




---

**To:** **Education Policy Board**

**On:** **15 January 2015**

---

**Report by:** **Director of Education and Leisure Services**

---

**Heading:** **Review of Youth Voice**

---

## **1. Summary**

- 1.1 To ensure that Renfrewshire continues to meet the changing and challenging needs of engaging young people in meaningful youth voice initiatives, it was necessary to undertake a review of current programmes and opportunities.
  - 1.2 Furthermore, it was important to ensure that the review reflects the needs and aspirations of young people and that the recommendations have the ability to grow as Renfrewshire's youth voice process develops. This report sets out the recommendations arising from that review.
  - 1.3 Throughout the review process young people's experiences, views and findings were recorded on film. This youth voice review video is available to view.
- 

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the committee agree to:
  - 2.2 The establishment of a Renfrewshire Youth Voice Assembly that enables young people to work together to identify the most important issues, make decisions on what action to take and engage with decision makers.
- 

## **3 Background**

- 3.1 Youth Voice involves ascertaining, coordinating and expressing the views of young people. It is also involves young people taking action to bring change in their communities. This can happen through Youth Voice groups such as pupil councils and youth forums. It can also happen through young people participating in decision making bodies.

- 3.2 Youth Voice contributes to the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence. The curriculum is structured around different experiences and contexts for learning. Youth Voice represents one of these contexts. It affords young people meaningful opportunities to participate responsibly in decision making and to contribute as leaders and role models. Youth Voice also seeks to foster respect for the institutions that underpin civic democracy.
- 3.3 The Youth Services Team play a central role by supporting youth forums, providing training, supporting members of the Scottish Youth Parliament and organising Scottish Youth Parliament elections. In addition, other Council services and partner organisations provide opportunities for young people to take part in decision making. Examples include the opportunity to participate in community planning consultation events, Local Area Committees, the Cashback for Communities Grant Panel, the Licensing Forum and Integrated Children Services Planning.
- 3.4 The review involved consultation with Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYPs), Renfrewshire Youth Voice and other youth forums. As part of the review young people participated in a Youth Forum Network event in June 2013, a visit to the North Lanarkshire Youth Council in September 2013 and residential Youth Voice Conference in January 2014. A summary of what was learnt from these consultations and ongoing discussions with young people is set out in appendix 1.
- 3.5 Throughout the review process young people's experiences, views and findings were recorded on film. This youth voice review video is available to view.
- 3.6 The findings and conclusions arising from these consultation activities were used to form the main recommendation of this report. 'The establishment of a Renfrewshire Youth Voice Assembly that enables young people to work together to identify the most important issues, make decisions on what action to take and engage with decision makers'.
- 3.7 It is intended that the Renfrewshire Youth Voice Assembly would meet at least twice a year. One of these meetings would be an annual young person's conference, modelled on the Renfrewshire Young People's Community Planning Conference held in February 2013. The conference will provide an opportunity for young people to meet together and discuss important issues, decide upon future campaigns and meet and influence decision makers like community planning partners. Other assembly meetings would serve to promote team building, training and planning.
- 3.8 It is proposed that Renfrewshire Youth Voice be the executive body of the Assembly, providing the position of chairperson and taking ownership of the planning of the annual conference. The organisation and support to the Assembly would be provided by Youth Services.
- 3.9 It is intended that Assembly members will be aged 12 to 25 years old and include the following groups of young people:
- members of the Scottish Youth Parliament;
  - members of Renfrewshire Youth Voice;
  - members of Community based youth forums from across Renfrewshire;

- representatives of pupil councils from across Renfrewshire's schools; and
- young people representative of minorities, hard to reach or vulnerable groups of young people; drawn from working in partnership with voluntary and public sector partners. Examples include looked after and accommodated young people, young carers, young people from black and minority ethnic communities and young people identifying themselves as LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender).

---

## Implications of this report

### 1. Financial Implications

None.

### 2. HR and Organisational Development Implications

None.

### 3. Community Plan/Council Plan Implications

Children and Young People	- The recommendations increase opportunities for young people's views to be heard and be involved in decision making.
Community Care, Health and Well-being	- The arrangements for youth voice set out in this report will lead to improved health and wellbeing outcomes for young people.
Empowering our Communities	- The recommendations empower young people to make a positive impact on their local communities.
Greener	- The arrangements for youth voice set out in this report will contribute to sustainable development.
Jobs and the Economy	- The experience of being involved in youth voice initiatives develop skills and qualities valued by employers.
Safer and Stronger	- The arrangements for youth voice set out in this report will contribute to safer and stronger communities in Renfrewshire.

### 4. Legal Implications

None.

### 5. Property/Assets Implications

None.

### 6. Information Technology Implications

None.

**7. Equality and Human Rights Implications**

The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report.

**8. Health and Safety Implications**

None.

**9. Procurement Implications**

None.

**10. Risk Implications**

None.

**11. Privacy Impact**

None.

---

**List of Background Papers**

- (a) Education Policy Board Committee Report – Review of Youth Voice, 15th November 2012.

The foregoing background papers will be retained within ELS for inspection by the public for the prescribed period of four years from the date of the meeting. The contact officer within the service is Alastair Ewen, Youth Service Manager / 0141 889 1110.

---

**Education and Leisure Services**

*RN/JL/AE/FD/AC/AE*

*22 December 2014*

**Author: Alastair Ewen, Youth Service Manager / 0141 889 1110)**

### **Summary of the Review Process**

**Renfrewshire Youth Forum Network Event** – this event was organised and held in the Council Chambers on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2013. 29 young people from 6 local youth forums answered a series of questions about their participation in youth forums. It was learnt that:

- Young people join their local youth forum because they want to volunteer, improve their CV, represent their peers, meet new people and have fun;
- Young people communicate with their peers mainly using social networking sites;
- Young people would like more power in funding decisions on local youth projects;
- Young people would like to have a Renfrewshire-wide youth council to represent the views of and take action on behalf of young people.
- Young people would like to have opportunities to network with other young people involved in youth forums.
- Young people would like more training to help them fulfil their role as youth forum members.

**Visit to the North Lanarkshire Youth Council** – Members of the review steering group visited the North Lanarkshire Youth Council on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2013 to learn how it functions. Young people learnt that the Youth Council:

- Is representative of young people, drawing its membership from community based youth forums in every part of North Lanarkshire.
- Is effective in representing the views of young people to decision makers.
- Is effective in helping young people to network.
- Is effective in cascading information to community based youth forums.

### **Residential Youth Conference, Wiston Lodge, January 2014 -**

33 young people from youth forums in Renfrewshire took part in a residential youth conference. The forums represented included Renfrewshire Youth Voice, Erskine Youth Council, West Johnstone Youth Council, Renfrew Youth Forum, GoZone Youth Forum; The Renfrewshire Young Carers Forum and the Renfrewshire LGBT Youth Forum. At the end of the conference the young people agreed that:

- More use should be made of technology, particularly social media, to communicate and engage with young people.
- Youth forum members should meet regularly to share information, network, undertake training and discuss issues of concern for young people.