

# REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE

Report No. 12

Date of Meeting	18 <sup>th</sup> January 2007
Title of Report	Involving Young People
Portfolio	Healthy Lifestyles
Link to Corporate Priorities	This work links to the Corporate Priorities under 'Equality and Diversity – Including Young People' and 'Customer Focus'. In addition, the work relates to three of the pledges for improving North Wiltshire – 'Listening to young people; Making decisions that are important to you; Improve leisure facilities.
Key Decision	No
Executive Workplan Ref	B321
Public Report	Yes

## Summary of Report

To provide an update for Members on the development of the Young People's Council, Local Democracy Week and other pieces of work relating to the involvement of young people in local democracy and in the services provided by the District Council.

## Officer Recommendations

1. That the Executive note the report and its content.
2. That the Executive offer their continued support to the involvement of young people in local democracy and in the services the District Council provides.

Other than those implications agreed with the relevant Officers and referred to below, there are no other implications associated with this report.

Financial Implications	Legal Implications	Community & Environmental Implications	Human Resources Implications	Equality & Diversity Implications
YES	NO	YES	NONE	YES

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform The Executive of the work that is being undertaken by the North Wiltshire Young People's Council and other related projects to ensure that young people are involved in local democracy.

## **2. Options and Options Appraisal**

- 2.1 Option 1: To note the report
- 2.2 Option 2: To continue to support the involvement of young people in local democracy through activities like the Young People's Council and related events and projects.

## **3. Background Information**

- 3.1 The Young People's Council (YPC) continues to meet on a monthly basis. An open meeting held in March 2006 recruited new members, whilst many of the original group of young people are still taking part. There are currently 24 members who represent young people from across the entire north Wiltshire district.
- 3.2 A group of YPC members took part in the Local Development Framework Core Strategy consultation in March 2006. A report detailing this consultation is available on the website or by contacting the Spatial Plans Team.
- 3.3 A Small group of YPC members were involved in developing the NWDC Youth Strategy which is currently being finalised.
- 3.4 YPC members took part in the recruitment and selection to the Youth Involvement Development Officer post in May 2006. Following appropriate training, a YPC member took part as a member of the interview panel. Other YPC members took part in workshops aimed at assessing each candidate's skills and abilities in undertaking a job-related task.
- 3.5 The YPC has made use of various event opportunities that have promoted further consultation with young people. During the North Wiltshire Festival (and despite the torrential rain) members of the YPC endeavoured to find out more about what local young people think the YPC should be doing. They also consulted students at Chippenham College's Fresher's Fayre in September. The issues that came out as being most important to young people were: perceptions of young people, education and the environment. The results of the consultation are attached at appendix 1
- 3.6 The YPC is currently focussing its work on the young people's chosen priority, which is: 'To address the negative perception of young people'. The YPC voted to commence the task by working jointly with the police. The aim of the task is to change the often negative perceptions held by both young people and the police towards each other. In May 2006 the YPC organised and ran a very successful meeting with representatives from the police and the Council's Community Safety Officer. A number of ideas for joint working were agreed including a proposal that resulted in YPC members spending half-term 'on patrol' with Police Community Support Officers (PCSO's) and police officers. This was aimed at helping to bridge the gap between police and young people by generating a greater understanding of each other. The work will be continued in the new year with a joint event aimed at reaching wider groups of young people.

- 3.7 Two YPC members recently took part in a conference on 'Consulting Children and Young People' in Bristol. The conference was aimed at professionals who work with young people and included local councils, the police, schools and the Connexions Service across the South West. The YPC members were invited to share their experiences of the Council's good practice in supporting the active involvement of young people, through such activities as the YPC and Local Democracy Week events. The Consultation Institute (who organised the event) contacted the Council as a result of reading the YPC pages on the website where they were impressed with the work that is being undertaken.
- 3.8 On October 16<sup>th</sup> the annual Local Democracy Week event took place at the District Council offices. It was organised and presented in partnership with the County Council's Youth Development Service. The theme this year was 'Take Part Take Power' and 70 young people from schools across the district attended. Young people were given an opportunity to explore a range of issues and to give their views individually by means of an electronic hand-held voting system. The system enabled them to select their most important issue, the majority voting for: 'Challenging the negative perceptions of young people'. During the workshop sessions that followed, the young people learnt about campaigning and lobbying skills and this enabled them to draft letters to their local MP and the Press. The event ended with a quick-fire panel 'question and answer session' when young people were encouraged to participate in a 'live' lobbying session. The YPC is taking forward one of the key recommendations from the event which is: 'To address negative media coverage of young people and to secure a regular young people's section in the local paper'. (A record of the day including recommendation and the results of the electronic voting are attached at Appendix 2).
- 3.9 In early November a group of YPC members met with their local MP, James Gray, to put forward the key issues that are important to young people in North Wiltshire. The discussion provided a valuable opportunity to lobby at a national level. The YPC raised a number of topics including environmental issues and their concerns about current perceptions of young people.
- 3.10 The YPC is currently undertaking research on a project aimed at breaking down barriers between groups of young people and fostering a better understanding and tolerance between different groups. The YPC is expected to apply to Wiltshire Young People's Opportunity Fund to finance this project.
- 3.11 The YPC continues to have a full voting position on the Local Strategic Partnership. It recently drew up a list of actions for the LSP under each of the eight themes for inclusion in the LSP action plans. The young people also voted to work more closely with the LSP, identifying it as one of their priorities during this year's residential course.
- 3.12 This year, the District Council, in partnership with the County Council, organised a joint training programme for young people who are involved in youth democracy. The programme was aimed at developing their skills and providing them with additional learning opportunities, as well as providing young people with an opportunity to network and share ideas across different groups. This programme may be further developed in the new year.
- 3.13 It is clear, from the work detailed in this report, that the young people involved in the YPC have made huge achievements in terms of their learning, development and progression. They have made great advancements over the last 12 months and this is reflected in the level of work they now undertake and the kinds of work they are planning and getting involved in for next year. YPC members show a great

commitment to giving their peers a voice and in working for change on behalf of young people. This work deserves recognition and celebration – both of the council for its ongoing commitment to working with young people and of the YPC themselves for their time, commitment and hard work and for the energy and enthusiasm they bring.

#### **4. Financial Implications**

- 4.1 The on-going commitment to deliver this work has budgetary implications and these are contained within current budget allocation, which is £10,000 for 2006/2007. There are no additional financial implications arising from this report.

#### **5. Community and Environmental Implications**

- 5.1 The YPC took part in consultation for the Local Development Framework in March 2006 and were very clear that they wished to continue to be consulted and up-dated on such matters.
- 5.2 The YPC has a member representative on the LSP. The YPC continues to contribute the views of young people to the partnership to ensure that their ideas are taken into consideration in the development and implementation of the North Wiltshire Community Strategy.
- 5.3 There are crime and disorder implications arising from the negative perceptions of young people. The fear of crime is relatively high in North Wiltshire and undertaking work that aims to tackle the community's perceptions and improve relationships with local young people may help to reduce this.
- 5.4 The YPC and Local Democracy Week events are important ways in which the Council consults with and listens to young people.

#### **6. Equality and Diversity Implications**

- 6.1 The work highlighted in this report has a direct impact on the 'involving young people' element of the Council's Corporate Priority Equality and Diversity. The work undertaken to involve young people aims to include a diverse range of young people and to strive to ensure that all groups can be involved. This is reflected in the YPC's terms of reference and in the ground rules that they have agreed. The work undertaken with young people is rooted in anti-discriminatory practice and an ethos of equal opportunity.
- 6.2 In partnership with the County Council, the District Council organised an 'Equality and Diversity' training session for YPC members and young people from schools in the district. The aim of the training was to discuss how to make youth democracy as inclusive as possible and to explore issues around race and culture. This event took place in November 2006 as part of the ongoing training and development programme for young people who are involved in youth democracy.

#### **7. Risk Analysis**

- 7.1 Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990)  
'Every Child Matters' (2003)  
The Children Act 2004  
Youth Matters 2005 (Green Paper) and Youth Matters: Next Steps March 2006

- 7.2 As a result of the above policies there is a duty on local authorities to place children and young people at the heart of service planning and delivery. In Wiltshire this has led to the creation of a Children and Young People's Trust Board, of which the Council is a statutory partner. One of the statutory duties placed on the local authority area is the development of a strategic plan by the authority and its partners. The Wiltshire Children and Young People's Trust Board's vision and values are that all children and young people in Wiltshire achieve the five Every Child Matters outcomes: Be healthy, Stay Safe, Enjoy and Achieve, Make a positive contribution and Achieve Economic Wellbeing
- 7.3 As statutory partner on the Trust Board, the Council also has a duty to develop its services in accordance with the Plan, which includes enabling young people to shape the services they receive themselves and the type of services that are developed for the future.
- 7.4 Children and young people also form a major part of the Local Area Agreement (LAA). LAA's are about developing a more integrated approach to the delivery of community wide outcomes contained in local strategies. It is anticipated that emerging work of the Children and Young People's Trust Board will form the majority of the Children and Young People block of the LAA and therefore it is likely to impact on plans that the Council has for the active involvement of young people.
- 7.5 The risk involved in not supporting the work around youth involvement could mean that the Council was no longer fulfilling the duties outlined above.

<b>Appendices:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Appendix 1 – results of the questionnaires undertaken by the YPC</b></li> <li>• <b>Appendix 2 – Local Democracy Week 2006 – Record of the day</b></li> </ul>
<b>Background Documents Used in the Preparation of this Report:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>None</b></li> </ul>

**Previous Decisions Connected with this Report**

<b>Report</b>	<b>Committee &amp; Date</b>	<b>Minute Reference</b>