

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting6th September 2012

1. Title of Item/Report

Youth Participation

2. Record of the Decision

Consideration was given to a report on the arrangements for the election of the Member of the Youth Parliament (MYP) and establishment of a more representative and democratically appointed Youth Assembly.

Through the PIC network a Shadow Youth Board (SYB) was established as a strategic initiative to ensure young people's views were represented within the Children's Trust Board. The young people involved were volunteers and not democratically elected. To date the remit of the SYB had been limited and not linked to the Council's decision making structures and scrutiny processes.

As part of the Youth Services EIT review, the Children and Young People Select Committee asked that the future involvement of young people on the Children and Young People Select Committee be formalised through the introduction of appropriate engagement mechanisms.

For some time there had been a recognized need to establish a new structure establishing a more representative and democratically elected Youth Assembly. The new structure would:-

- Work with young people directly in youth led action projects
- Actively encourage youth involvement and community change
- Involve young people in innovative and accessible ways, take part in consultations to guide the work we do as a Council
- Provide information to young people about our projects, the work of the Council and other youth services

Training and support would be provided in order to enable the young people involved to take part in new opportunities.

It was proposed that the new model:-

- would replace the current Shadow Youth Board with a more

representative “Youth Assembly” made up of representatives from a range of existing youth forums (e.g. school councils, BME, young carers, sixth forms, special needs reps and the UK Member of the youth parliament;

- that the MYP should be a representative on the youth assembly so that young people’s voices in the Borough were heard on a local, regional and national level;
- local youth elections for YMP and the Youth Assembly were held with support from Democratic Services, electoral services;

IYSS to work closely with Democratic Services to include a broader referral process for future MYPs, closer links with the schools and develop an action plan to work towards a 2013 election option. This would also raise awareness in schools, colleges/ youth forums etc.

The British Youth Council had published a guide for staff, Councillors and young people involved in youth voice activities within the local authority. The guide set out a toolkit for local authorities to test the strength of their youth voice arrangements underpinned by principles which should inform the involvement of young people in decision making. Members were provided with details of the principles.

The self-assessment toolkit posed a series of questions with some indicators of best practice and was attached to the report.

It was proposed that the youth assembly be established in line with guiding principles set out above and the indicators of best practice (with the exception that budgets and communications could be coordinated by the Council).

Membership would be drawn from 11 – 19 year olds (up to 25 year olds for young people with special needs). Representation would be drawn in the first instance from:-

- School Councils (secondary)
- Sixth Forms and Colleges
- Universal Youth Clubs
- BME (via Cornerhouse)
- Young Carers (via Eastern Ravens)
- LDD Representatives plus appropriate Advocacy Support (possibly via Special Schools but not mutually exclusive to one organisation)
- LAC/ Care Leavers (via CiC Council)
- Special Interest Groups
- Member of the UK Youth Parliament

It was proposed that the Area Youth Boards were not retained under the new model and that their role was replaced by the new Youth Assembly; arguably the Youth Assembly would be more representative and could still have the capacity to facilitate area based youth work. Communications with Elected Members on the proposed new ways of working would be critical.

Membership of the youth assembly would need to be kept under review with other groups/ bodies added to the membership as appropriate.

It would be for each school and group to agree their own internal mechanisms for nominations to the youth assembly and it was suggested that appropriate democratic processes were in place to achieve this.

It was proposed that Terms of Office would be two years in line with the term of office of the UK Youth Parliament member.

Once established it would be essential that the youth assembly had a wider voice in community matters and the ability to feed into/ support the Council's decision making structures.

Democratic Services would manage the development of the work programme and meetings, which would also enable stronger links to be established between the Youth Assembly and Council decision making structures, in addition to providing other support (e.g. induction and ongoing development). IYSS would continue to provide wider engagement and support to the young people involved.

Cabinet was asked to consider the new model which would then be subject to consultation with young people and stakeholders prior to implementation at the start of the next municipal year to tie in with the elections for the MYP.

The current MYP was appointed from young people in the Borough who had expressed an interest in being involved with the UK Youth Parliament. It was proposed that, in future, local youth elections for the MYP were organized by Democratic Services, Electoral Services.

Electoral Services would be developing detailed arrangements, in conjunction with IYSS and key partners, for elections to take place possibly in February 2013. These would follow a similar approach to any other elections.

Following Cabinet consideration, the proposed model and approach would be subject to consultation with young people and stakeholders.

RESOLVED that:-

1. the new model, which would be implemented at the start of the next municipal year, to tie in with the elections for the MYP, be noted.
2. consultation take place with young people and stakeholders including the existing Shadow Youth Board.

3. Reasons for the Decision

To establish a new structure establishing a more representative and democratically elected Youth Assembly.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

Councillor Beall declared a personal interest in the item entitled Youth Participation as he was Chairman of the East Ravens Trust Board.

6. Details of any Dispensations

Not applicable

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Midnight on Friday 14 September 2012

Proper Officer
10 September 2012