

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

20th January 2012

Scrutiny Review – Youth Participation

Interim Report of the Task Group

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the work of the Task Group to date and to ask them to note and comment on the information in this report.

2.0 Initial Meeting of the Task Group – 11th November 2011

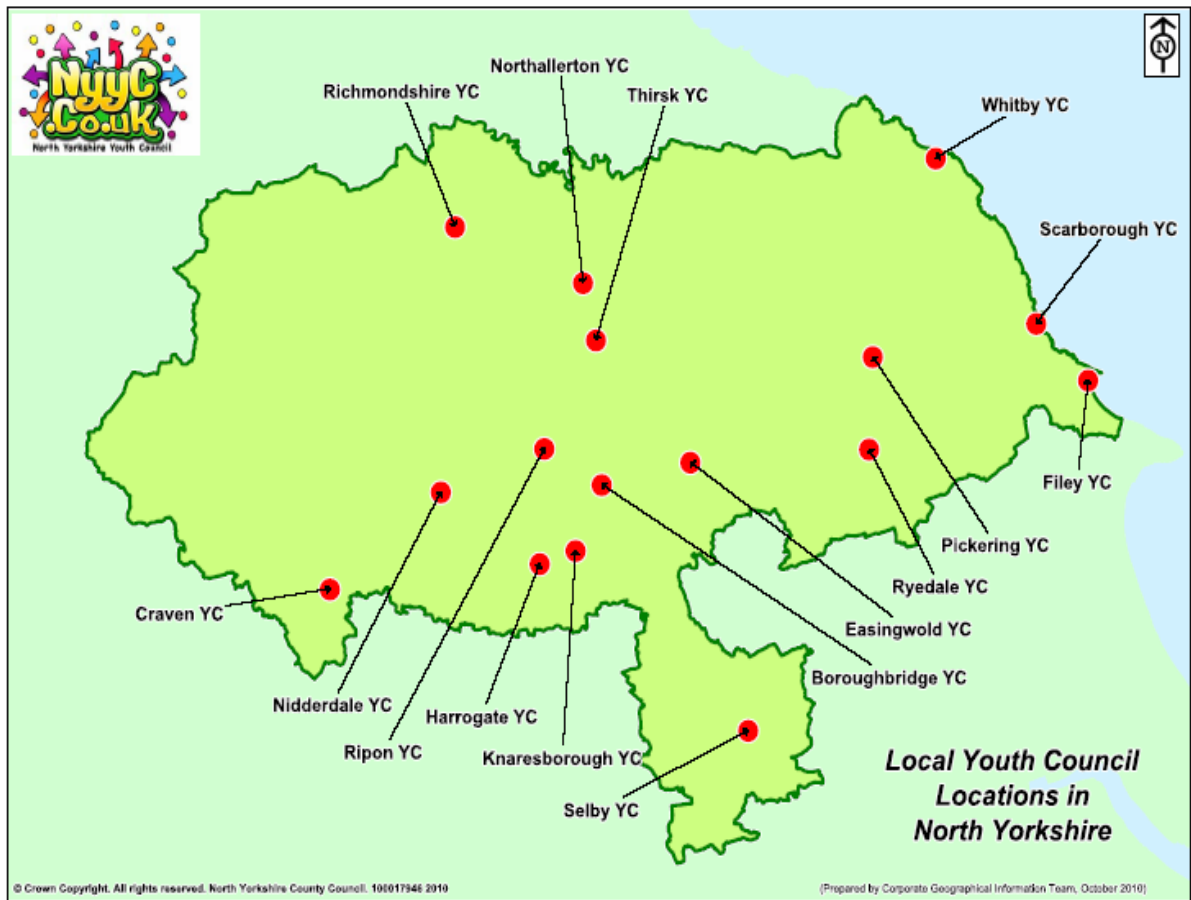
The aim of this review is to consult with representatives of the North Yorkshire Youth Council and local Youth Councils; to learn about the impact Youth Councils are having on young people; how their key issues are developed; are Youth Councils representative of all young people aged 11-19; how could we improve the links between Youth Councils and the Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee and raise the awareness of all elected members.

For our first meeting we were joined by two Officers from the Integrated Youth Support Service and a representative from the North Yorkshire Youth Council. They provided the Task Group with a presentation and background information on youth participation in North Yorkshire which included community engagement and a further presentation on the setting up of local Youth Councils across the County.

This helped us to understand the benefits of involving young people in the planning, delivery and evaluation of services, especially those that affect them which can promote citizenship and social inclusion. We also learned that participation is more than simply asking young people to take part in an activity. It refers specifically to the involvement in the process of identifying needs, exploring solutions, making decisions and planning action within communities and organisations that seek to support civil society.

In recent years there has been a significant move towards giving young people more opportunities to get involved and one method which has gained recognition, popularity and influence during the last few years is the Youth Council.

What we have learned so far about Youth Councils in North Yorkshire?



There are 16 youth councils across North Yorkshire. Each youth council is made up of young people aged 11-19 and their role is to represent the views and opinions of young people from across their local area; get young people's voices heard by decision makers (like the district and County Councils) and people who provide services to young people.

The North Yorkshire Youth Council (NYYC) is made up of representatives from each of the area youth councils. Its aims are to:

- Present the views of young people to the appropriate authorities
- Organise and run projects for and on behalf of young people
- Act as an accurate and honest consultative body in order for local institutions to research youth trends
- Involve young people in the community.

NYYC meet on the first Monday of the School Holiday at the Royal York Hotel between 10.00 - 4.00pm when they receive updates from each of the local Youth Councils, UKYP and officers.

They invite speakers to discuss relevant issues and undertaken consultations; work on campaigns; plan events; undertake training and most importantly have fun!

Current NYYC Campaigns.....



Fork Off Campaign is about 'healthy eating' with a focus on educating and encouraging young people to be independent and cater for themselves.

Fare Fairs – relates to young people under 18 having access to half price bus fares across North Yorkshire.



Get Plastered – young people learning more about first aid

In January 2011 three NYYC representatives were elected as Members of the United Kingdom Youth Parliament and they have campaigned for a young carers card that can be used within school to gain extra support and for fare fairs on public transport.

- A highlight was attending the Annual Sitting (4 day conference)
- Taking part in the House of Commons Debate



3. The Task Group's Consultation Meeting with the North Yorkshire Youth Council - 21st December 2011

We had the pleasure of meeting with 18 youth representatives attending this meeting and two North Yorkshire County Council Officers.

As Chairman of the Task Group I was I asked to explain what the aims of the scrutiny review were about and why we wanted to consult with the Youth Councils.

We asked the young people present “what difference had youth councils made for them” and were advised that it had given them an opportunity to voice their opinions outside of the school environment, and share those opinions with young people with similar concerns.

It had also added to the experience gained from College mock elections and about the way a system works, but not necessarily youth politics.

They went on to explain how relationships on a local level work with MPs and Local councillors, but how the youth workers were an easier and more practical method of sharing information with NYCC.

Some described their closer links with District Councils and that they had local Councillors at every meeting, making things more efficient.

A few described the difficulties they had contacting Councillors and MP's and building relationships and had experienced general dismissal. An example they shared referred to plans to build a new supermarket – the Town Council had been contacted but the Youth Council had not. They felt that assumptions had been made that young people would want the development but in fact some had very different views. They also added the comment that as they had not voted they did not think their comments mattered.

One youth representative said that it had given him the confidence to stand as a Town Councillor – he was elected.

It had provided the opportunity to attend a local meeting, learning how an organisation works, rather than them coming to the youth meetings.

What is their biggest concern?

Main issue at local, district and nationwide is transport. The costs of bus and train fares are too high for young people. Social lives suffer as a result leaving young people feeling isolated.

At a local level there may be different issues.

Also have the other two Campaigns – Fork Off and Get Plastered.

Fork Off Campaign – young people felt that the education side of food technology in School is more technical and scientific rather than simply teaching you how to cook. Went on to mention that Richmond Sixth Form provided life skills courses which provided education for young people about healthy eating.

What role does Social Media in play in our organisation?

They told us that Facebook has replaced texting in a lot of cases, especially where phone signal is particularly poor and that communication online is particularly efficient and so broadband is imperative. They often use Skype for meetings where there are fewer people needed to attend and for a shorter meeting.

A member of the Task Group suggested that they take a look at using DOODLE to arrange convenient times for meetings.

Are you achieving some or most of what you had hoped?

They all agreed that even just by being a part of the meetings they were being given the opportunity to be heard, and having a voice.

Would you be interested in being involved with the Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee and perhaps this task group in particular?

Yes they would but it would depend on the times of meetings - not during the school day etc. They will need to discuss this in more detail and will hopefully get back at a later date.

A suggestion they put forward was whether the County Council might consider providing a number of candidates to be a 'named link' with the Youth Council.

Do the local youth councillors have access to information about local events/local councillors/town council meetings, area forums?

Not really - Often they find out that meetings have been held after the event in the local paper.

Their suggestion is that these events/committee meetings etc could be advertised using social media rather than the more 'old fashioned methods' that pass young people by.

Do Youth Councillors have training to be able to achieve their role?

They do have access to a variety of training days and conferences but perhaps they need to think about creating a portfolio to formalise this process.

4. Work to do

It is important that we make contact with the **Flying High Group** - young people with special needs and disabilities and the **Young Peoples Council** (children in care council) and this is underway.

The Task Group is due to meet again shortly when we will consolidate the findings to date, identify any gaps in our information under the remit of this scrutiny review and begin the process of drawing this together into a draft final report, hopefully with the help of young people from the North Yorkshire Youth Council.

**County Councillor John Batt
Chairman of the Task Group – Youth Participation
12 January 2012**

Report prepared by:

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Email:

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Date:

12 January 2012

Background Documents:

None

6.0 Recommendations

6.1 The Committee is asked to:

- a. Note the information in this report.
- b. Note the calendar of meeting dates in their diary

**Bryon Hunter, Scrutiny Team Leader
Policy, Performance and Partnerships
County Hall, Northallerton**

Report compiled by: Stephanie Bratcher, Corporate Development Officer
Ext: 2049
Email: stephanie.bratcher@northyorks.gov.uk
Date: January 2012
Background Documents: None

Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Plan of Scrutiny Review

TOPIC	North Yorkshire Youth Councils	
OBJECTIVE	<p>The aim of this review is to consult with representatives of the North Yorkshire Youth Council and local Youth Councils; to learn about the impact Youth Councils are having on young people; how their key issues are developed; are Youth Councils representative of all young people aged 11-19; how could we improve the links between Youth Councils and the Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee and raise the awareness of all elected members.</p>	
REASONS FOR REVIEW	<p>We may not always think of children and young people as consumers of public services - education is the most obvious but they can also use health services, social care and national and local transport networks. In their leisure time many engage in cultural or sporting activities and can be a significant group within local communities engaged in volunteering.</p> <p>In recent years there has been a significant move towards giving young people more opportunities to get involved in the design, provision and evaluation of policies and services that affect them or which they use.</p> <p>The importance of involving North Yorkshire young people in decision making is recognised in the 'Children and Young People's Plan 2008-11' which lists '<i>Increase children and young people's participation in shaping services</i>' as one of its priority area'.</p> <p>There are reportedly many ways of actively involving young people in decision making, but one method which has gained recognition, popularity and influence during the last few years is the Youth Council.</p> <p>Youth Councils have become embedded and there are 16 local Youth Councils in North Yorkshire made up of young people aged 13-19 which aim to represent the views and opinions of young people from across their local areas. The North Yorkshire Youth Council (NYYC) brings together representatives from each of the local Youth Councils to meet, discuss and act on issues that matter to young people. It has also developed links with other specific participation groups such as Young Peoples Council for looked after children and the Flying High Group of disabled young people.</p> <p>From the outset this review will be a two-way learning curve if we are to establish a better understanding of each others very different role and to see if we can develop a more structured link with the North Yorkshire Youth Council.</p> <p>Youth Councils have been up and running for sometime now so it is timely to ask young people what they see as the benefits for having youth councils and as future employees (or employers) who will have a huge stake in future economic prospects and the environment.</p>	
CORPORATE OBJECTIVES	To ensure good access for all	
	To help people to live and thrive in safe and secure communities	

(Please mark as appropriate)	To help all children and young people to develop their full potential	X	
	To promote a flourishing economy	X	
	To maintain and enhance our environment and heritage		
	To improve health and wellbeing and give people effective support when they need it		
TASK GROUP MEMBERS	C Cllr John Batt C Cllr David Jeffels C Cllr Caroline Seymour C Cllr Cliff Trotter Mrs Judith Bromfield Voluntary Sector representative Bjorn RisiVoluntary Sector representative Graham Richards Church of England representative		
PARTICIPANTS & STAKEHOLDERS	North Yorkshire Youth Council representatives Local Youth Council representatives Flying High Group Young Peoples Council Children and Young Peoples Service – Integrated Youth Support Service Elected Members District Councils Voluntary Youth Organisations		
METHOD	Task Group Consultations with relevant stakeholders. Consultation with expertise witnesses Desktop research Review of local guidance/policies		
ISSUES	What has been the impact of Youth Councils for young people Are they representative of all young people aged 11-19 Raise the awareness of elective members Develop links with Young People Overview & Scrutiny		
PROGRAMME PLAN	Meeting Date	Meeting	Focus
	11 Nov 11	Initial Task Group Meeting	Setting the scene and background information
	21 Dec 11	Meeting with North Yorkshire Youth Council	Consultation meeting
	20 Jan 12		Interim Report to the Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee Continue with desktop research and arranging meetings with Flying High Group and Young Peoples Council
	Jan 12	Task Group	On behalf of the Task Group on-going desk top research and information gathering. Identify and address any gaps
	Feb 12	Task Group Meeting	To consider and collate their findings
	March 12	Young People	Presentation of draft Final Report for comment to

		Overview & Scrutiny Committee	YPOSC Copy of draft report to North Yorkshire Youth Council for their comment Copy of draft report to Children & Young Peoples Service for their comment
	April 2012	Executive Members	Presentation of final report and recommendations
SUCCESS INDICATORS	Improved liaisons and consultations with young people Raising awareness with other County Councillors and Services within the County Council Improved links with the NYYC and YPOSC		
ESTIMATE OF RESOURCES REQUIRED	6 Task Group Meetings		