



East
Northamptonshire
Council

Policy and Resources Committee – 17 January 2011

New model for involving and engaging young people

Purpose of report

To ask Members to adopt a new model for involving and engaging young people in local issues. The model has been developed in consultation with schools, youth groups and others and will replace the existing Youth Council.

Attachment(s)

None

1.0 Background

- 1.1 At its meeting on 11 October 2010 (minute 214 refers), the Policy and Resources Committee approved proposals to consult with schools, youth groups and relevant organisations in East Northamptonshire, around a future model for involving and engaging young people.
- 1.2 East Northamptonshire has a Youth Council. Although it has been able to contribute to topical issues in East Northamptonshire, it has limitations for encouraging all young people to get involved with developments in their local areas.
- 1.3 With Big Society and Localism agendas taking effect, a different approach is needed so young people across all groups are encouraged to participate.

2 Consultation and discussion on the new model

- 2.1 Proposals for a new model have been discussed with the Youth Council, teachers responsible for the student councils in the schools and representatives from Service Six, the youth services provider in East Northamptonshire and Wellingborough.
- 2.2 Youth Councillors have indicated their wish to be involved in what is taking place or planned in their local areas. Several of them are already involved in local community issues either through their schools or groups outside school life. In addition to this the schools are mindful that learning can be enhanced when studies are linked to local community matters. In particular, studies around humanities across key stages 3, 4 and 5 look closely at how people from different backgrounds come together and form local communities.
- 2.3 Our current Area Based Initiatives (ABI) in Rushden and Irthlingborough have been of interest to the schools' Extended Services programme, which provides additional support for learning beyond the National Curriculum. A project at Huxlow Science College is helping students develop their skills and create a community space at the school. From this it is envisaged that students will be encouraged to participate in developments and projects in and around Irthlingborough.
- 2.4 As part of Youth Council meetings, Youth Councillors exchange the top issues each Student Council is looking at. In many cases the issues are relevant to more than one school and the Youth Councillors want to develop more effective communication links between the schools for tackling them jointly.
- 2.5 As part of its contract, Service Six has specific targets for engaging young people in positive activities and volunteering activities. The main part of this will be through

detached youth work in local areas. However it does see opportunities for the development of the voluntary activities through closer working with East Northamptonshire Council, schools and other partner organisations.

- 2.6 One of the key roles the Youth Council has is considering applications for funding from the County Council's Youth Opportunities Fund (YOF). It also has £5,000 available each year as Youth Council Grants to support local youth projects. YOF is coming to an end in March 2011 and all of the funding for 2010/11 has been allocated. Both Youth Councillors and the schools have suggested that if the Youth Council Grants (£5,000) are retained, the Student Councils could support the process of considering applications in the future.

3. New model

- 3.1 It is proposed that the current Youth Council continues with its programme of meetings in this school year 2010/11; the last meeting will be in March 2011. From September 2011 a new model will focus on working with the schools in two areas: -

1. Engaging and involving young people in local initiatives and projects through their schools.
2. Develop communication channels to involve young people in district-wide initiatives and consultations.

- 3.2 Our present Youth Councillors will be able to help shape the approaches to each of these areas. It will be necessary to develop a forward plan of local initiatives and projects and consultation activities in conjunction with the schools. This will ensure that things are programmed with exams and course work in mind.

- 3.3 Developing communication channels will give consideration to email networks, text messaging, blogs and where possible the use of social networking sites. The Community Partnerships team has experience with this from the ABI projects.

- 3.4 Although this new model moves away from scheduled meetings, it is proposed to hold an annual event for young people, such as a Youth Conference. This would give the opportunity for young people to meet with each other, take part in activities around topical issues and share ideas. Young people would be involved in the planning and preparation of such an event and lead aspects of it.

- 3.5 It is proposed that the Youth Council Grants be retained and renamed Youth Grants. The process of evaluating the applications to the scheme be done in conjunction with the Student Councils in the schools.

4. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 4.1 The current Youth Council tends to encourage more confident pupils to seek election. However the new model will increase opportunities for all young people to be involved in both local and district-wide issues regardless of background, race, age, gender, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation or academic ability. For this reason an Equalities Impact Assessment has not been carried out.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 There are no identified legal implications arising from this proposal.

6. Risk Management

- 6.1 There are no identified risks arising from this proposal.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 Currently £5,000 is made available both for the Youth Council Grants and running the Youth Council meetings. It is proposed that the Youth Council Grants be retained. Some financial provision will also be needed with the new model, mainly to support the annual conference event and where necessary any workshops around local issues.
- 7.2 Provision in 2011/12 budget has been set at £5,000. This will support the continuation of the current Youth Council Grants scheme and the new model from September 2011.

8. Corporate Outcomes

- 8.1 The new model will help deliver our corporate outcomes as follows: -
- 8.1.1 Good Quality of Life – Young people will be able to influence the development of their local communities, which in turn will support a better quality of life for them now and in the future.
- 8.1.2 Effective Partnership Working – Our links with the schools across the district will be strengthened, increasing the opportunities for young people to influence the way we develop and deliver services in the future.
- 8.1.3 Good Reputation – We will be seen as supporting the development of young people; providing opportunities for them to increase their skills and life chances.
- 8.1.4 Strong Community Leadership – We will use our enabling and influencing role to ensure young people have a say in their future.

9. Other issues to consider

- 9.1 Resources – The co-ordination of the new model will continue to be undertaken by the Community Partnerships team. The administrative functions of running the Youth Council meetings will be removed and the support for the new arrangements aligned to the day to day work of the team.

10 Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- Note the points identified from the consultation and discussion set out in section 2
- Approve the implementation of the new model for involving and engaging young people in East Northamptonshire set out in section 3.

Legal	Power: Local Government Act 2000
	Other considerations:
Background Papers: None	
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Date: 22 December 2010	
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(Committee Report Normal Rev. 22)