

CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

29 NOVEMBER 2012

**REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

CABINET DECISION

Children and Young People – Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Ann McCoy
Corporate Management and Finance – Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor David Harrington

YOUTH PARTICIPATION

1. Summary

This report follows approval by Cabinet (6th September 2012) of the proposed draft new model for the election of the Member of Youth Parliament (MYP) and establishment of a more representative and democratically appointed Stockton Youth Assembly (SYA) which is currently the subject of consultation with young people and stakeholders.

The report outlines proposals for each of the key areas of activity to be undertaken; identifies officer responsibility in each case, and suggests a proposed timeline for the whole process (**Appendix 1**).

2. Recommendations

1. Cabinet approve the proposals for the development of the new model for Youth Participation, and any further ancillary matters be delegated to the Corporate Director of Children, Education & Social Care for determination in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Children & Young People and Corporate Management and Finance.
2. Consultation be held with existing members of the Shadow Youth Board regarding the options identified at paragraph 14 in respect of the Chair and Vice Chair arrangements of the Assembly for its first year.
3. The outcome of the consultation carried out with young people and stakeholders to date, be noted.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision(s)

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

4. Members' Interests

Members (including co-opted Members) should consider whether they have a personal interest in any item as defined in **paragraphs 9 and 11** of the Council's code of conduct

and, if so, declare the existence and nature of that interest in accordance with and/or taking account of **paragraphs 12 - 17** of the code.

Where a Member regards him/herself as having a personal interest, as described in **paragraph 16** of the code, in any business of the Council he/she must then, **in accordance with paragraph 18** of the code, consider whether that interest is one which a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest and the business:-

- affects the members financial position or the financial position of a person or body described in **paragraph 17** of the code, or
- relates to the determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to the member or any person or body described in **paragraph 17** of the code.

A Member with a personal interest, as described in **paragraph 18** of the code, may attend the meeting but must not take part in the consideration and voting upon the relevant item of business. However, a member with such an interest may make representations, answer questions or give evidence relating to that business before the business is considered or voted on, provided the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose whether under a statutory right or otherwise (**paragraph 19** of the code)

Members may participate in any discussion and vote on a matter in which they have an interest, as described in **paragraph 18** of the code, where that interest relates to functions of the Council detailed in **paragraph 20** of the code.

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

It is a criminal offence for a member to participate in any discussion or vote on a matter in which he/she has a disclosable pecuniary interest (and where an appropriate dispensation has not been granted) **paragraph 21** of the code.

Members are required to comply with any procedural rule adopted by the Council which requires a member to leave the meeting room whilst the meeting is discussing a matter in which that member has a disclosable pecuniary interest (**paragraph 22** of the code)

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

29 NOVEMBER 2012

**REPORT OF
CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

YOUTH PARTICIPATION-DEVELOPMENT OF NEW MODEL

SUMMARY

This report follows approval by Cabinet (6th September 2012) of the proposed draft new model for the election of the Member of Youth Parliament (MYP) and establishment of a more representative and democratically appointed Stockton Youth Assembly (SYA) which is currently the subject of consultation with young people and stakeholders.

The report outlines proposals for each of the key areas of activity to be undertaken; identifies officer responsibility in each case, and suggests a proposed timeline for the whole process (**Appendix 1**).

RECOMMENDATION

1. Cabinet approve the proposals for the development of the new model for Youth Participation, and any further ancillary matters be delegated to the Corporate Director of Children, Education & Social Care for determination in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Children & Young People and Corporate Management and Finance.
2. Consultation be held with existing members of the Shadow Youth Board regarding the options identified at paragraph 14 in respect of the Chair and Vice Chair arrangements of the Assembly for its first year.
3. The outcome of the consultation carried out with young people and stakeholders to date, be noted.

BACKGROUND

1. The new model for Youth Participation:-
 - replaces the former 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;
 - provides that the MYP should be a representative on the youth assembly so that young people's voices in the Borough are heard on a local, regional and national level;
 - ensures that local youth elections for YMP and the Youth Assembly are held every two years with support from Democratic Services, Electoral Services;
 - encourages IYSS to work with young people directly in youth led action projects, actively encouraging youth involvement and community change;
 - seeks to involve young people in innovative and accessible ways, taking part in consultations to guide the work we do as a Council;

- provides information to young people about our projects, the work of the Council and other youth services.
2. The guiding principles for the model were to be based on guidance provided by the British Youth Council (BYC) as follows:
- Youth people have the *opportunity* to be involved in making decisions on what their involvement should be and which vehicle is used;
 - Youth Voice Vehicle (YVV) should have a clear *vision and purpose* shared by young people and understood by the local authority and support providers;
 - Local authorities should recognize the value of involving young people in decision making at a strategic level and make *sufficient resources* available to support their involvement;
 - YVVs should be *inclusive* of young people from different backgrounds and with different needs and should ensure that their ways of working do not exclude or discriminate against specific groups;
 - YVV should be *representative of the diversity* of the young people living in the local authority area;
 - Adults involved in supporting, advising and liaising with YVVs should fully *understand and support the processes of young people's involvement*;
 - Young people should be involved in developing and deciding on appropriate *resources, support and training* required to establish a productive environment for young people's participation;
 - YVVs and local authorities should be *outward focused* and draw on good practice in other settings and organizations;
 - YVVs and local authorities should regularly *access the impact* of young people's involvement to ensure that investment in young people's voice is making a difference to young people's lives;
 - YVVs and local authorities should be able to *articulate the benefits* they have seen from involving young people in decision making.
3. Following Cabinet on the 6th September 2012, ongoing discussions and consultations are taking place with young people already involved in a variety of groups including the shadow board and the young people involved will support the transition to the new SYA. In addition our Youth Providers Network (an inclusive group of partners and organisations involved in providing services for young people) have also been informed / consulted on the proposed changes during their routine meetings. Responses / feedback received has been supportive to the proposed more effective model of youth engagement and participation for young people in Stockton.
4. Membership of SYA was to be drawn from 11 – 19 year olds (up to 25 year olds for young people with special needs) from the following groups in the first instance:
- School Councils (secondary), Academies, Independents and Sixth Forms (1 member from each)
 - Colleges (1 Member from each)
 - Universal Youth Clubs (1 Member from each township – Stockton Billingham Ingleby Barwick Thornaby and Yarm)
 - BME (via Cornerhouse) (2 Members)
 - Young Carers (via Eastern Ravens) (2 Members)
 - LDD Representatives plus appropriate Advocacy Support (possibly via Special Schools but not mutually exclusive to one organisation) (2 Members)
 - LAC/ Care Leavers (via CiC Council) (1 Member from LAC 1 member from CIC Lets take Action Group)
 - Member of the UK Youth Parliament (1 Member)

DETAIL

NOMINATION OF REPRESENTATIVES TO THE SYA

5. In order to seek nominations to the SYA from each of the above representative groups, it is necessary in the first instance to identify contacts for each of the representative groups identified at paragraph 4, and for their attention to be drawn to the aims of the new proposed model for both the election of the MYP and establishment of a more representative and democratically appointed Youth Assembly. Given CESC's already close involvement with many of the organisations listed, it is suggested that they undertake this initial task with a view to providing a contact database that can be used to support the nomination process and at the same time continuing the awareness-raising of the new proposed model introduced through the consultation process.
6. Thereafter it will be necessary for officers from Democratic Services and CESC to jointly consider how many representatives from each of the groups should be sought based on the likely size and number of groups identified. It is suggested that nominations be sought from each group as identified at paragraph 4, plus a substitute. Democratic Services will then write to each of the groups identified seeking the appropriate number of nominations.
7. Given the need for links to be established between the Assembly and the Council's decision making processes, it may also be appropriate to consider representation by an elected member. The British Youth Council advocate the identification of a 'Youth Voice Champion' at elected member level. To date, given their respective responsibility for both Children & Young People and Democratic Services, the Cabinet Members for Children & Young People and the Cabinet Member for Corporate Management & Finance have been consulted regards the development of the proposed model for Youth Participation and it is suggested that each be appointed to the SYA to strengthen the links between the Assembly and Cabinet, thereby increasing the membership proposed at paragraph 4 by a further two members.
8. A pre-requisite to the success of the SYA will be the support from skilled youth workers who are able to engage with and support young people in a range of ways with e.g. mentoring, meeting additional needs, and ensuring appropriate advice to enable young people to maximize their access to the opportunities open to them.

ELECTIONS

9. Our current MYP was appointed from young people in the Borough who had expressed an interest in being involved with the UK Youth Parliament. It is proposed that, in future, local youth elections for the MYP are organized on a more formal basis by Democratic Services, Electoral Services and that an opportunity be given to the outgoing MYP to raise awareness of the elections and give an outgoing address reflecting on his own time in office.
10. Electoral Services will be developing detailed arrangements, in conjunction with IYSS, young people and schools, for elections to take place possibly in February 2013.
11. The proposed approach will require support from secondary schools across the Borough and therefore the logistics and practicalities of the elections process will need to be discussed and agreed with the schools involved. It is likely that the approach will involve:
 - IYSS undertaking engagement and awareness raising to encourage young people within secondary schools to stand as a candidate (aged between 11 and 18 and living or attending a school within the Borough); nominations to be received by a deadline date;
 - Publicity via existing communication channels (e.g. school bulletins, IYSS programmes, social media);
 - Two year term of office; first past the post voting system to be used with runner up elected as deputy;

- Electoral Services to administer an open nominations process and collate statements supporting each candidate for publication in a leaflet/ poster;
- Ballot papers and ballot boxes to be circulated to participating schools with consideration being given by the school to electronic voting where possible. It is proposed that voting would take place over a designated week with a count taking place at the end of that week.

SYA TERMS OF REFERENCE

12. It is proposed that the term of office for each representative appointed to the SYA be for two years in line with the term of office of the UK Youth Parliament member. Membership of the assembly would however need to be kept under review with other groups/ bodies added to the membership as appropriate as determined by the assembly themselves with assistance for nomination provided by officers.
13. It will be necessary for the SYA to have in place its own Terms of Reference or Constitution regulating how it will operate. To this aim, Democratic Services will develop a draft Terms of Reference for consideration and approval by the new assembly at its first meeting. This will include indicators of best practice identified by the British Youth Council such as:-
 - the production of an annual manifesto/work plan endorsed by its members,
 - a brief description of its purpose,
 - responsibilities of membership,
 - provision for the election of a Chair and Vice Chair to be appointed annually,
 - arrangements for officer support,
 - voting arrangements,
 - frequency of meetings and preferred venue,
 - code of conduct/conflicts of interest,
 - quorum,
 - CRB arrangements.
 - reporting arrangements to the Council's decision making structure,
 - the production of an annual report on activities,
 - annual review of membership.
14. With regard to the election of a Chair and Vice Chair, it would be a matter for the SYA at its first meeting to determine from its membership who the most appropriate persons would be, and the term of office for each. Options for consideration regards the Chair and Vice Chair positions could include:-
 - (i) that in its first year of operation, the Assembly utilize the experience of its membership and appoint the Elected member with portfolio responsibility for Children and Young People as its Chair;
 - (ii) that again for its first year of operation, Stockton's Elected Member of the UK Youth Parliament be appointed as the Vice Chair of the Assembly , supported by the Elected member with portfolio responsibility for Corporate Management and Finance ;
 - (iii) in the second year of operation the Vice Chair succeed to Chair with a vice being drawn from and agreed by the Membership with the two Elected Members remaining in a champion and supporting role;
 - (iv) the reverse of options i-iii) above be applied and Stockton's Elected Member of the UK Youth Parliament be appointed as the Chair of the Assembly for the first year, with the Vice Chair position taken by one of the two Cabinet members on the Assembly;
 - (v) no elected members be eligible to serve as Chair or Vice Chair on the Assembly, and that these positions be filled by the remaining membership of the Assembly.

DEVELOPMENT OF WORK PLAN

15. In order to ensure the youth assembly has a wider voice in community matters and the ability to feed into/ support the Council's decision making structures, it is proposed that an Annual Borough Debate be held and attendance be held open for each of the Council's elected representatives and appropriate stakeholders including representatives of the Health & Wellbeing Board and Police & Crime Panel, thereby fulfilling the aim of establishing effective links with statutory boards. It is hoped that such a debate could support the establishment of appropriate priorities for the work plan for the forthcoming year including success measures to help monitor the impact of the work undertaken. The content could be shaped by factors such as the outcomes of the first Youth Residents Viewpoint Panel; the National UK Youth Parliament priorities; and local priorities such as the Council Plan, the Health & Wellbeing Strategy, and the Police & Crime Plan.
16. As part of the development of its work plan, officers from CESC will assist the Assembly in being accountable to the youth population of the area, including identifying appropriate consultees and stakeholders for each issue. Democratic Services will assist in this process by identifying an appropriate Forward Plan module that can be used within the Council's E-Genda system to contain the Assembly's work plan. This plan will be available on the Council's website and will contain details of how people can engage and influence issues to be considered by the Assembly.
17. Arrangements for the first Annual Borough Debate, which could be held in April/May 2013 following the election of the Assembly and could be linked to existing democratic events, would be co-ordinated by both officers from Democratic Services and CESC, along with other relevant officers of the Council as required. Given the likely audience anticipated, it may be necessary to consider the use of a large auditorium in central Stockton, such as the Baptist Tabernacle.
18. The Youth Assembly could be asked to comment on Council consultations, scrutiny reviews and undertaking consultations themselves around the priorities set. A dialogue between the Youth Assembly and Select Committees could help to inform each other's work programmes with the Youth Assembly being asked to propose topics for in depth scrutiny review to scrutiny liaison forum and vice versa. It may also be that the Youth Assembly could carry out complementary work/ consultation to support scrutiny work.

MEETINGS OF THE ASSEMBLY

19. Subject to approval of its terms of reference, it is proposed that meetings of the SYA be held bi-monthly at the new My Place facilities at the North Shore Academy. Agendas for the meetings will be issued by Democratic Services utilizing the Council's E-Genda system, with items provided by officers from CESC and other stakeholders on behalf of the Assembly.
20. Democratic Services will also provide meeting management support and produce minutes for each meeting which in turn will be reported to the next meeting of the Assembly for approval. Agendas, reports and minutes of the Assembly will be made public via a link to the Council's website and all information regarding the Assembly will be hosted within the Council's Democratic Information section on the website. The opportunity exists to link this information to other areas of the website dedicated to Youth Participation.

LINKS TO YOUTH VIEWPOINT PANEL

21. Policy, Improvement and Engagement is responsible for the Council's adult and young residents' panels. Previously known as Youth Viewpoint, the young residents' panel is in the process of being reconfigured, and renamed, with a view to distributing the first questionnaire to the refreshed young residents' panel in early 2013. The reconfiguration work will begin in

November 2012, aiming to create a statistically representative panel of 1,100 young people from across the Borough (including young people who are NEET, 'looked after' and participating in a youth offending scheme) who are aged 10 – 19 years. It will also include young people with learning disabilities aged up to 25 years. Once established, the Panel will provide officers in the Council and partner organisations a way to engage with young residents about service and policy planning, development and improvement. It will also be able to help inform and evaluate the work of the Borough's Youth Assembly from April 2013. Once established, the Panel will be available for consultation 3 times per annum (once in Autumn, once in Spring and once again in Summer).

AWARENESS RAISING AND PUBLICITY WITHIN THE COUNCIL AND EXTERNALLY

22. Officers from CESC will need to ensure and assist the development of a clear Communications Strategy which will be vital to the formation of a successful Youth Assembly. The strategy will be required to raise awareness initially of the proposal for change, facilitate the implementation of the new approach and finally contribute towards the sustainability of the SYA. Reference should be made to the indicators of best practice contained in the BYC YVV toolkit.
23. Democratic Services, through delivery of its Community Engagement Strategy, will assist in promoting the opportunities for young people to be involved with the Youth Assembly. There will be a need for CESC to identify an appropriate Link Officer/s to support the Assembly.
24. It is proposed that an Annual Report at the end of each year is prepared setting out what has been achieved this could usefully be presented to the Children & Young People Select Committee as part of the annual overview meeting. This may also inform ongoing scrutiny work. Copies of the report would be provided to all members and stakeholders.

MEMBER INDUCTION AND ON-GOING DEVELOPMENT

25. As part of its proposed terms of reference, it is suggested that role descriptors for both membership and Chair/Vice Chair positions on the Assembly be developed and shared during the nomination process so as to explain the role and expected commitment of membership. Democratic Services will assist CESC in identifying appropriate role descriptors in this regard.
26. The Assembly will also be supported by both CESC and Democratic Services in identifying an appropriate Induction Programme for its members, which may include an overview from specific service providers, including from within the Council, and an explanation of the opportunities for the Assembly to influence and engage within the Council's decision making structure. Democratic Services and officers from CESC will also assist in identifying and providing appropriate training and mentoring for young people taking on representative roles within the Assembly.
27. As part of both the opportunities for mentoring and engagement with the Council, Democratic Services and CESC will also seek to provide opportunities to allow the Assembly to shadow Cabinet members and senior Council officials. Similar informal arrangements already exist in respect of the MYP which can be developed to suit the needs of the Assembly.

CONSULTATION

28. Paragraph 3 refers.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

29. None arising from this report

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

30. Participation work will need to be met from within existing budgets. Consultation by / with Youth viewpoint to be met from existing budgets. Quote based on secondary school roll numbers for printing costs for UKYP Election £1K to be met from existing budgets.

RISK ASSESSMENT

31. This report is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

32. The new model will require an appropriate risk assessment from the perspective of the young people taking part in both the Youth Assembly and in respect of MYP.

COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS

33. Stronger Communities.

Head of Democratic Services

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Background Papers: None

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors: Not Ward Specific

Property Implications: None