

Meeting:	CABINET
Date:	10 <sup>TH</sup> November 2005
Subject:	Young People's Participation Strategy
Responsible Officer:	Paul Clark
Contact Officer:	Richard Segalov
Portfolio Holder:	Social Care and Health
Key Decision:	No
Status:	Part 1

### **Section 1: Summary**

The vision of this draft strategy is for children and young people to actively participate in all service planning and delivery across the council, through meaningful engagement. This draft strategy is designed to provide:

- Practical assistance with implementation of that vision based around standards for good practice;
- A method for co-ordinating action taken towards the participation and involvement of children and young people across the council, and

A structure for reviewing and monitoring which ensures that all participation results in positive change.

In order to evaluate and scrutinise the overall implementation of the strategy, a **Monitoring group** consisting of young people, members of the participation team and elected members will be developed. **The role of elected members as community leaders and representatives of local communities is thus fundamental to the successful development of this group. Newly elected members will be given relevant information, training, and support to assist them in fulfilling this role.**

## Decision Required

Cabinet is asked to endorse the Strategy and to nominate Members to the Monitoring group as mentioned above.

## Reason for report

Participation is a central part of the Council's delivery against its Corporate Priorities. It is fundamental to the themes of Strengthening Communities and Valuing Harrow's customers. In addition, the new national framework for Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) aims to test how well councils understand their local communities, with one of the themes for assessments being children and young people.

## Benefits

The strategy for engaging children and young people will serve as an important pilot project for the Council's overall **Community Engagement Strategy (CES)**, which looks to co-ordinate and improve engagement activities across the Council and improve the quality of life for residents. As part of this, the initiative contributes to the council's engagement aim of delivering further activities, which, involve and collaborate with target groups, rather than simply consult.

## Cost of Proposals

**No additional funding is requested.** There is already a skilled participation group within People First Division as well as experienced and commitment in other service areas across the council.

## Risks

Missed opportunities to engage with a significant group of Harrow residents and benefit from their opinions.

## Implications if recommendations rejected

None

## **Section 2: Report**

### 2.1 Brief History

This (draft) participation strategy has been developed and written by a group of 15 young people, aged between 12 and 21 and living in Harrow, working alongside 3 participation workers, 2 participation co-ordinators and 2 independent consultants. The work has been ongoing since October 2004.

### 2.2 Options considered

To write the strategy without the direct involvement of young people. This option was rejected from the proposal.

### 2.3 Consultation

This strategy is based directly on research carried out by the young people over a five-month period between November 2004 and March 2005. A huge amount of time and effort was taken by the young people and the workers supporting them to ensure that a large number of children and young people were given the opportunity to feed in their ideas and to ensure that this process was meaningful. In total, they heard from over 100 children and young people via questionnaires, meetings, street interviews, schools, colleges and through children's services about their views on council services and how they would like to be involved in the future. Also interviewed were 20 adults working across all directorates of the council, some elected members, the Mayor and workers from the voluntary sector.

### 2.4 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications.

### 2.5 Legal Implications

Consultation with all service users is a key element in the new CPA Framework.

### 2.6 Equalities Impact

Effective participation of young people of different background and circumstances should be appreciated and positively valued. Article 12 of the United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) gives children and young people across communities the right to express their views on all matters that affect their lives and to have account taken of their views. The young people consulted on this strategy represent Harrow's diversity.

## **Section 3: Supporting Information/ Background Documents**

Appendix – Draft Participation Strategy – circulated in the Cabinet Supporting Documents Pack.