

# EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

## EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 23 MAY 2006

### ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

#### Report by Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform members of the Education Committee of the outcome of recent events relating to engagement and consultation with young people in East Ayrshire.

## 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Since the inception of East Ayrshire Council, involving young people in discussion and decision making about matters important to them has been ongoing.
- 2.2 Two recent annual events took place as part of the Department's commitment to engagement and consultation. These were the Annual Youth Conference and the What's Important to You? seminar. Both these events are planned by young people for young people with the support of Community Learning and Development and other staff.
- 2.3 The overall aims of these events are:
- To involve young people in dialogue about matters of concern to them
  - To highlight the partnership work being undertaken in East Ayrshire between agencies, Council and young people
  - To provide information on the services and opportunities for young people within East Ayrshire
  - To ensure young people's views are listened to and taken account of for planning and development purposes.
- 2.4 The themes for this years' Youth Conference, which was held under the Service's Active 8 banner were health, leisure and fitness, issues affecting young people, and influence of peer pressure. The subjects chosen by young people to discuss at the What's Important to You Seminar were drugs, gangs, lack of facilities and litter.

## 3. REPORT

### 3.1 Youth Conference

Young people, supported through Community Learning & Development and partner youth work settings and in voluntary projects were contacted throughout the year and given information about the Conference inviting their participation. All projects and young people who indicated an interest were

invited to take part in the Conference.

193 young people attended the Youth Conference and participated in workshops. This is the biggest attendance to date and consideration in the future will need to be given to capping numbers.

Partners were critical to the success of the Conference and twenty four agencies exhibited displays. During the day, young people were recognised for their achievements through the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme.

The Conference brought young people from across the Council area together to meet, interact and to discuss issues that they see as being important to them. Electronic voting which was used for the first time with people attending the Conference showed that 73% of the young people voted the workshops and stalls as the favourite part of the day.

Each workshop carried out their own evaluation and the comments from the young people include:

*"this was good, I found out new things, really informative and it was fun and enjoyable".*

Issues highlighted by young people for further discussion included fashion and image, sexism and ICT and the media.

### **3.2 What's Important To You Seminar?**

Young people across Primary 6 and Primary 7 were asked to prioritise local and global issues of importance to them. Over 300 questionnaires were returned, and based on the analysis topics were chosen for the Seminar.

In total 102 young people attended the Seminar, with between 8 and 12 young people from Primary 6 and Primary 7 from different backgrounds attending from each Learning Partnership area.

The Seminar was developed with young people who were supported by multi-agency staff within Learning Partnerships. Workshops were facilitated on each topic by young people with each Learning Partnership displaying how they had tackled each issue.

The Seminar allowed young people from across East Ayrshire to meet for the first time and exchange ideas about how each topic was being addressed in their area.

The evaluation of the event was very positive. Over ninety seven percent indicated they had the chance to take part and have their say. Quotes included:

*'I thought it would be the normal boring questions but it was GREAT!', 'It was interesting to find how much there was to do in my area'*

*'Brilliant'.*

Over 70% of those attending gave contact details as they wished to be involved in future similar events.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 Nil.

#### **5. COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The overall aims of the Conference and Seminar reflect the Promoting Community Learning, Improving Opportunities, Improving Community Safety and Improving Health Themes of the Community Plan.

#### **6. LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 The Community Learning and Development Service is currently reviewing its approach to supporting and working with young people. The outcome of this will be brought to a future Committee for consideration.

#### **7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

7.1 It is recommended that Members of the Education Committee:

- (i) note the success of this year's Conference and Seminar;
- (ii) invite the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services to advise Local Committees of the Conference and Seminar outcomes; and
- (iii) otherwise note the contents of the reports.

Graham Short  
Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

8 May 2006  
BMcD/KG

#### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

1. Conference Programme/Publicity Leaflet
2. What's Important to You? programme

Members wishing further information should contact Kay Gilmour, Head of Community Support, Tel: (01563) 576106 or Dot Grieve, Principal Officer, Community Learning and Development, Tel: (01563) 578127.

**IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER: KAY GILMOUR**