

COUNCIL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Special Council Meeting 2012 26th April 2012

Report of Democratic Services Manager

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To present options for the Special Council meeting with young people from sixth form colleges across the district.

This report is public

Recommendations:

That the Committee reaches a decision on the content and logistics of the 2012 Special Council Meeting. Community Engagement has put forward three options for the content of the meeting:

- i. political speed dating;**
- ii. pupil power game;**
- iii. world café discussion groups.**

1 Introduction

- 1.1** At the previous meeting, members agreed to hold this year's Special Council meeting with young people from across the district, in order to engage with a section of the population which often has little contact with the Council.
- 1.2** Meetings of the Special Council are held biennially to consider a single item, listen to a speaker, meet in an assembly or forum, or to consider a local, regional or national issue.
- 1.3** In this instance, members elected to meet in an assembly or forum with young people of sixth form age from across the authority's administrative area. As such, officers from Community Engagement were requested to formulate proposals for decision at this meeting on the structure and content of the day. Those details are presented in the paragraphs below.

2. Proposals from Community Engagement

This event will be an opportunity for:

- i. Councillors and young people to talk and exchange views;**
- ii. Councillors to find out what is important to young people;**
- iii. Young people to gain a greater understanding of the council, the role**

of the councillor and the challenges that they face.

2.1 The event will need to start with an overview of the council and the democratic process. An interactive exercise will be developed to introduce the young people and councillors to each other and help to create a more informal and relaxed atmosphere.

2.2 There are three options, in terms of content, for the Committee's consideration:

- i. political speed dating;
- ii. pupil power game; and
- iii. world café discussion groups

2.3 *Political speed dating*

2.4 Political speed dating is a fun and light hearted way for young people to interact with councillors. Like conventional speed dating, each session consists of a series of three minute dates or interactions (or around five minutes if in pairs of councillors). During this time, councillors and young people can ask their partner anything except their age, party affiliation and place of residence. The idea is to focus on what the person is really like and what is important to them. When the gong sounds, everyone moves on.

2.5 At the end of the event, the views of the students and councillors would be captured in a creative way.

2.6 Dependent on the number of young people attending, councillors may need to sit or move around in pairs.

2.7 The council has not run this type of event before, although Lancashire County Council and South Lakeland District Council colleagues have, and they could be contacted to share their knowledge and experience.

2.8 *Pupil Power game*

2.9 Pupil Power is a game based on 'monopoly' but rather than spending money buying streets and houses, there are cards to represent council services. Pupils are given a budget of £15 million and a list of services that add up to £20 million, and are asked to decide in groups which services to buy and which they could manage without. They are helped in their deliberations to balance the budget by elected members and officers.

2.10 This is a topical exercise which gives young people a taste of what it is like to be a council member, representing voters and making decisions that affect everyone in the district.

2.11 A large number of young people would need to attend to balance the number of councillors and young people in each group.

2.12 *World café discussion groups*

- 2.13 This is a creative format which would provide councillors and young people with the opportunity to discuss topical issues and develop solutions together.
- 2.14 Councillors and young people would sit together on small tables and a number of positive questions would be set, to encourage them to discuss the chosen issue and develop a number of solutions together.
- 2.15 Part way through the discussions, people would be asked to move tables, thus providing a wide variety of participants.
- 2.16 Some councillors will have experienced this format in a recent community leadership session or the Connecting Communities project. This format has also been used for local resident budget discussions.
- 2.17 The World Cafe could focus on 'next generation democracy', with the councillors and young people asked to develop ideas and actions to engage the next generation in the democratic process.
- 2.18 A Lancaster University student is planning to do a project on this issue for the council and this event may be an opportunity to test some of their ideas and recommendations.
- 2.19 The outcomes and potential actions from the groups of young people and councillors would be captured in a creative way throughout the discussions.

2.20 Logistics

- 2.21 It is recommended that the event runs from 1pm to 4pm, at a venue which can provide flexible space including small tables and chairs. The ideal venue would promote an atmosphere of relaxed informality.
- 2.22 All sixth form schools and colleges in the district will be contacted and asked to send representatives. Youth Council representatives may also be invited. Ideally the schools and colleges will be contacted as soon as possible to provide them with time to select representatives, plan into their timetables and make any necessary travel arrangements.
- 2.23 The benefits for the students will need to be promoted in order to encourage a strong turnout from young people, and it is recommended that Lancashire County Council Youth Service are asked to be involved as they are a good source of expertise and experience.

3 Conclusion

Members are asked to make a decision on their preferred option for the content of this year's Special Council meeting. In addition, members may wish to consider the venue, logistics and any specific objectives which they have for the event.

(including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

None.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Legal Services have been consulted and do not have any comments to add.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Any costs would be minimal and can be met from within existing democratic budgets.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Human Resources:

None.

Information Services:

None.

Property:

None.

Open Spaces:

None.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

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