

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT REVIEW TASK AND FINISH PANEL – 22 JUNE 2015

INFORMATION ON YOUTH COUNCILS – OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Introduction

At the inaugural meeting of the Panel on 20 April 2015 Members, when agreed that it would be useful, for comparative purposes, to have information with regard to youth councils in a range of other local authority areas. Accordingly, set out below, in bullet-point format, are the key features from a number of authorities which have active youth councils.

The information supplied at this stage is taken from the web-sites of the local authorities, youth councils and programmes referred to as set out in early May 2015. The intention is to speak directly with the youth officers concerned regarding their current activities/initiatives and report on the outcome of those discussions at the Panel meeting.

Harlow Youth Council

- Elections are held each year in December on a town-wide basis in secondary schools and some youth groups.
- Formed in 2002 and consists of a locally elected group of 13-19 year olds
- Elected Youth Councillors stand for 2 years and can re-stand after 2 years if they are under 20 years of age.
- Full Youth Council meetings, held at the Civic Centre, are open to the public and are held on the first working Monday of each month.
- The Youth Council offers specific dates throughout its calendar for the purposes of consultation with, and presentations from, other agencies and organisations.
- Responsibilities of Youth Councillors include attending meetings – Youth Council meetings, Harlow Council meetings on occasions and a variety of community meetings and events.
- Collects information about young people including from the young people themselves, Harlow Council, Essex County Council, local youth organisations and conducts surveys/questionnaires
- Listens to young people and feeds back their views where appropriate to adult Councillors for their consideration and action if appropriate
- Anti-bullying campaign
- Links to British Youth Council, Childcare and Kidscape, NSPCC, Rise Above-Health and Well-being, the Samaritans and Young Essex Assembly.

St Albans

- St Albans Youth Council is a group of young people between the ages of 11-19 from across the District of St Albans.
- It lobbies the Council on local youth issues, raises money for charities, researches local youth issues and acts as a voice for young people.
- The Film Club is a new youth specific cinema showing films for any young people aged 11-19 at a discounted rate.
- Six of the Youth Councillors attended a Five Ways to Wellbeing Conference and gave a key note presentation and organised a workshop highlighting the gap in provision between a young person seeking support from their GP for a mental health issue and any meaningful help in beginning to deal with difficulties. .

In the past two years the Youth Council has:

- Produced a Mental Health Report covering 2,500 people which was presented to the House of Lords to the Deputy Prime Minister

- Appeared in local media, including BBC Three Counties 'Shrink Wrapped'
- Supported a variety of charities such as Youth Talk
- Helped provide young people with free school transport

Hillingdon Young People/Youth Council

- Hillingdon Youth Council is 'the voice for young people who live, study or work in the borough'.
- Elections are held annually.
- The Youth Council meets every Monday and is involved in planning and facilitating the annual youth conference, carrying out the project work based on the needs expressed by young people.
- It meets with the Borough's Corporate Management Team every three months and raises issues concerning young people.
- Carries out project work about issues raised at the annual conference e.g. sexual health issues.
- Attends specific department meetings to ensure young people are involved in decision-making.
- It gets actively involved in the design and delivery of services for young people.
- Enables Hillingdon's two members of the UK Youth Parliament to receive feedback from young people and vice versa.
- Disability Multi Sports Club
- Velocity Programme
- Aims are set out in the Youth Council manifesto.

Bromley Youth Support Programme and Youth Hubs

- Bromley has a Youth Council which operates on a basis very similar to that at Epping Forest District
- The Youth Support Programme brings together different services for young people including the work undertaken by the Youth Council.
- The programme is for young people from Year 6 up to 19 (or 25 if the young person has a disability).
- It offers four locality youth centres (hubs) providing activities and support based on the needs of the locality.
- The centres are open at a variety of times including day time, evenings and weekends.
- It has set up a project for young people with disabilities.
- It has a mobile team which visits areas of the borough with a 'music and kitchen' bus
- Has a dedicated Duke of Edinburgh Team.
- A youth involvement team through which young people can have their say about issues affecting them.

Summary and Conclusion

The local authorities assessed were chosen because of the more extensive breadth of their youth councils. The work being carried out at other several other local authorities was also looked at but in many instances consisted of no more than a brief summary on a website with a link to Twitter or Facebook which then 'tailed off'. In that regard, in comparative terms, the work being carried in Epping Forest is more extensive and impressive.