

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 20 FEBRUARY 2003

EAST AYRSHIRE MULTI-AGENCY FORUM FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Report by Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the outcome of the first Multi-agency Forum for Young People, and to seek Committee approval to submit the note of each Forum meeting to the Policy and Resources Committee.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Policy and Resources Committee of 29 November 2001 agreed to establish a Multi-agency Forum for Young People. It was agreed that community planning partners and in particular representatives from Strathclyde Police and NHS Ayrshire and Arran should be invited to become members of the Forum.

3. PROGRESS

- 3.1 The first Multi-Agency Forum was held on Wednesday 4 December 2002 and chaired by Councillor Farrell, Children and Young Person's Champion.
- 3.2 The Chair of NHS Ayrshire and Arran represented the Health Service in Ayrshire and both Councillor McIntyre, Leader of the Council and Councillor Carmichael, Chair of Community Services Committee represented East Ayrshire Council. Superintendent Jim Thompson represented Strathclyde Police. Thirteen young people attended the Forum from across East Ayrshire, nine of which were MSYPs.
- 3.3 It was agreed by the Forum that the overall aim should be to listen to young people in matters which affect them as citizens living in East Ayrshire. Specific aims were agreed as:
- “to give young people the opportunity to raise issues in a structured way which may have an effect on policy within East Ayrshire Council, NHS Ayrshire and Arran and Strathclyde Police”.
 - “to give East Ayrshire Council, NHS Ayrshire and Arran and Strathclyde Police the opportunity to consult with young on relevant matters.
- 3.4 The agenda was primarily set by young people and included:
- Issues for young people with a disability
 - Community safety

- Addiction issues
- Support for MSYPs

3.5 There was considerable debate across the range of agenda items and Appendix 1 sets out a full note of the meeting.

4. WIDER ISSUES

4.1 The Council is in a strong position to involve young people and there are many good examples from across Council services of where the involvement of young people has shaped service design and delivery.

4.2 Set out below is the current structure which supports the involvement of young people in decision making processes which is subject to ongoing review based on experience of what works and the views of young people.

- East Ayrshire Youth Forum (fed by local Youth Forums across East Ayrshire)
- Authority wide Student Council meetings (Student Councils from all secondary schools and Park School)
- Community Planning Partners Multi-Agency Forum for Young People (fed by East Ayrshire Youth Forum; Authority wide Student Council Forum and members of the Scottish Youth Parliament)

4.3 The Dialogue Youth Initiative will involve young people on a number fronts and will be a main vehicle for providing information to young people and hearing young people's views primarily through the use of new technology. These views will feed into the overall Multi Agency Forum for Young People.

4.4 There is evidence to suggest that using a single means of involving young people in decision making, providing information or listening to young people will not be effective. A structured but multi-faceted approach is required. However, all of this information requires to be assimilated and analysed to ensure it is representative of young people and their needs.

4.5 The mechanism for doing this is the Children and Young Person's Service Plan.

5. THE ROLE OF POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

5.1 Young people want to be able to see directly where their views are being heard and what action is being taken.

5.2 Although the Children's and Young Persons Service Plan will be the main strategic planning mechanism, members of the Policy & Resources Committee will want to be able to hear and respond to specific issues, where appropriate, outwith the three year planning cycle of the Plan.

5.3 It is therefore proposed that the note of the Multi-Agency Forum is submitted routinely to the Policy & Resources Committee.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Nil

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Nil

8. POLICY ISSUES

8.1 The issues raised in this report support the proposals contained in both the Children and Young Person's Service Plan and the Community Plan.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 It is recommended that Members of the Policy & Resources Committee:

- (i) approve the proposal set out in paragraph 5 to routinely submit the note of the Multi-Agency Forum for Young People to the Policy & Resources Committee; and
- (ii) otherwise note the content of the report.

John Mulgrew
Director of Educational and Social Services

JM/KG/JP
29 January 2003

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. East Ayrshire Children's Champion - Policy & Resources Committee - 29 November 2001.

Members wishing further information should contact Kay Gilmour, Head of Community Support, Tel: (01563) 576104.

IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER: KAY GILMOUR

EAST AYRSHIRE

MULTI-AGENCY FORUM FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

NOTE OF MEETING - WEDNESDAY 4 DECEMBER 2002

ATTENDING

Councillor Tommy Farrell, Children and Young Person's Champion (Chair)
Kerry Anne Clark, The Youthie
Carly Kirkwood, The Youthie
Jessie Marsh, MSYP and Cumnock Youth Forum
Shona Muir, MSYP and Ochiltree Youth Club
Fraser Wright, MSYP and Looking Forward Group
Stephanie Hill, MSYP and Stewarton Senior Youth Group
David McDowall, MSYP and Stewarton Senior Youth Group
Louise McDowall, MSYP and Stewarton Senior Youth Group
Lyndsay Worn, MSYP and the Dairy Project
Craig Glover, MSYP and the Dairy Project
Leanne Young, MSYP and the Dairy Project
Claire Trodden, North West Youth Centre
Catherine Govans, North West Youth Centre
Councillor Drew McIntyre, Leader of the Council
Councillor Jimmy Carmichael, Chair of Community Services Committee
George Irving, Chair of NHS Ayrshire and Arran
Superintendent Jim Thompson, Strathclyde Police, Head of Operational Policing in East Ayrshire
Bill Stafford, Director of Community Services
John Clayton, Head of Corporate Resources

APOLOGIES

Louise Hunter, MSYP and Looking Forward Group
Robert Paton, Looking Forward Group

INTRODUCTION

Councillor Farrell welcomed everyone to the first meeting of East Ayrshire's Multi-Agency Forum for Children and Young People.

ITEM 1

Remit of the Forum

It was agreed that the Forum would be known from now on as the Multi-Agency Forum for Young People.

The purpose of the Forum was agreed, namely "to listen to young people in matters which affect them as citizens living in East Ayrshire". Specific aims were agreed as:

- “to give young people the opportunity to raise issues in a structured way which may have an effect on policy with East Ayrshire Council, NHS Ayrshire and Arran and Strathclyde Police”.
- “to give East Ayrshire Council, NHS Ayrshire and Arran and Strathclyde Police the opportunity to consult with young people on relevant matters”.

ITEM 2

Consultation with Young People with a Disability in Relation to their School Experience

A general issue was raised by a representative from the Looking Forward Group about the experience of young people in a school setting to participate in the every day life of school. In particular, the example was given of sports days.

The Forum recognised the need to build on existing good practice and to look at where improvements can take place. It was agreed that the issue of accessibility for young people with a disability did not solely relate to their school experience but impacted on leisure and recreation services, transport, shopping etc.

The Forum was informed that the Department of Educational and Social Services require to publish an Accessibility Strategy by April 2004. This strategy will cover issues not only in relation to the physical aspects of buildings but how young people with disabilities can participate in the curriculum and the wider life of schools. Arrangements are being made for consultation with young people with a disability through schools.

It was noted by the Forum that a special needs, leisure and play facilitator has been appointed to assist young people with a disability to become involved in sporting activities.

ITEM 3

How can young people feel safe in their communities at night?

Superintendent Jim Thompson gave a brief overview to the Forum about the difference between the perception of young people and the statistics gathered by Strathclyde Police in relation to crime.

Young people gave specific examples of their own experiences and it was recognised that it is very difficult to separate out individual experiences from the overall nature of crime within East Ayrshire.

Suggestions about how to improve young people’s feeling of safety at night included better street lighting, CCTV; more for young people to do etc.

Some young people talked about very positive experiences in their local area and their involvement in centres or youth forums etc. Others gave examples of where successful youth centres had been temporarily closed because of the behaviour of one or two of the young people. It was suggested that young people perhaps want to set their own rules and agree what penalties centre members should face.

Superintendent Thompson suggested that the Forum might find it helpful if crime statistics could be circulated with the minute and for future meetings have information circulated with the agenda. Kay Gilmour to action.

ITEM 4

How effective are drug awareness programmes? Would it be better to use the money to give young people more to do?

Young people felt that Drug Awareness Programmes did not always help although they also gave specific examples of what worked well. The CHIP van was seen as very successful. It was suggested that more should be done in the curriculum for drugs awareness and that more open clinics could be established in the community.

Superintendent Thompson indicated that there was a full time officer in the Police for drugs awareness and that there had been an increase in the detection rate year on year. However he emphasised that there was a need for information to be provided to the Police.

Mr Irving talked about the need not just to have drugs awareness but to also support those young people and adults who have an addiction problem and therefore treatment services was a vital part of the solution.

It was suggested that it might be helpful if the Forum could hear some presentations at the next meeting about the range of initiatives in East Ayrshire. Kay Gilmour asked the Forum if any of the young people had been involved in peer education initiatives and if so what had been their experience. Young people felt that more parents needed to be aware of drugs.

It was agreed that Kay Gilmour would co-ordinate a presentation for the next Forum.

ITEM 5

What support will there be in the future for MSYP's?

Councillor Farrell indicated that £6,000 had been allocated to support MSYP's both at a national level and more locally. This funding also included support for MSYP's who had additional needs perhaps through a disability.

It was suggested by the young people that more needed to be known about MSYP's and a discussion took place about how they could get information out to other young people in East Ayrshire. It was agreed that as the February edition of the East Ayrshire Headlines Magazine is going to be dedicated to young people's rights and responsibilities that either a section or a leaflet could be inserted which would describe the work of MSYP's.

It was agreed that Kay Gilmour would take this forward.

One of the MSYP's indicated that a discussion had taken place at the Scottish Youth Parliament about open surgeries where MSYP's might hold surgeries in local areas. Councillor Farrell indicated that this was something which would need to be looked at very carefully.

Both Mr Irving of NHS Ayrshire and Arran and Superintendent Jim Thompson indicated that there was an increasing desire to listen to young people's views and they would be particularly interested in knowing how they could gauge the Forum's views on specific issues. Mr Irving was very keen to have young people along to a future Health Board meeting.

It was agreed that there was an absolute need to listen to young people but there was also the need to ensure that young people currently involved in the Forum were not overburdened.

ITEM 6

Dialogue Youth/Young Scot Proposals

Councillor Farrell informed the Forum that the Council and its planning partners had received funding to establish a Local Dialogue Youth Unit from April 2003. The Unit will be a main vehicle for involving young people. As part of the funding for the Dialogue Youth Unit a Smarter Card will be issued to every 11 to 25 year old in East Ayrshire who wishes to have one. This will allow discount to a range of shops and services. The issue of communication between MSYP's and different youth forums was discussed and it was agreed that the Dialogue Youth Unit will be used to roll out electronic communication with young people across East Ayrshire.

ITEM 7

Future arrangements

Councillor Farrell asked the Forum how it would wish to meet in the future. It was agreed that the Forum will meet three times per year in London Road Centre commencing at 1500 hrs. Student Council representatives will be invited to future Forum meetings and agenda items will be issued two weeks before the Forum.

ITEM 8

Agenda items for future meetings

- Youth Crime
- Teenage Pregnancy
- Teenage Smoking
- Addiction issues
- Access for Young People with Disabilities (transport/shops)

Proposed Dates for 2003

To be confirmed but will take place in April, September, December.