

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Council

DATE: 24th November, 2015

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WARD(S): All

PART I **FOR INFORMATION**

SLOUGH YOUTH PARLIAMENT

1. **Purpose of Report**

To advise Members on the work of the Slough Youth Parliament (SYP).

2. **Recommendation**

That the Council endorse the work being undertaken by the Slough Youth Parliament and note details of the presentation.

3. **Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities and Five Year Plan**

3.1 Involve young people in local decision making encouraging active citizenship, continuing to ensure that meaningful mechanisms are developed and are in place to enable this.

3.2 Provide young people with opportunities to influence the design, delivery and evaluation of Services for young people including the Young People's Service.

3.3 There are no other wellbeing strategy, workforce, financial or other implications arising from this report.

4. **Supporting Information**

Context

4.1 In 2014 the Slough Children and Young People's Partnership Board (CYPPB) approved the implementation of an elected Youth Parliament for Slough. Building on the existing Youth Cabinet, which was made up of young people nominated to sit on the group, the CYPPB were keen for young people in Slough to have a truly representative group, democratically chosen by young people, and able to influence decision making across the town.

4.2 The Young People's Service were charged with taking this forward as part of the wider Youth Voice agenda, and worked closely with schools to implement this first Slough Youth Parliament.

Representation

- 4.3 It is important that the Youth Parliament is more than a tokenistic talking shop, and allows young people to actually influence local decision making. To this end, Slough Youth Parliament has been busy building partnerships with local decision makers and currently has representation on the Children and Young People's Partnership Board, Safer Slough Partnership Board, Thames Valley Police Community Consultative Group and the UK Youth Parliament (UKYP).
- 4.4 UKYP is overseen by the British Youth Council and gives the young people a National platform. This includes participation in House of Commons debate in November, chaired by the speaker Rt. Hon. John Bercow MP, and broadcast live on BBC Parliament.
- 4.5 The support offered by the Young People's Service will ensure that the Youth Parliament is enabled to access and make the most of these opportunities through training and practical help.
- 4.6 As well as the Members elected through schools and colleges, there are representatives from 'co-opted' groups from under represented young people on the Youth Parliament. This includes Lesbian Gay Bi-Sexual and Transgender young people, service users and Young Carers, and we are currently working on building closer ties with the Children in Care Council.

Selection Process

- 4.7 In Autumn 2014, The Young People's Service worked hard to ensure schools were fully engaged in raising awareness about the Youth Parliament amongst their pupils. There was a positive response, and most schools committed to providing support to their students, enabling and encouraging them to either stand or vote.
- 4.8 12 secondary schools including specialist school Arbour Vale, and East Berkshire College participated in this process. Any young person aged 11-19, living in Slough was able to nominate themselves to stand as a candidate in their school or college. Each participating school was an election ward, and held elections, where every student was able to vote. In the end over 120 young people put themselves up to stand for elections which took place in January 2015.
- 4.9 Using the first past the post system, the two candidates with the highest number of votes at each school become Members of Slough Youth Parliament. 5596 youngsters voted for their chosen representatives with some schools achieving over 90 percent turnout in their elections, and the average turnout for the borough was 61percent.

Progress to Date

- 4.10 Slough's Youth Parliament is currently made up of 34 young people aged 12-19 elected for a two year term of office. At a weekend residential during February half term MYP's worked hard drafting their manifesto, code of conduct and electing their executive committee. The Parliament also elected their representatives to local strategic groups.
- 4.11 The Youth Parliament meet monthly and have already been involved in drafting the new Children and Young People's Plan for Slough, assisted with the consultation on Slough's new Childhood Poverty Strategy and new mental health self help app for young people, attended community events and successfully lobbied for Slough Council to support votes at 16.
- 4.12 In September, MYP's hosted a conference on education and employment opportunities as this is high on their agenda. This event included presentations from SBC's economic development team, Herschel Grammar School, Heathrow and Young People's service and the aim was to inspire members and give them some clarity of action.
- 4.13 Most recently members have coordinated Slough's response to Make Your Mark consultation which involved young people choosing from ten issues that affect their lives. This year we had 6,487 11-18 year olds participate in the consultation which is a 55 percent turnout and a tenfold increase from last year participation rate. This is only Slough's second year taking part making us the most improved Local Authority in the country, we also had the 7th best turnout nationally and were top for the whole of the South East region beating neighbours such as Reading, Bracknell and Windsor and Maidenhead.
- 4.14 Youth Parliament Representatives will be attending the Council meeting on 24th November to deliver a presentation regarding the work of the Slough Youth Parliament.

5. **Appendix Attached**

Appendix A – Slough Youth Parliament Manifesto

6. **Background Papers**

Make Your Mark 2015 Results Report.