

# Children's Services

## Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting

### Thursday 16 November 2023

### Youth Cabinet Update



**Purpose of the report:** The Youth Cabinet would like to provide members with an update of their work.

#### 1.1 Trading Standards

A Youth Cabinet member recently linked up with the Trading Standards Team, as an underage volunteer, to support with an underage sales operation in Thurrock. The aim of this work is to undertake test purchases in shops where the underage volunteer enters a shop and attempts to buy an age-restricted product such as alcohol, vapes, etc. By carrying out this work, Trading Standards officers can assess whether the retailer is checking customers are old enough to buy these goods. During the operation two out of four premises sold to the underage volunteer.

The Youth Cabinet member found the opportunity to be a worthy experience helping to make a difference and prevent underage sales.

#### 1.2 Youth Voice Conference

On Saturday 21 October 2023 Thurrock's Member of Youth Parliament (MYP), along with one worker, attended the Youth Voice Conference at Writtle University College in Chelmsford. The day was planned and delivered by young people with the support of Essex Boys and Girls Clubs, Essex Council for Voluntary Youth Services, Essex Police and Essex Violence and Vulnerability Unit. The conference saw young people and professionals attend with a day full of guest speakers, workshops, and a market stall area with lots of information and services for young people to access.

Thurrock's MYP also delivered a Stay Spike Safe workshop to young people as part of his Spiking campaign. During the workshop young people explored what spiking is, listened to victim's stories, discussed common misconceptions, and looked at the risks. They also shared gadgets to prevent being spiked, such as bottle stoppers and CYD drink testers. *See Appendix A image.*

The conference was a great success. It was an opportunity to share knowledge and skills, network with other areas and build new working relationships with other youth councils in Essex whilst celebrating the importance of youth voice.

### 1.3 **SEND Youth Voice**

Thurrock Youth Cabinet are currently in the process of developing a new strand to our work to encompass SEND Youth Voice. We have felt for some time that this is an area of growth to ensure that the voices of SEND young people are captured in our work.

We are planning a Youth Voice drop-in event for SEND young people on Wednesday 29 November 2023 from 6:30pm – 8pm in Grays, to start capturing views and opinions. This will be hosted by the Youth Cabinet with the support staff. We would be grateful if you could support us to promote this event. *See Appendix B image.*

### 1.4 **Knife Crime Awareness Campaign**

A Thurrock Youth Cabinet member is currently in the process of starting a Knife Crime Awareness Campaign in the borough. This will not only raise awareness of the dangers of carrying a knife but also inform young people of the location of the knife bin in Grays. Currently, many young people seem to be unaware of its location.

As mentioned, the campaign is in the beginning stages. So far, the Youth Cabinet member has gained the backing of Essex Police and the Ben Kinsella Trust who will provide support and guidance where needed to the Youth Cabinet member.

The Ben Kinsella Trust has also invited all Youth Cabinet members to their Knife Crime Exhibition in Barking with the opportunity to also take part in a free Knife Crime workshop. We plan to visit in the early new year, which will help to inform the growth and direction of the campaign. We look forward to sharing more details about this campaign over the coming months.

### 1.5 **Essex Wildlife Trust**

On Saturday 16 September 2023, nine members of the Youth Cabinet took part in the [Nextdoor Nature project](#) as part of an ongoing program of work. In partnership with Essex Wildlife Trust and Riverside Community Big Local, they hosted a small community event at Falcon Woods, following the success of the litter pick in June.

The event was an opportunity for residents to drop in, share their views and learn more about the work that the groups have been doing.

Youth Cabinet members created and designed the content of the event. There was an Ideas Zone to capture residents' views on how the site could evolve. As well as a Voting Area to talk about potential changes to the area. There was also an Activity Space for younger members of the community make bug hotels for the site or their own garden.

Key outcomes were:

- Nine members of the Youth Cabinet attended and ran the event with support from Essex Wildlife Trust & Riverside Community Big Local Group.
- Twenty-two members of the community/public engaged with the event and took part in the activities and had a say.
- Eleven members of the public signed up to support with on-going maintenance on the site.

Overall, the event was a success and Youth Cabinet members are looking forward to linking with residents and supporting ongoing activities, consultations, and changes to the site to help nature on our doorsteps. *See Appendix C image.*

## 1.6 **Work on the horizon**

- On Friday 17 November 2023 Thurrock's Member of Youth Parliament (MYP) will be attending the House of Commons, along with all other MYP's from across the UK. Once there, they will sit on the green benches and debate on the five chapters of the Food for Learning Bill.
- On Saturday 9 December all Youth Cabinet members will have the opportunity to attend the British Youth Council Youth Conference which will be a day of guest speakers, workshops, and networking.
- Next year the Make Your Mark campaign will run again. The campaign will give all young people aged 11-18 in the UK a chance to vote on the biggest issues they feel young people face today. We will ask for your support in promoting this campaign early next year. Alongside Make your Mark, elections for Thurrock's new Member of Youth Parliament (MYP) will also take place. Thurrock has eight MYP candidates that will be running in 2024.
- Thurrock Youth Cabinet's recruitment drive is currently in progress. We are looking for student representation from the following schools:
  - Ormiston Park Academy
  - Harris Academy Riverside
  - St Clere's School
  - The Gateway Academy
  - Thames Park Secondary School

If you have connections with these schools, please ask them to get in touch at [youthcabinet@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:youthcabinet@thurrock.gov.uk) to book a meeting. The Youth Cabinet lead worker is happy to attend the school to discuss the Youth Cabinet with students.

## Appendix


### Appendix A




Thurrock's MYP delivering Stay Spike Safe Workshop at the Youth Voice Conference



Appendix B

Youth Voice drop-in Event on Wednesday 29 November 2023



  **THURROCK COUNCIL**  **INSPIRE**  
YOUR FUTURE

**YOUTH VOICE DROP-IN EVENT HOSTED BY THURROCK YOUTH CABINET**

**Are you 16-25 years old?**

Would you like to have a say on life, learning and living in Thurrock?

If so, Thurrock Youth Cabinet would like to hear from you!


**Do you identify as neurodiverse, additional needs, special needs, SEND**  
(Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) ?

**Join a new Youth Voice group and turn your ideas into action.**

To find out more come along to our drop-in event.

**Wednesday 29th November 2023**  
drop in from 6.30pm-8pm  
**Inspire Youth Hub, 24-28 Orsett Road, Grays, RM17 5EB**  
(free parking at back of building)

- Meet Youth Cabinet members and staff
- Have your say on a debate topic
- Get a taster for the things we talk about and take action on
- Ask any questions
- Find out when the new group starts
- Parents/carers welcome to attend

 **Register your interest at**  
**[youthvoice@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:youthvoice@thurrock.gov.uk)**



Appendix C

The Falcon Woods Community Event on Saturday 16 September 2023

