities and developed an understanding of the Youth Cabinet – we have had several applications to join since this event!

Democracy Week Debates

In October the Youth Cabinet took part in a debating evening with elected members. A number of young people from the Children in Care Council joined in this year's event and all participants passionately debated the topics which were 'The top issue from make your mark, Work Experience and 'Is it possible to stop bullying in schools, the workplace and communities?'

The debates help to highlight some of the issues for young people and what the Youth Cabinet can do in their work going forward i.e. Mental Health Awareness campaign and Work Experience survey.

Accredited Outcomes

A number of Youth Cabinet members have obtained accreditations/awards during 2014. 4 members gained the British Youth Council *Youth Voice Award* – which recognises young people that are actively involved in youth participation. 5 members became hate crime ambassadors and took part in the accredited hate crime training run by Essex Police.

Getting young people voting – 'Make Your Mark'

Every year the Youth Cabinet campaigns to get young people in Thurrock voting in '*Make Your Mark*'. This is a nationwide youth ballot that gives all

young people (11-18 yrs) the opportunity to vote on the single most important issue to them. In 2014 4,326 Thurrock young people took part and voted. This was up from previous years of 2013 (1,741) and 2012 (698) and reflects the hard work the Youth Cabinet put into this. The turnout in Thurrock was the second highest in the East of England. For the second year running the issue which received the most number of votes locally was work experience. The Youth Cabinet have since devised a questionnaire to go out to all secondary schools seeking their views on how work experience can be improved in addition to agreeing to support the task and finish group from Children's Overview and Scrutiny once established.

Reviewing Commissioned Services

The Youth Cabinet has continued to review services commissioned by Thurrock Council. In 2014 members reviewed both the *youth mentoring* and *youth at risk programmes* that come under the children's commissioning team. The format for these involved the Youth Cabinet members carrying out the following:

- Read and consider the project outline
- Interview the commissioned provider
- Produce a report based on their findings (which then forms part of the overall review). Having young people at the forefront of reviewing the services on offer underpins the Youth Cabinets objective of ensuring young people are at the heart of decision making and enabling young people to have a voice

Involvement in local decision making/scrutiny

In addition to representation on Children's Overview & Scrutiny the Youth Cabinet will be involved in the task and finish group looking at work experience in Thurrock. Members are also part of the project board looking at taking youth services outside of Thurrock Council through setting up an alternative deliver model. So far this work has seen 383 young people give their views on the future of youth services via a survey and an interactive vote around the potential name for the new youth related organisation.

Regional / National Participation

Through its membership of the UK Youth Parliament (UKYP), Thurrock is represented at a regional and national level. Young people from Thurrock have attended 3 regional conventions in 2014, which allowed them to take part in different sessions including contributing to government consultations. Our Member of Youth Parliament (Ejaay Manalastas) represented Thurrock in the 2014 UKYP debates at the House of Commons. Ejaay was fortunate to contribute to one of the debates on the day and was given the award of 'Best back bench speaker' for her contribution!

Youth Cabinet Newsletter

Members of the Youth Cabinet are currently devising a newsletter as their end of year annual report, this will enable members to develop their skills in feature writing and editing and will enable members to see at a glance the impact that the youth Cabinet has had in the past year. The newsletter will be available at the end of March and will be distributed to Cabinet members

5. CONSULTATION (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

5.1 Youth Consultation carried with a report going to the February meeting of the Children's Overview & Scrutiny Committee for approval.

6. IMPACT ON CORPORATE POLICIES, PRIORITIES, PERFORMANCE AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

6.1 This report contributes to the following corporate priorities:

- create a great place for learning and opportunity

7. IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Financial – N/A

Implications verified by: **Kay Goodacre**
Finance Manager

The savings proposals outlined for 15/16 and beyond would need to be aligned to the youth related activities supporting vulnerable groups within local communities, and ensuring that young people can access regeneration opportunities via the growth hubs across Thurrock.

7.2 Legal – N/A

Implications verified by: **Lucinda Bell**
Education Lawyer

The Committee is asked to note the report content and make decisions that are within the remit of the Committee's terms of reference and powers

7.3 Diversity and Equality –

Include representation of groups and ability to self nominate

Implications verified by: **Rebecca Price**
Community Development Officer

The Thurrock Youth Cabinet aims to represent the wider community of young people in Thurrock. It is a diverse group in terms of age (11-19

yrs), gender, ethnicity and disability – reflecting the make up of young people residing in Thurrock. Numerous schools and local groups (including Sea Cadets & Scouts) and schools are represented and the Youth Cabinet has a close link with another local young people's forum: Thurrock's Children in Care Council.

Through its membership and activities the Youth Cabinet is committed to equality and diversity. The membership reflects the diversity of the local area and members run a number of events throughout the year to engage diverse groups (e.g. youth conference, outreach events, joint sessions with the Thurrock Children in Care Council). A number of Youth Cabinet members have trained as Hate Crime Ambassadors and are committed working in this area. In February 2015, the Youth Cabinet will receive a presentation on the newly formed Thurrock Fairness Commission, with a view to getting involved in this.

In terms of access the Youth Cabinet is open to any young people (11-19 yrs) living or been educated in Thurrock.

7.4 **Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Section 17, Risk Assessment, Health Impact Assessment, Sustainability, IT, Environmental**

None

APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT:

None

Report Author Contact Details:

Name: Patrick Kielty – Participation Officer and Thurrock Youth Cabinet

Telephone: 01375 652340

E-mail: pkielty@thurrock.gov.uk