

Cheltenham Borough Council
Social & Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee
3 February 2003
Review of Agenda for Young People
Report of the Community and Youth Development Manager

1. Summary and recommendation

1.1 This report sets out the strategic framework within which the council operates its agenda for young people and how it complements the work of key partners and partnerships **(Appendix 1)** It demonstrates the progress that is being made against objectives and principles and highlights successes as well as challenges for the future.

1.2 I recommend that:

1.2.1 a working group of members of the Social and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee, partners and users be formed to review the existing strategy for young people, the key challenges identified within this report and the council's priorities with regard to the future agenda for young people.

1.2.2 the working group report back to this Committee in September, in readiness for the 2004/5 budget setting process.

2. Background

2.1 Cheltenham Borough Council recognises the value of involving and creating opportunities for young people to be included in decision making and also for the need to work in partnership with those organisations and communities who have an impact on their lives. It also acknowledges the need to deliver and support activities and services which address their health, learning and safety needs.

2.2 Cheltenham Borough Council initiated a programme of work in 1997 called '**Investment in young people- a strategic framework**' which recommended the creation of a Youth Affairs Officer post to deliver the actions outlined in the strategy. These included the formation of a young people's council and supporting partnership work in health, education/training/employment, community safety, leisure (including the arts) and housing. It also highlighted the need to ensure that young people had access to information and advice, and that opportunities were created to engage with young people in their communities through access to youth activities and venues.

2.3 '**Right here, right now - a strategy for young people**' was approved in 2001 and further developed the arguments for creating opportunities for young people to engage with Cheltenham Borough Council, its partners and the communities in which young people live, work, learn and play. Importantly, it stresses the need for Cheltenham Borough Council to work with its partners, to help young people develop the skills needed to ensure they have influence. It also highlights barriers and ways in which these may be tackled, to ensure young people can maximise their opportunities and become active citizens, in their communities and through the ballot box.

3. Resources and developments

3.1 Since July 1997 there has been an annual revenue budget of between £20,000 and £25,000 to support the work of the Youth Affairs Officer. Approximate allocation are as follows: £5000 rent at Grapevine, Grosvenor Hall; £5000, Massive; £5000 budget to MAD young people's council; £10,000 for post of MAD co-ordinator.

3.2 The overall contribution that Cheltenham Borough Council makes towards the youth agenda is much greater and includes Massive (summer activities), sports development, play development, arts development, active communities, play facilities, education programmes (inc. art gallery and museum, festivals) youth housing, small grants, SLA's and community safety.

3.3 Key areas of development and projects which reflect the achievements of the youth agenda include:

- The formation and development of the MAD young people's council (now in its fifth year).
- Representation of young people on committees and partnerships (eg overview and scrutiny committee, Connexions board).
- The election of youth members of parliament and deputies.
- The election of a spokesperson for young people and political group spokespeople which received over 4500 votes.
- The establishment and refurbishment of Grosvenor Hall (Grapevine) youth information and advice centre.
- Development of more community based facilities (temporary and permanent).
- Introduction of a proof of age card scheme supported by retailers, trading standards and the police.
- Effective development of popular sport, leisure and play programmes and an active communities initiative.
- Establishment of effective networks and partnership work in Cheltenham and across Gloucestershire.
- The development of a youth housing strategy supported by statutory and voluntary agencies
- Continued success and development of the Art Gallery and Museum and the Festivals education and events programmes.

3.4 This work is supported by a full time post which also covers the lifelong learning and health improvement agendas. Following the re-structure much of this work now falls within the Social and Community group which will enable even better joint working in support of the agenda for young people.

4. National and local perspectives

4.1 Cheltenham Borough Council was the first local authority in Gloucestershire to develop a young people's council and involve young people in decision making and one of the first to introduce strategic inter-agency working in the field of young people services. Those two themes in particular are now clearly prioritised by the government.

4.2 **National perspective:** Since the inception of the youth agenda, there have been a number of national initiatives that have an impact on the council and its partners.

These include:

- Crime and Disorder strategy and the formation of youth offending teams.
- Raising standards in schools and maintaining the involvement of young people in education and training post16.
- Creation of the Connexions service, Learning and Skills Council and the push towards more inter-agency working.
- Transforming and excellence in youth work and the push to involve young people in decision making, including a national youth parliament and the election of local youth parliament members.
- Neighbourhood renewal, community cohesion and social inclusion agendas.
- A national children's and young people unit and a minister for young people.
- Homelessness Act 2002.
- Citizenship and personal, social, health education
- Electronic government.
- Introduction of programmes to support children and prevent social exclusion amongst young people including Sure Start, Children's Fund, Active Communities and Active Sports.

4.2.1 This list is long but not exhaustive and the need to constantly re-adjust to new targets and new structures has been difficult for all those agencies involved, and often confusing, as people have had to develop new skills and ways of working, without ever being clear if this would lead to improvements.

4.3 **County and Borough perspective:** The agenda for young people in Cheltenham is currently being shaped by some of the above initiatives. The Connexions service (**appendix 1b**) in Gloucestershire came into effect in April with the task of ensuring that young people aged 13-19 get the information, advice, support and guidance they need to achieve their full potential. They will achieve this by working in partnership with a number of agencies and with young people themselves. This support service will be available through high street shops, mobile provision, partner organisations and personal advisors in schools and communities.

4.4 Connexions helps to fund voluntary and community sector organisations and is developing a strategic and operational partnership across the county. This work is complemented by the youth and community service which has an excellent record in Gloucestershire as well as the voluntary youth sector who regularly engage with large numbers of young people. Sure Start (**appendix 1b**) is now operational in 2 disadvantaged areas of Cheltenham with the aim of providing young families (families with children aged 0-4) with the best start in life and this is now complemented by the Children's Fund (**appendix 1b**) which is targeting families and children aged 5-13.

- 4.5 Both these programmes have the purposes of breaking a cycle of disadvantage with the aim of maximising the potential of young people who might be at risk of under-achievement at school, in poorer health or who may go on to be perpetrators or victims of crime. The challenge is how to make these initiatives work most effectively and how community development programmes in Arle Farm, Cavendish Park, Whaddon, Lynworth and Priors, Hesters Way and St Marks can best be helped.
- 4.6 There has also been a drive through each of these initiatives, as well as through the youth service and local government to ensure that young people are actively involved in determining their needs and how they can be addressed. Young people are taking part in youth councils, schools council, management committees and at board level. There is determination to continue to enable young people to participate further in decision making. In particular there is a need to engage with vulnerable young people including, the homeless, young offenders, black and ethnic minorities and the disabled. This work needs to develop at grass-roots level to enable further participation in local and national government.
- 4.7 The young people's agenda outlines the fact that Cheltenham Borough Council should champion the needs of its young people. It achieves this through direct service provision and by influencing key partners and partnerships. The latter is more difficult to measure but is equally important. It helps partners to understand what the strategic objectives of the borough council are, and how their services can have the greatest impact. By working together, sharing resources and recognising each others' priorities, our services will have a greater impact.
- 4.7.1 Details of some partnership work and the challenges they are seeking to address are written below.

Challenges	Partnerships that are helping to meet challenges
Ensuring young people have access to a full range of housing services	Youth Housing Forum
Reduction in number of young people who become involved in crime and in those displaying problematic behaviour	Crime and Disorder partnership & sub groups
Reducing levels of teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, smoking, accidents Reducing mental health problems of young people	Health Improvement Partnership Healthy schools partnership
Action to tackle drug and alcohol abuse	Crime and Disorder partnership & sub groups Health Improvement Partnership
Reduce number of 16-18s not in education, employment or training	Connexions 'partnership' Gloucestershire Learning Partnership Cheltenham Learning Town Healthy schools partnership
Increase in young people engaged in sport/physical activity	Active Gloucestershire Partnership
Increasing participation of young people in decision making and development of services	Youth consultation and advisory network District and county youth fora
Reduction in social exclusion	Social Justice Partnership
Development of voluntary youth sector work	Gloucestershire council for voluntary youth services
To provide the best start in life for children and their families	Sure Start
To maximise life opportunities for children, young people (5-13years) and their families who are experiencing difficulties.	Children's Fund
Many of these partnerships have an impact on more than one challenge, and area partnerships such as Whaddon, Lynworth and Priors Partnership and Hesters Way Partnership are trying to meet all these challenges. Details of individual partner organisations and groups are in the glossary.	

5. Right here, right now! The Strategy for young people

- 5.1 Whilst recognising that comparatively few young people suffer extreme disadvantage in Cheltenham, it should be noted that all young people suffer disadvantage through a lack of influence in decision making, poor mobility, poor information about decisions that affect them and limited economic power. Young people also suffer from the pressures created by peer groups, educational achievement and a desire to be accepted. The agenda for young people tries to limit these disadvantages and pressures by creating an environment that supports young people through their transition to adulthood.
- 5.2 The principle focus of the strategy for young people is those young people aged 10-19 (19% of Cheltenham' population-Census 2001) although some work does involve young people above and below these age ranges.
- 5.3 The strategy's basic principle is to involve young people in decision making from the earliest possible stage of their lives. In this way the borough acknowledges its obligation to take into consideration the wishes and feelings of children and young people when decisions about their welfare are being made (The Children Act 1989). In addition the borough council demonstrates a commitment to Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which gives the young a fundamental right to participate in all decisions that affect them and to ensure that their views are given due weight.
- 5.4 The philosophy behind the strategy is that to truly address the needs of young people, adults must understand young people and vice versa. It is not simply about offering young people facilities that they say they want. It is about understanding their needs, their behaviour and their view of the world. By working in partnership with young people, better decisions can be made through encouraging young people to be critical and ensuring that they feel they have a right to put forward independent ideas and agendas. They need to be secure in the knowledge that they will be heard, having had full access to information and with the opportunity to participate in subsequent developments. It is Cheltenham Borough Council's role to help facilitate this.

6. Progress against objectives

- 6.1 The strategy simplified the objectives of the Investment in Young People framework into four objectives:
- 6.2 **Objective 1: To empower young people**
- 6.3 **Introduction:** To enable young people to be genuinely involved in decision making at the local level three core principles need to be established, namely **citizenship** - which confers publicly recognised rights on young people; **participation** - which is the process of putting rights into practice and **empowerment** - which is the outcome of putting rights into practice. To achieve this we need to support young people to develop their confidence and level of self esteem.
- 6.3.1 Through this process we can help meet the council's aim to engage with young people and give them every opportunity to engage with the democratic process. It is important that young people feel their vote will count at the ballot box if we are to remain accountable to future generations.
- 6.4 **Current activity:** This is largely focused around the continued development of the MAD young people's council and its support structures. Since its formation MAD has involved over 50 young people directly, over 200 at events and over 5000 in ballots and questionnaires. MAD has its own constitution and is supported by the youth development manager and the MAD co-ordinator who works part-time from Grosvenor Hall. It has recently formed an advisory committee that includes nominated youth spokespeople from Cheltenham Borough Council and individuals from different sectors of the voluntary, statutory and business community.

- 6.4.1 MAD has a primary role in listening to young people, informing them of developments and acting on queries and issues that young people present. It achieves this through questionnaires, e-mails, notice boards and visits to schools and youth clubs to give presentations or to hold surgeries. MAD also has representatives on this Overview and Scrutiny committee, the Connexions board and has access to other partnerships such as Crime and Disorder, Lifelong Learning and Social Justice. MAD has also represented the views of young people in local and national conferences. Where appropriate MAD will contribute to more local agendas if it feels it has a genuine role that it can fulfil.
- 6.4.2 MAD also held an election for the appointment of a spokesperson for young people which attracted over 4500 votes. This was an excellent example of what can be achieved if the message and delivery is properly targeted at young people. However it is time and resource intensive and any future election of this sort will need to be carefully considered.
- 6.4.3 Cheltenham Borough Council also supports the Youth Consultation & Advisory Network (YOUTHCAN) which meets to share best practice with regard to youth participation amongst agencies. It has produced ethical guidelines for consulting young people and has delivered training to local authority members and officers on how to consult effectively with young people. The guidelines received the recommendation of the Chief Officers Group as part of a county-wide review of the participation of young people in 2001(**appendix 2**).
- 6.4.4 This objective is also met through education projects supported by Cheltenham Borough Council staff, including festival events, the art gallery and museum, local government workshops and through sport and play projects such as Massive, Active Communities, and Sport/Play zones. Much of this work is highlighted in a citizenship support booklet published for schools by the local education authority.
- 6.5 **Future developments:** The next stage in development is to introduce a Youth Participation Policy to ensure that every effort is made to obtain the views of young people and involve them in those service which have the greatest impact on their lives and to accompany this policy with staff training and establishment of advocates for young people amongst employees. The policy will highlight the recommendations of the county-wide review of youth participation and consider how the 'Hear by Right' standards for involving young people in local government can be addressed (**appendix 3**). This development should also ensure that young people are contributing to the local strategic partnership and community planning process.
- 6.6 **Objective 2: To advise, inform and listen to young people**
- 6.7 **Introduction:** Young people have an integral role to play in developing their communities. To do this they require a broad range of information and support services that are relevant, easily understood and accessible to young people. Information helps young people to make sense of the changes that are taking place in society and helps them to become more independent.
- 6.8 **Current activity:** Cheltenham Borough Council continues to support the youth information and advice centre 'Grapevine' based at Grosvenor Hall. This takes the form of a £5000 (approx.) rental charge for use of an office, training room and access to facilities for MAD and the youth development manager. The centre provides an ideal venue for youth events and offers opportunities to engage with young people from different sectors. Its core service is the provision of free information, advice and counselling for young people.
- 6.8.1 This service is complemented by the Youth Information Shop run by Cheltenham Community Projects in the lower high street. Although similar in definition these two access points cater for different clients and the Cheltenham Youth Information shop has particular emphasis on education, training, employment, benefits and housing advice. Although Cheltenham Borough Council does not support the Youth Information shop directly, it does hold a service level agreement with Cheltenham Community Projects.

- 6.8.2 As well as the support offered to schools mentioned previously, Cheltenham Borough Council produces a wealth of information about services both in printed form and on the Internet. This is often accompanied by visit from staff to promote specific events. MAD also have display boards in schools and youth clubs which highlight information relevant to Cheltenham Borough Council services. Information is also made accessible to young people through its dedicated youth page. As with all information there is sometimes a criticism that there is not enough of it (or that there is too much of it) or that young people do not know how to access it. Experience tells us that young people obtain most of their information from friends and relatives and that the more immediate it is, the more relevant it will be.
- 6.9 **Future developments:** the introduction of the Connexions service is an opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of the information and advice received by young people and to work in partnership with them to fill in gaps and provide consistency.
- 6.10 **Objective 3: To maximise facilities and opportunities**
- 6.11 **Introduction:** The provision of quality services is crucial to young people and the extent to which they are met is largely dependant on the influence that young people have. Active lifestyles can be encouraged through ensuring equality of access to facilities and a range of opportunities to help all aspects of the social development of young people and to promote community spirit. It is also important to ensure that these facilities have the support of young people, their communities and partner agencies so that they do not become 'white elephants'
- 6.12 **Current activity:** Cheltenham provides a range of facilities and opportunities for young people many of which are supplied or funded by the borough council. As mentioned above, making young people aware of these opportunities is a challenge in itself but some of the factors that prevent young people from accessing them are the cost of entry and transport, the availability of transport and peer pressure. Low cost and free activities are important elements of the borough council's sport and play programmes.
- 6.12.1 The lack of neighbourhood facilities are often mentioned by young people and adults as a concern. It is important to have at least a basic level of provision in communities which could include informal and formal meeting places for young people and play facilities, together with good access to more advanced facilities such as youth and leisure centres etc. Youth workers are vital in this process and the development of the mobile youth provision will also be welcomed.
- 6.12.2 Initiatives such as the 'POD' and the 'SAFE' (steel porta-cabins staffed by the youth and community service) are a good first step to meeting the needs of young people in a community as they provide a point of access to further youth development opportunities as well as trained youth workers. They are not big enough for large scale activities or congregations of young people but they do provide a good starting point to build relationships with young people and provide them with opportunities to help plan their own activities. These facilities have been provided through partnership work between the borough, youth services, local councillors and members of the community.
- 6.12.3 MAD have held fortnightly discos in the town centre for under 18s and the provision of facilities for 15-17's in the town centre is an issue often raised by young people. Junior youth clubs for the 10-13's, set up and run by volunteers have had some success but can struggle to maintain funding and recruit new volunteers.
- 6.12.4 The Parks and Landscape division have played a key role in developing youth facilities including the 'POD' and 'SAFE', play equipment and improvements to the skate ramp facilities in Pittville Park and on Brizen field. Park rangers are also a good resource for communication with young people.

- 6.12.5 The festivals have always attracted schools and the addition of the science festival has helped to engage more young people in learning opportunities. Massive, play zone and sports zone remain popular and the active communities initiative is also providing year round opportunities for young people in Whaddon and the wider community.
- 6.12.6 A panel of youth housing providers meet weekly to allocate accommodation to young people. Cheltenham Borough Council supports this group which also meets to discuss more strategic issues and monitor the progress of the youth housing strategy. Young people living alone are exposed to more risks and accommodation which is clean, warm and from which they access support services is a key element in ensuring their safety.
- 6.13 **Future developments:** A key challenge is to ensure that these opportunities are accessible and relevant to young people across Cheltenham and that they continue to contribute to the citizenship, learning, health, and community safety agendas. It is also important to view these activities as vehicles for developing further skills and interacting with other people, and expanding young people's knowledge about what Cheltenham can offer.
- 6.13.1 Providing informal venues for 14-17s and supporting youth work with 10-13s are two areas that need further development. There is also a need to ensure that any negative impact of the closures of the Shaftsbury Theatre, the Axiom and Northlands on youth arts development opportunities is addressed.
- 6.13.2 The development of a green space strategy is also an opportunity to look holistically at public spaces and consider how the facilities, open space and recreational areas can best be developed to meet the needs of young people and communities.
- 6.14 **Objective 4: To ensure the safety of young people**
- 6.15 **Introduction:** Young people are both victims and perpetrators of crime but in both cases it is only a minority of the total child or young people population that are affected. However, the fear of crime is common to all young people and its impact affects lives directly and indirectly. Young people need to feel safe and have confidence in those services which can improve their quality of life.
- 6.15.1 Community safety work with young people must involve them directly and should not only aim to reduce crime and fear of crime but to reduce behaviour that might lead to crime because of low self esteem, limited opportunities and support structures. Young people's safety is about ensuring they do not become victims of crime or perpetrators of crime or become exposed to unnecessary risks. It is also about protecting the communities in which they live and play and ensuring that young people feel part of those communities.
- 6.16 **Current activity:** There are many partners whose work impacts on the safety of young people even if the focus of their work is elsewhere. Cheltenham Borough Council has a key role to play which includes amongst others, leading on community safety matters, ensuring that young people have suitable accommodation, that they can use facilities safely, that there is safe public transport and that they can access health information and related services.
- 6.16.1 We can also divert young people away from crime by ensuring that we deliver a range of activities and opportunities. These should not only keep them engaged in meaningful activity but should develop their personal and social and health education so that they are more confident, have greater ambition and are more able to take control of their lives by making the right decisions about their own behaviour.

6.16.2 A number of projects have been supported by the crime and disorder partnership, including drug and bullying peer education work, the introduction of a proof of age card, supporting activities for young people in the school holidays and developing education projects around safe driving. From an enforcement side, Cheltenham has led on anti-social behaviour orders, mobile CCTV and has tackled 'joy riding' through installing bollards and other traffic calming measures on those estates worst affected.

6.17 **Future developments:** Whatever the reasons for young people becoming involved in crime, there always has to be an alternative path for young offenders and potential young offenders which is why it is crucial for the partnership work that is already in place to be maintained and improved.

7. Summary

7.1 The key challenges for progressing the youth agenda are:

- Developing the role that young people play in influencing decision making in Cheltenham Borough Council, including the introduction of a youth policy which will include guidance on how to consult and work in partnership with young people & how young people can be involved in staff training and recruitment. This should also help to meet the recommendation of the best value review of youth participation and the Hear by Right standards for involving young people in local government.
- Creating more opportunities for young people across Cheltenham to engage with the young people's council, local groups of young people and the youth parliament.
- Developing a town wide children and young people partnership to support the local strategic partnership and community plan and effectively support projects and services.
- Develop an internal network of officers to ensure existing services continue to meet key objectives in health, housing, education, and crime and those issues raised by young people. Also, to promote more effective joint working on development projects
- Ensuring that young people from across the social spectrum can influence change.
- Ensuring that the borough council's role in the development of young people and related services is clearly defined and that it remains open to scrutiny in particular by young people themselves.
- Develop useful success criteria for future youth agenda activity.
- Ensure that young people play an active and meaningful role in any review of the agenda for young people

7.2 The youth agenda has been a successful initiative that continues to innovate and play an active role in the helping to meet the needs of young people in Cheltenham. It is cross cutting and well supported by partner organisations in the borough and the county. Importantly the work should continue to benefit all young people and celebrate the successes of young people as well as tackling the issues they face. It is now timely to review the existing youth strategy in conjunction with partners and users and to bring forward a new three year strategy and action plan for approval.

8. Implications

8.1 **Financial** none arising from this report.

8.2 **Legal** none arising from this report.

- | | | |
|-----|---|--------------------------------|
| 8.3 | Personnel | none arising from this report. |
| 8.4 | Equal opportunities, social justice and anti-poverty | none arising from this report. |
| 8.5 | Environmental | none arising from this report. |

Background papers	<p>Investment in young people, a strategic framework</p> <p>Right here, right now, a strategy for young people</p> <p>Report of the county-wide review of youth participation in Gloucestershire</p> <p>Hear by right -setting standards for active involvement of young people in democracy (LGA)</p>
Contact officer	Stefan Wathan, Community and Youth Development Manager, 01242 775051, stefanw@cheltenham.gov.uk
Accountability	Councillor Rowenna Hay
Responsible overview and scrutiny committee	Social and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Partner organisations and partnerships (not exhaustive)

Active Gloucestershire Partnership
Cheltenham Business Partnership
Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Racist Incident Group
Cheltenham Community Projects
Cheltenham Crime and Disorder Partnership
Cheltenham Pensioners' Forum
Children's Fund
Church youth groups
Clubsafe
Connexions
Disability Action Cheltenham
Early Years Development Partnership
Education and Business Partnership
GLOSCAT
Gloucestershire Council for Voluntary Youth Services
Gloucestershire District Councils
Gloucestershire Police
Gloucestershire Race Equality Council
Gloucestershire Social Services
Gloucestershire Trading Standards
Health Improvement Partnership
Health Promotion
Healthy Schools Partnership
Hester Way Neighbourhood Partnership
Hester Way Neighbourhood Project
Lifelong Learning Partnership
Local Education Authority
MAD (Making A Difference) young people's council
Members of Youth Parliament
Minority Ethnic Forum
National Star College
Parish Councils
Primary and Secondary Schools
Primary Care Trust
Re-integration Service
Social Justice Partnership
Springbank, Arle Farm and Cavendish Park Residents Association
Sports Clubs
Sure Start
The Prince's Trust Volunteers
University of Gloucestershire
Whaddon, Lynworth and Priors Neighbourhood Partnership
Whaddon, Lynworth and Priors Neighbourhood Project
YMCA
Young Gloucestershire
Youth and Community Service
Youth Consultation and Advisory Network
Youth Housing Forum
Youth Offending Team
Youth arts

Sure Start

Sure Start is part of the Government's support programme for children and families aimed at breaking the cycle of disadvantage for the current generation of young people. It is aimed at families with children aged under 4.

Sure Start in Cheltenham is led by Hesters Way and Whaddon, Lynworth and Priors neighbourhood projects and supported by a wider partnership of statutory and voluntary organisations and parents. The fund does not displace money from current services but should genuinely add value in each area.

The fund amounts to £1,075,000 capital over 3 years and a maximum of £750,000 in year 3.

In Cheltenham the Sure Start fund supports families in areas of St Marks, Hesters Way, Springbank and Whaddon, Lynworth and Priors.

Children's Fund

The Children's Fund is administered by the Children and Young People's Unit as part of the Government's support programme for children and families. The key objective is that services developed help children (aged 5-13) and their families who may be disadvantaged. The fund does not displace money from current services but should genuinely add value in each area.

The Children's Fund in Gloucestershire is led by the National Children's Home (NCH) and is supported by a partnership board made up of statutory and voluntary organisations as well as advocates for young people and young people themselves.

The fund amounts to £1.2 million per year for 3 years for the whole of Gloucestershire.

The proposed Children's Fund area in Cheltenham includes Hesters Way, St Marks and Springbank wards although the boundaries have yet to be confirmed. If approved, the Children's Fund will come into effect in April 2003

Connexions Gloucestershire

Connexions is a new youth service providing advice, guidance, support and personal development services for all 13-19 year olds. Through Connexions partnerships it will bring together all the services that help young people and gives young people access to a personal advisor.

www.connexionsglos.org.uk

Key recommendations of the county-wide review of youth participation

The county-wide review of youth participation in Gloucestershire was established at the request of the chief executives of each district and the county authority.

The initial objective of the review was to focus on the key issues in the 'democratic deficit' of young people to determine how 14-25 year olds might be empowered through effective service delivery.

Recommendations

- Local Authorities (LA's) should work to ensure that young people's participation is integrated into service planning
- That a 'youth proofing' checklist is used by service managers when planning delivery
- That a training programme should accompany the checklist
- That LAs should adopt the ethical guidelines for consulting young people
- Elected representatives should be more in touch with young people
- That LAs should adopt a youth policy/strategy
- hat LAs should set up a cross cutting youth projects team
- hat appropriate success criteria should be identified.

CBC is addressing these through

- A strategy for young people
- Having a youth council representative on overview and scrutiny
- Having youth spokespeople from each party who work and meet with MAD on a regular basis
- By introducing officers to MAD through presentations at MAD meetings
- Development of a draft youth policy
- Developing training for officer/members who may need to consult with young people based on the ethical guidelines.

Example of Hear by Right standards for involving young people

The Local Government Association, together with the National Youth Agency have developed a set of standards for councils to aim for in involving and engaging children and young people in local democracy

Standard	Emerging	Established	Advanced
Shared Values	Council agrees explicitly that active involvement of young people is a core purpose	Charter of shared values with community partners	Young people involved in review and redefinition of shared values
Strategy	Develop a strategic plan for active involvement, with sufficient resources	Review the balance of mutual benefit-is it clear how all parties benefit	Young people lead the review if the strategic plan for active involvement
Structure	Establish process to ensure active involvement of young people in overview and scrutiny process	Establish structures that ensure young people's views are built in to relevant decision making processes	Young people lead decision making and scrutiny structures on issues affecting them
Systems	Job descriptions require all staff to commit to active involvement of young people in local democracy	Community partners join up in active involvement work	Accreditation recognises achievement
Members and Officers	'Champion' appointed to lead member and officer development strategy	Clear and adequate support staff for building capacity among young people	All members and relevant officers have attended induction and/or training run by young people
Skills and Knowledge	Ensure young people have access to information to help inform decision making	Young people deliver capacity building with community partners	Young people deliver capacity building to other young people
Leadership Style	'Champion' appointed at executive and senior level	Compact with partners to ensure community leadership on active involvement	Young people lead review of council's success and progress with active involvement