

REPORT FOR: CABINET

Date of Meeting:	19 July 2012
Subject:	Response to Overview and Scrutiny Committee Report 'Redefining Youth Engagement'
Key Decision:	No
Responsible Officer:	Catherine Doran, Corporate Director Children & Families
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Brian Gate, Portfolio Holder for Children, Schools and Families
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	Yes
Enclosures:	Voice, Influence, Action – Harrow Youth Parliament

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report is in response to the 'Redefining Youth Engagement' review, presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 30th May 2012, in particular to the fourteen recommendations contained within it. These are commented on individually in appendix 1.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is requested to note the report and delegate authority to the Corporate Director in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children, Schools and Families to develop and implement the response, in partnership

with local schools and the Harrow Youth Parliament.

This will include joint working with the Council's Grants' Panel and contact with those local authorities referred to in the report such as Camden, Hammersmith and Fulham and Tower Hamlets, each offering different approaches to youth engagement.

However it should also be noted that with the Council's focus on statutory and targeted work, significant decisions have previously been put into effect which have already removed many universal services for young people.

Reason: (for recommendation)

The Council's 'resident involvement' agenda aims to change the culture of youth engagement and to establish stronger links with young people living and being educated in the borough. This will inevitably be a dynamic process, requiring the commitment of officers across all departments and Councillors alike, and will take time to embed.

The 'Youth Engagement' report has already become a key document underpinning the work of the Youth Development Team within Children and Families' Service and is compatible with the priority actions of the Harrow Youth Parliament.

Bearing in mind the current operating model with the Children and Families' Service and the ongoing pressure to achieve further short and medium term savings, it is important to note that additional resources will be required in order to fully consider the cost benefits to the Council and to find external funding sources and sponsorship.

Section 2 – Report

The 'Redefining Youth Engagement' report was presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 30th May 2012. The subsequent discussion was led by the Chair of the review group, Councillor Silver, assisted by members of the Harrow Youth Parliament.

It was formally 'received' by Cabinet on the 20th June and for discussion at the July Cabinet.

It is an important report which builds on the work of a previous Scrutiny Review on a similar theme and makes reference to the 'Voice, Influence,

Action' protocol and guide of 2010, which at the time of publication received national acclaim.

The report aims to move the youth engagement agenda forward with a significant stride, particularly important in the context of the Harrow's ambition to be 'a Council that listens and leads' and the related 'Let's Talk' initiative.

There are approximately 22,000 teenagers living in the borough, many of whom already make a major contribution through volunteering, charity fundraising and unpaid community work. But most can and are willing to do more if encouraged and supported to do so. The ambition is to better co-ordinate youth engagement across the Council and to utilise to greater effect the experience and perspective of our younger residents to improve overall decision making.

As key partners, it is also important to work with schools and colleges in ways that acknowledge the opportunities, both individually and in groups, they already provide and to encourage further creativity and collaboration in the future.

The Harrow Youth Parliament (HYP) is set up to give young people across the borough a voice on local subjects of concern and to provide the means to influence decision makers on issues that affect them. In addition and particularly pertinent to this report, it also ensures policy makers act on their commitments through regular meetings with senior officers and portfolio holders (see appendix 2).

Although the HYP goes to great lengths to represent the widest possible cross section of young residents with a combination of school based elections (more than 12,000 young voters took part in the selection process in 2012) and co-opted representatives of minority groups, totalling a membership of 83, inevitably there are many who are not engaged and are as yet unable to feed into the HYP structures.

Through an improved communication strategy, being developed by the HYP, in conjunction with the Communications Team, reach into the youth population of the borough is being significantly improved. Some Councillors have already reported an increase in engagement with young constituents and there is evidence that involvement with the HYP elections, supported by the Council's Democratic Services, has impacted on recent participation in local and general elections as young people become eligible to vote at eighteen.

It is also accepted that there are potential financial benefits arising from improved youth engagement, as evidenced by the Institute for Public Policy Research which shows that early intervention and 'providing positive activities for young people can create a net saving, through reduced spending on the effects of social exclusion'.

However, in the past three years there has been a significant political and economic shift, with the consequent termination or removal of ring-fencing

from, a range of relevant Government grants (e.g. the Children's Fund, Youth Opportunity Fund, the Positive Activities for Young People Fund and Youth Capital Grant) and more than £1 million removed from the Children and Families Service youth budget, to meet the Council's medium term financial savings targets. As a consequence, many community-based activities and much of the support provided for youth engagement by dedicated Council staff, has been curtailed.

Within the financial constraints, the Council remains committed to a progressive approach to youth engagement, encouraging the work of the Youth Parliament and Child in Care Council (for 'looked after' young people) and for this year running or funding a range of holiday and after-school programmes, most developed in partnership with the Harrow Youth Parliament itself.

For 2012/13 the Youth Development Team in Children and Families' Service has already planned an extended National Citizen Programme and is in the process of commissioning a wide range of positive activities in conjunction with the local voluntary sector, making full use of our excellent local resources and buildings.

As a consequence, although all the recommendations are agreed in principle, cost implications and pre-existing arrangements, necessitate that the Council invests in only some of the recommendations at the present time. Although as Oliver Hurcum of the HYP has pointed out....

'the Council should understand that the social as well as the financial cost of failing to engage with young people could be far greater than the short-term expenditure required to improve such engagement'.

Financial Implications

Many of the actions detailed in the response to the recommendations will have revenue costs either as one offs (e.g. the hire of a venue for a conference, funding a publicity campaign or publication of a 'what's on' guide) or personnel costs (e.g. trainers for education programmes, IT specialists for web design or caretakers to cover extended opening hours of buildings).

Each recommendation would require funding to be identified before it can proceed. Where the cost is minimal or involves existing staff time then it is hoped it can be funded from existing Children and Families' Services budgets. However the larger projects, such as a return to a 'Summer Uni' programme or the appointment of a 'Young Mayor' scheme, would require dedicated staff and more substantial funding. There is also an expectation that the Harrow Youth Parliament will look to undertake some of its own fundraising and a campaign to achieve some commercial sponsorship is being considered.

Performance Issues

There is considerable evidence to indicate that positive engagement can be cost effective and when delivered in a timely and considered way helps transform the lives of vulnerable young people and families.

This is in part the rationale which underpins the new operating model within the Children and Families Service, early intervention being an important investment in the future of our communities as 'later interventions are considerably less effective if they have not had good foundations' (the Marmot Review 2010).

Particular performance indicators we would expect to see affected include:

- a reduction in the number of permanent and fixed term exclusions from high schools (23 pupils, representing 0.07% of school population received a permanent exclusion in 2010-11 compared with a national average of 0.08%. Top quartile performance is 0.03%. For fixed term exclusions, the numbers were 1143, 3.66% compared with national 4.46%, top quartile 3.35%)
- a reduction in the number of first-time entrants to the criminal justice system (Harrow's FTE rate per 10,000 young people between January and December 2011 was 597, compared with 'Youth Offending Team family' average of 590 and a London average of 891)
- narrowing the gap for children who are at risk of poorer education outcomes, through the better targeting of resources to those in greatest need
- improving practice and outcomes by addressing risk and protective factors at an early stage focusing on causes of problems not symptoms
- improving inter agency working by encouraging partners to think and work together to plan and deliver services in a seamless way
- increasing use involvement and staff satisfaction with a greater focus on reaching out to young people and families before crisis intervention becomes necessary
- an increase in the number of Council trained young mentors, volunteers and apprentices
- an increase in the number of local third sector organisations commissioned by the Council to provide positive activities for young people
- an increase in the number of young people engaged in sports, arts, drama and music at venues such as the Harrow Arts Centre, the Wealdstone Centre and the Cedars Youth and Community Centre

- 'saving money' by reducing the demand for intensive and expensive long-term interventions and improving the match between what is on offer and what is actually needed.
- Baseline data on each of the above is currently being collated for future comparison, but as with all Council actions, there need to be tangible outcomes and clarity as to the real difference being made.

Environmental Impact

There are no environmental impact implications arising from this report.

Risk Management Implications

Risk included on Directorate risk register? No

Separate risk register in place? No

There are no clearly identifiable risk implications but failure to engage young people in their local community and share ownership in the future of Harrow could in some cases lead to further youth disengagement and an increase in long-term unemployment and anti-social behaviour.

Equalities implications

Was an Equality Impact Assessment carried out? No

The timing of an Equality Impact Assessment has been discussed with the Policy and Partnership Team and they have advised that it should be carried out in conjunction with any key actions arising from the delivery plan.

Corporate Priorities

Successful youth engagement will impact on at least two of the corporate priorities:

- United and involved communities: A Council that listens and leads.
- Supporting and protecting people who are most in need.

As set out in the Scrutiny Committee report, young people have a stake in the Harrow community and are often the major users of public services – e.g. schools, transport, the town centre, leisure facilities, parks and open spaces.

It is important that young people have an opportunity to contribute to their design and development and can influence the decision and policy makers. In order to achieve this, individual Councillors and officers may need to reconsider how they engage with younger members of the public, in particular

the timing and location of meetings and the language and style of their presentation.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Emma Stabler	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date: 26 June 2012		
Name: Sarah Wilson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: 9 July 2012		

Section 4 – Performance Officer Clearance

Name: David Harrington	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Divisional Director Partnership, Development and Performance
Date: 22 June 2012		

Section 5 – Environmental Impact Officer Clearance

Name: John Edwards	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Divisional Director (Environmental Services)
Date: 22 June 2012		

Section 6 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Richard Segalov, Divisional Director, Early Intervention Services, Children and Families Service

Background Papers:

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Report – ‘Redefining Youth Engagement’ – dated 30th May 2012

**Call-In Waived by the
Chairman of Overview
and Scrutiny
Committee**

NOT APPLICABLE

[Call-in applies]

APPENDIX 1

**Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Redefining Youth Engagement
Report from Scrutiny Review Group May 2012**

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Review Group makes the following recommendations which are not given hierarchically but to follow the structure of the report’s discussion. These are intended to complement the Council’s direction of travel with regard to meeting the needs of young people and add some further thinking, based on what young people have told us through the course of our review:

RECOMMENDATIONS ON GENERAL POLICY DEVELOPMENT:

RECOMMENDATIONS:	ACTIONS:	BY WHOM & WHEN
<p>RECOMMENDATION 1: Designated corporate ownership of the Council’s responsibility around youth engagement that can be routinely measured should be introduced. The Corporate Director of Children and Families’ Service should take the strategic lead on behalf of the Corporate Strategic Board and work with the Harrow Youth Parliament to ensure that developments are regularly fed back to young people. The introduction of a new Youth Development Team in the new operating model for Children’s Service should be seen as an opportunity to adopt a more coordinated approach to youth engagement across the Council.</p> <p>Why? Because our mapping exercise of the Council’s engagement with young people found that current efforts are uncoordinated and are often ad hoc.</p>	<p>The Corporate Director accepts this lead responsibility on behalf of the Strategic Board and commits to working more closely with the HYP. This will include regular face to face contact, invitations to key meetings and work shadowing’ opportunities.</p> <p>It maybe that Cabinet would wish to nominate a lead Councillor, as suggested by Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 30th May.</p> <p>The HYP also ask that Portfolio Holders and other Councillors agree to be open to discussion with them so that can better understand actions taken and key decisions made.</p> <p>An offer has already been made by Councillor Perry, on behalf of Community, Sports and Cultural Services, to target young people when it consults on</p>	<p>Portfolio Holder Children, Schools and Families (PHCSF) Corporate Director Children and Families’ Service (CDCFS) Harrow Youth Parliament (HYP)</p>

	<p>major policy areas such as Library transformation and to seek out volunteering opportunities both in relation to sporting events and programming at the Harrow Arts Centre.</p> <p>The new Youth Development Team is currently establishing its role and responsibilities and is already looking to expand mentoring, volunteering and apprenticeships. It has strong relationships with statutory partners and credibility with some of the most hard to reach young people across the borough.</p> <p>In conjunction with the Children's Commissioning Team an audit is underway to ascertain current provision and need, with the intention of matching this to the future purchasing of services for young people.</p>	
<p>RECOMMENDATIONS:</p>	<p>ACTIONS:</p>	<p>BY WHOM & WHEN</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION 2: As part of the Council's review of children centres consideration should be given to the use and development of Council premises – including Neighbourhood Resource Centres, Cedars Centre and Wealdstone Youth Centre – for engaging young people around a specific set of outcomes (community volunteering, campaigning, communications, confidence building and understanding democracy). The sites should include services for teenagers, especially in areas where young people say they have nothing to do, nowhere to go and nowhere to call their own. Any future 'youth offer' should also make the most of what the</p>	<p>Included in the recent Children Centre community consultation and review, consideration was given to widening access to, and the availability of, the centres, for use by an older age group of young people. This was accepted by Cabinet in December and is built into the new arrangements, part of the 'hub and spoke' model. Each centre will have a 'user reference group / management board and young people will be encouraged to join and local volunteers encouraged to offer support and supervision as set out in the Council's 'how to'</p>	<p>PHCSF CDCFS HYP</p>

<p>borough already has to offer around access to sports, music and the arts, health advice and other specialist youth support services. Particular attention should be given to the most disadvantaged areas of Harrow and providing specialist intervention and support for teenagers in difficulty.</p> <p>Why: Because much negative behaviour can be avoided if young people have positive things to do and relevant places to go, as reinforced by residents through Better Together research, and the Council's children's centres and other community sites are ideally placed to plug this gap. Young people told us that more safe and exciting places to go was a top concern with many signalling that a lack of facilities can lead to boredom and bad behaviour.</p>	<p>guides.</p> <p>It is the case that longer opening hours necessarily bring with it increased staffing, security and utility costs. Also some of the centres are on school premises and out of hours access may be restricted, However, these buildings are a valuable local resource and where possible should be utilised to maximum effect.</p> <p>The Youth Stop 'drop-in, the Harrow Arts Centre and the Wealdstone and Cedars Youth and Community Centres already have extensive programmes in place, covering topics as diverse as campaigning, communications and confidence building as well as more vocational activities such as sport music art and drama. Work is underway to ensure the highest quality of these activities and that attendance is maximised.</p> <p>Inspirational tutors can be expensive and further work is being done on the costings.</p> <p>Arrangements are being made with the HYP to visit the centres in order to ascertain their potential.</p>	
<p>RECOMMENDATIONS:</p>	<p>ACTIONS:</p>	<p>BY WHOM & WHEN</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION 3: The Council, the Harrow Youth Parliament and others, should explore the introduction of young ambassadors as one way to tackle the negative stereotyping and labels around young people and as a way to</p>	<p>The establishment of 'young ambassadors' has proved successful in some other local authorities and a previous Youth Parliament had investigated its viability for Harrow. The view at the time was that</p>	<p>PHCSF CDCFS HYP</p>

<p>give leadership to and accountability for young people, as well as a route to improve local public services young people rely on. A group of young ambassadors would also provide a clear leadership and coordinating role around influencing, commissioning and a diversity of voices in encouraging participation in democracy and civic life.</p> <p>Why? Because Harrow's young people want to be involved in their communities and many already demonstrate community activism, although this is often dissociated from local democracy or politics which are seen as boring or irrelevant. Young people will participate more if they can relate to democracy ambassadors who are a trusted face to other young people. Young ambassadors also raise the visibility of young people and awareness of issues affecting them and provide an opportunity to the HYP to take more responsibility for linking Council and policy work to local young people and campaigns. A young ambassador scheme will need wide-ranging support mechanisms and will be a high demonstration that the Council is serious about changing the lives of young people in the borough and are listening to their concerns. How it is presented and delivered will be important. Young ambassadors complement Government's direction around 'Positive for Youth' to get young people involved in decision making and widens Harrow's National Citizens Service programme.</p>	<p>the current democratic approach to sharing the roles and responsibilities across the eighty three HYP members worked well for this borough and that establishing an alternative structure could cause confusion.</p> <p>In light of the report, this approach is now being reviewed and consideration is being given as to how the 'wide-ranging support mechanisms' would work.</p> <p>Some Council's have developed a 'Youth Mayor' position, although most also provide a sizeable budget to cover the cost of a salary, dedicated administrative and diary support, transport, clothing and a hospitality allowance.</p> <p>Contact with boroughs such as Lewisham and Merton and the Partnership for Young London has already been made to help consider the viability of 'young ambassadors' for Harrow and the HYP are currently looking at the possible selection criteria and The relationship they would have with the HYP itself.</p> <p>Tackling negative stereotyping and labels around young people is key to positive engagement. Stronger links, via the Council's Communications' Team, with the local press are being established as evidenced by the regular column in the Harrow Observer written, by an HYP member.</p>	
<p>RECOMMENDATIONS:</p>	<p>ACTIONS:</p>	<p>BY WHOM & WHEN</p>

<p>RECOMMENDATION 4: The Council should look to reintroduce a summer university scheme, backed by a commercial and/or charitable partner, to provide free courses to young people (including those up to 25 years with a learning disability) on communications, influencing, confidence building, community volunteering and campaigning. Camden's summer university and Tower Hamlets' Futureversity could provide a steer for this.</p> <p>Why: Because a summer university gives young people valuable accreditation for new skills, contributes to community life and wellbeing, improves participation and knowledge of democratic processes in future voters and enhances young people's employability. Building up young people's skills is positive for youth engagement and active citizenship. It arms young people with skills to help their future employability as well as providing positive activities during summer holidays, bringing together different groups of young people who do not always get to interact and share experiences. Residents and Council staff on Better Together focus groups said that young people had little to do in the form of structured activities and a summer university helps to anchor young people in positive activities during the long summer holidays when chances to get involved in positive, structured activity is limited.</p>	<p>A branded and affiliated Summer Uni scheme ran in Harrow from 2008 to 2010 inclusive, benefiting several thousand young people.</p> <p>A budget of approximately £30,000, excluding staffing, was used to promote, publicise and administrate these activities, although as a consequence youth crime and antisocial behaviour were seen to reduce across the borough.</p> <p>However, analysis at the time did indicate that the main beneficiaries of the activities were 'higher achieving' young people and with so many variable levels of participation specific outcomes benefits were impossible to evidence to any meaningful degree.</p> <p>The 'Summer Uni' process, with the Council taking responsibility for all aspects of the administrative and booking arrangements was also seen as resource intensive.</p> <p>Some Council run positive activities continue to run in Harrow after-school and during holidays, targeted on areas of higher risk such as Wealdstone and Rayners Lane.</p> <p>The Children and Families Service are looking to strengthen the local voluntary sector from the summer of 2012, establishing new partnerships and delivery arrangements for positive activities.</p>	<p>PHCSF CDCFS HYP</p>
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	<p>Earlier this year the Commissioning Team invited quality organisations to bid to deliver positive activities during the summer, Christmas and February half-term of 2012/13. Five young people from the Harrow Youth Parliament were involved in the assessment panel that selected eleven organisations to deliver a range of activities for young people during the school holiday periods. Members of the Youth Parliament have agreed to support the Commissioning Team in reviewing these contracts by carrying out mystery shopping visits and analysing their effectiveness and reach across the borough.</p> <p>The HYP will continue to be involved in commissioning processes and will be integral to the quality assurance and value for money monitoring during the life of these and other contracts.</p>	
<p>RECOMMENDATIONS:</p>	<p>ACTIONS:</p>	<p>BY WHOM & WHEN</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION 5: The Council should look to explore the ‘business case’ around youth engagement, in both senses of the word, in delivering better outcomes for young people. Firstly, a business case for the Council in investing to save through youth engagement and secondly, in the case for business to be involved in delivering outcomes through economic development. Business has a vital role to play in supporting youth services in the current climate. There is a real, current social need for business and charities to work with and champion young people and the organisations that support them.</p>	<p>In partnership with the Economic Development Team, a work experience and apprenticeship programme is in development, a separate report having been presented to the June Cabinet.</p> <p>However finding sponsorship has proved a challenge and is likely to remain so in the current financial climate.</p>	<p>PHCSF CDCFS HYP</p>

<p>Why: Because youth engagement will create better policy, is more likely to meet young people's needs and therefore more likely to work in practice when supporting young people. Developing a business case will help save the long-term consequences of not engaging, for example, anti-social behaviour. In the case for business, by working in partnership with business and the voluntary sector the local economy can benefit from better skills in young people and we can create a whole community that is more positive about youth. Participation creates a sense of ownership and community.</p>		
<p>RECOMMENDATIONS:</p>	<p>ACTIONS:</p>	<p>BY WHOM & WHEN</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION 6: The Council should consider piloting youth action group arrangements, like in Camden, to encourage young people to campaign and lead volunteering projects that tackle community problems. This could perhaps dovetail with the current Neighbourhood Champions scheme. Consideration should be given to integrating more young people into the Council's Neighbourhood Champion's programme.</p> <p>Why? Because young people have told us that they want to be more involved in local decision-making. Youth action groups encourage discussion and debate to address local issues. Neighbourhood Champions is an existing scheme which asks community volunteers to alert the Council of community problems.</p>	<p>This is an underdeveloped area in Harrow but has proved successful when undertaken, for example with the 'homelessness' and 'sexual health awareness' campaigns of recent years.</p> <p>As part of the National Citizens Service a number of new campaigns are being planned and dates have been set in September for these to be presented to the Leader of the Council by the young people involved.</p> <p>Ward Councillors may also wish to engage by going into their local schools and youth clubs, encouraging young people to 'get involved' in local constituency issues.</p> <p>There are already a few young Neighbourhood Champions and the HYP has agreed to assist in a</p>	<p>PHCSF CDCFS HYP</p>

	future campaign to recruit more.	
<p>RECOMMENDATION 7: As the Council continues to develop its commissioning models and mechanisms, it should involve young people in commissioning decisions from design to implementation, wherever appropriate. This involvement in the Council decisions should form one part of a wider involvement scheme that rewards youth engagement. For example, the scheme used by Hammersmith and Fulham Council secures young people as volunteers in Council work and importantly provides a tiered system for reward and recognition. Time and resources should be invested in supporting young people through training for these greater roles.</p> <p>Why? Because involving young people will create better policy, is more likely to meet young people's needs and have successful outcomes.</p>	<p>A youth perspective provides considerable added value to any commissioning /quality assurance process. There has already been some good examples including spend related to the Youth Opportunity Fund and the selection of the contracted provider for the Council's Connexions Service. Some more work will need to be done on the costings for the training and tiered recognition needed to enable young people to reach the required level of knowledge and understanding to be able to participate in the process.</p> <p>The Children and Families Commissioning Team recently met with members of the Youth Parliament to explore opportunities for working together to ensure that young people's voices are reflected in all stages of the commissioning cycle. A young people-led commissioning process that builds on the successes of the Youth Opportunity Fund and best practice elsewhere is currently being developed.</p> <p>It should also be noted that the limited availability of many young people due to school or college commitments can impact on the timeliness of the decision making process although adjustments are already being made to ensure it is integral to the Commissioning Team's focus.</p>	<p>PHCSF CDCFS HYP</p>

RECOMMENDATIONS ON IMPROVING COMMUNICATIONS:

RECOMMENDATIONS:	ACTIONS:	BY WHOM & WHEN
<p>RECOMMENDATION 8: The Council should lead a major borough ‘youth summit’ with partners, politicians, and local business as part of a “Harrow Youth Week” which recognises and celebrates Harrow’s young people and as part of the Council’s ongoing ‘Let’s Talk’ programme and commitment to engage with young people. Young people should help in the design and delivery of this.</p> <p>Why? Because the Let’s Talk programme should make better reference to Harrow’s outstanding young people. The Residents’ Panel Survey shows that Harrow residents believe that the Council does not consider the views of young people enough when making decisions, yet it is important to value and learn from young people’s ideas. Harrow needs a ground-breaking conference for young people to boost youth participation in community activities and political life. The conference should aim to produce a youth action plan for Harrow which road tests the recommendations of this scrutiny review’s report.</p>	<p>Three previous youth conferences have taken place over recent years, each more challenging and productive than the previous.</p> <p>The events were led by members of the Youth Parliament, with a programme lasting the whole day. Some 25 tables consisting of approximately 10 students each discussed a range of topical issues and helped set the HYP agenda for the following year. Costs included the hire of the hall, lunch and other refreshments, transport to and from local schools and sound and lighting equipment. The average cost was approximately £10k each. External sponsorship was sought on each occasion.</p> <p>On several occasions the conference was aligned to a Harrow youth achievement awards’ ceremony or Jack Petchey presentation on the following day, in order to make best use of the facilities.</p> <p>Neither event took place in 2011 due to the cost and limited available staff time to cover the arranging and organisation, although a very successful event for ‘looked-after’ young people did take place at the Harrow Arts Centre and a similar event is planned for the autumn of 2012.</p>	<p>PHCSF CDCFS HYP</p>
RECOMMENDATIONS:	ACTIONS:	BY WHOM & WHEN

<p>RECOMMENDATION 9: The Council should foster a more developed interface with the Harrow Youth Parliament and UK Youth Parliament, a relationship that promotes better two-way dialogue. This should recognise that the UKYP is undergoing change with more consideration being given to young people as campaigners in their own right. The Harrow Youth Parliament should consider expanding its remit to that of a Youth Adviser Network which pledges to achieve change through committing to a level of involvement with the Council, as part of a system of ‘give and take’ rewards for participation and involvement.</p> <p>Why? Because the Harrow Youth Parliament have told us that they want to get more involved and have a more consistent dialogue with decision makers, including Cabinet members, Councillors, Assembly Members and MPs. The Residents’ Panel highlighted to us that the Council does not consider enough the views of young people when making decisions.</p>	<p>On occasions members of the HYP have attended Cabinet and other Council committee meetings and events. They have also asked ‘public questions’ and lobbied their ward Councillors and MPs and this will be further encouraged in the future.</p> <p>When young people feel they have been treated with respect and have been listened to, they do feel very much more involved and invariably make an important contribution. However, consideration does need to be given to the timing of meetings, the order of the agenda and the use of specialist and technical language. Of course this applies to many members of the public, not just the youth.</p> <p>Experience suggests that the more local the issues, the more engaged young people will become. Neighbourhood police panels and one-off local community events have been particularly successful.</p> <p>Portfolio holders have always been welcoming of the HYP and at times have encouraged young people to sit alongside them at Cabinet itself.</p> <p>As part of recent budget savings, support for the Youth Parliament has been reduced to just one member of staff, where previously there was a small team. The work includes arranging the weekly meetings and their sub-committees, delivering training and providing administrative support. As some members are as young as twelve and others have learning difficulties or special needs,</p>	<p>PHCSF CDCFS HYP</p>
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	consideration will need to be given to adding to the capacity, potentially taking staff away from more targeted and statutory duties.	
RECOMMENDATIONS:	ACTIONS:	BY WHOM & WHEN
<p>RECOMMENDATION 10: Councillors, especially Cabinet members, should meet with young people at dedicated times throughout the year with meetings linked to key debates that young people can actually influence, for example the Council’s annual budget setting. The Council should promote more opportunities for all young people to engage in a greater two-way dialogue with Councillors and decision-makers, for example through shadowing opportunities, volunteering placements and quarterly question time events that are timed so as to influence key Council decisions.</p> <p>Why? Because if the Council is to have future meaning it must be relevant to the next generation. If new forms of engagement are to be effective, it is not just young people who should give up their time – Councillors should share some of their power.</p>	<p>The Children and Families Service Portfolio Holder has several scheduled meetings with the HYP each year and various other ad hoc arrangements on specific topics. Young people have also attended the Strategic Reference Group (chaired by Councillor Gate) and the Cedars Youth and Community Centre Board (chaired by Councillor Khalid).</p> <p>Some Councillors have offered young people the opportunity to shadow them as part of a work experience arrangement or the ‘11 million’ takeover day.</p> <p>Some forethought is required as not all meetings undertaken by Councillors are suitable for young people to be a part of, although the HYP is always willing to allow politicians and key decision makers to join them at their meetings.</p> <p>‘Question Time’ events have taken place in recent years to which Councillors have been invited. Topics have included - ‘understanding knife crime’, ‘the prevention of violent extremism’ and ‘Harrow academies yes or no?’</p> <p>Councillor Gate has recently had discussions with</p>	<p>PHCSF CDCFS HYP</p>

	the HYP about possible future topics and it is planned to run at least one per year.	
RECOMMENDATIONS:	ACTIONS:	BY WHOM & WHEN
<p>RECOMMENDATION 11: Young people should have a ‘what’s on’ guide available to them (e.g. listing activities, providing explanations of what the Council does and how young people can influence local decisions), similar to the ‘what’s on’ guide produced for children and families by the Communications department each year. This could, with support, be produced by young people and provide a useful sign post magazine (print or online) to volunteering opportunities that the Council has negotiated with employers and other organisations, available at the Council and in the community. This could be launched at an ‘open day’ – a dedicated event for young people where the Council invites them to learn more about the Council, what it can do for them and how they can influence it – a positive way to build up the relationship between young people and the Council which scrutiny could facilitate.</p> <p>Why? Because young people have told us that that they are unclear on what the Council does and what it offers. They want more Council and Councillor visibility and this would demonstrate what the Council can offer young people’s lives. The young people with learning disabilities who we talked to asked for an open day on how local democracy works as they want to get more involved. Many young people told us that the Council should look to build a stronger relationship with them.</p>	<p>Anything which encourages young people to understand more about politics and local democracy is to be encouraged. This is the main reason that the Council's Democratic Services are so supportive of the HYP elections, introducing many thousands of young people to the hustings and voting process.</p> <p>HYP members have also attended the late night ‘count’ following local and national elections.</p> <p>There has been much discussion on the most appropriate means of communicating with young people, whether on the web, in print or face-to-face and probably all these are required if we are to be fully effective. However, there are costs attached to each of these media and ongoing management and security arrangements need to be in place.</p> <p>The HYP have asked to be copied into the Cabinet and Committee forward plans so they can decide what issues they would like to consider in more detail.</p> <p>Publication of the Harrow youth magazine ‘That’ ceased in 2010 due to the cost. They were distributed to schools, youth clubs and libraries and were generally well received. The design and</p>	<p>PHCSF CDCFS HYP</p>

	<p>content was overseen by the Communications team at a cost of approximately £3,000 per edition.</p> <p>A 'what's on' is a key part of the design of the updated harrowyouth website, but will necessarily be reliant on event organisers, Council officers and local Councillors ensuring the information is accurate and up to date.</p> <p>A similar challenge is faced by the Harrow Arts Centre and the Youth Development and Arts Centre Teams are working collaboratively to find a cost effective solution.</p>	
RECOMMENDATIONS:	ACTIONS:	BY WHOM & WHEN
<p>RECOMMENDATION 12: The Harrowyouth website needs to be overhauled. Young people should be given a dedicated online space like the 'student room' which offers useful opportunities for conversations about local issues, provides clear links to volunteering, jobs and skills development opportunities, is a portal for exchanging conversation and goods, and signposts to Council and community information. A dedicated resource should be identified to work with young people and facilitate development of the website.</p> <p>Why? Because young people have told us that the website was ineffective and did not provide useful information, or meet their needs.</p>	<p>It was acknowledged a year ago that the harrowyouth website was in need of refresh and more technologically sophisticated sites were costed, such as 'Student Room'. It was decided that the new youth website needed to be simpler and more manageable. It will be up and running before summer 2012 in order to publicise the local offer for this year's summer activities.</p> <p>The cost of a basic weekly monitoring of the existing site and keeping it up to date and secure is about £5,000 per year and although in the past some young people have taken this on, it has not been easy to maintain the continuity of their involvement.</p> <p>At present there are not the funds to develop a more</p>	<p>PHCSF CDCFS HYP</p>

	<p>inter-active web based service and young people have told us they already use sites that are more extensively resourced and do a better job than we could sustain in Harrow. The HYP are now looking at how links to these could be embedded.</p> <p>Attention is currently focussed on ensuring key local information is available to young people and parents and that the information is accurate and up to date.</p>	
<p>RECOMMENDATION 13: The Council needs to develop a strategy for the use of social media especially where the target audience is young people.</p> <p>Why? Because young people told us that social media platforms are one means of engaging with them but is more likely to succeed if run by young people themselves and built on existing and trusted relationships.</p>	<p>The use of social media for all ages is very much on the agenda for the I.T. and Communications Services using the experience of the HYP as part of their forward planning. Facebook, Twitter and QR codes are just some examples of technology already being piloted across the Council.</p> <p>This is also resource intensive and will require protocols and safe operating systems to be in place if under the auspices of Harrow Council.</p>	<p>PHCSF CDCFS HYP</p>
RECOMMENDATIONS:	ACTIONS:	BY WHOM & WHEN
<p>RECOMMENDATION 14: The Council should pilot a ‘press gang’ of budding ‘citizen’ journalists who can gain work experience in the press office and get their articles about the community published in Harrow People, magazines for Council staff and other publications for young people.</p> <p>Why? Because young people and other local authorities have</p>	<p>The HYP has always had a communications and media lead and on occasions they have guest edited ‘Harrow People’ and similar publications.</p> <p>The Council’s Communications Team already have young people working with them and they are considering the potential of utilising the Council</p>	<p>PHCSF CDCFS HYP</p>

<p>told us that Council magazines will seek most resonance with young people if they are involved in an editorial capacity. They will also gain valuable work experience and skills, and can take great pride in getting their work published which they can add to their portfolios of community achievements.</p>	<p>apprenticeship scheme. As stated by a member of the HYP 'this is an opportunity to harness the enthusiasm and skills of local youth'.</p> <p>Although always willing to offer advice and assistance to young people there are constraints due to the size of the team confidentiality issues.</p>	
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