



**Kirklees Council**  
**Kirklees Democracy Commission Cross Party Working Group**

**Wednesday 16 January 2019**

Present: Councillor David Sheard (Chair)  
 Councillor Andrew Cooper  
 Councillor Cathy Scott  
 Councillor John Taylor  
 Councillor Robert Walker

In Attendance: Carl Whistlecraft – Head of Democracy Service  
 Vina Randhawa – Manager, Area and Neighbourhood Action Team  
 Martin Green - Head of Localities Offer – Children and Families, Learning and Skills  
 Adele Humble - HR Manager  
 Mashuda Shaikh - Cohesion & Integration team  
 Sharon Salvanos - Electoral Services Manager  
 Dr Andy Mycock – University of Huddersfield  
 Diane Sims – Senior Communications Officer  
 Spencer Wilson – Group Support & Development Officer

Apologies: Councillor John Lawson

**1 Notes of Last Meeting**

The notes of the meeting of the Working Group held on 28 November 2018 were agreed as a correct record.

**2 Civic Pathways for Young Citizens**

The Working Group received a series of brief presentations intended to demonstrate the current breadth of activity taking place to deliver against this priority recommendation. The working group also received details of planned activity. The presentations cover the following areas:

**Learning and Early Support** - focusing on National Citizen Service which has involved an 18 month innovation programme with the NCS Trust, focusing on encouraging more Kirklees 15 to 17-year-olds to take part in NCS. This involved engaging people in social action projects with elected councillors played a key role in supporting the programme. In terms of future aspirations

the Working Group noted that there was a desire to join up youth social action pathways from 11 to 25 with the NCS, Princes trust, Duke of Edinburgh etc with a view to all becoming embedded as part of this process. This could involve young people link to Ward based / Councillor supported social action activity, with NCS playing a key role in supporting social mobility, community cohesion and addressing local priorities.

In consideration of the presentation the Working Group made reference to the following:

- The lessons learned from the innovation programme and the need to ensure that such learning is picked up by the wider Trust as part of planning and delivering future activity;
- The percentage take up by young people in Kirklees;
- Issues associated with week two of the programme, which often duplicates activities that young people have already experienced in school;
- The visibility and accessibility of the programme to young people and the extent to which App-based technology would improve awareness and take up;
- The relationship with schools and the extent to which sufficient opportunity is given within school time to effectively explain the programme in a more detailed way with a view to maximising awareness and take up;
- The extent to which wider engagement takes place with other groups outside of the school setting (for example uniform groups) and the role such groups could play raising awareness and facilitating communication;
- The potential role for Community Plus to play an important part in raising awareness of the NCS programme as part of their wider role;
- The need for councillors to play a role in taking the initiative to their communities. The Working Group suggested that specific sessions should be arrange for councillors with a view to them becoming ambassadors for the programme.

**People Services** - focusing on the activity taking place with regards to apprenticeships. This has involved the development of a community outreach program targeting underrepresented groups in deprived areas with additional recruitment through drop-in workshops and a range of events.

Work has resulted in the development of a wider talent pool approach for future apprenticeship vacancies and use of the apprenticeship levy to support services with their entry level role recruitment. Strategically, support has been provided to maintained schools to pool resources to maximise the levy and the development of a support package for care leavers has been agreed which incorporates Saturday jobs schemes.

It is anticipated that future work will involve a more coordinated approach to placements within the Council, utilising key partners such as the University and insight from our own young employees for ideas and creative recruitment. In consideration of the presentation the Working Group made reference to the following:

- The issues arising from a lack of funding for pre-employment programs;

- The lobbying role of the Council in seeking to influence lack of funding in this area

**Area and Neighbourhood Team** - focusing on a range of activities including democracy sessions in schools, UK Parliament education programme, support for the National Citizen Service programme, developing work of the Kirklees Youth Council, delivering the Democracy Ambassador Programme and the activities of the Young People's Voice and Influence and Change Team.

In terms of future work there will be a focus on growing a stronger Youth Council, developing local democracy resources, delivering the UK Parliament education programme towards gold ambassador standard and generally sharing such stories and celebrating the success and achievements of young citizens. In consideration of the presentation the Working Group made the following points:

- The need to widen school engagement in the programmes of work. Councillors, as school governors, have a role to play;
- The importance of involving key groups such as care leavers;
- The importance of understanding and sharing the massive impact that involvement in organisations like the Kirklees Youth Council can have on young people's lives;
- Exploring the potential of making linkages with the groups for example trade union youth development programmes.

**The Cohesion Team** - focusing on the My Country My Vote schools programme and Changemakers initiative, School Twinning and the unaccompanied asylum seekers dropping project. In terms of future aspirations work will be taking place to develop a wider leadership programme and a focused approach to citizen engagement in the madrassahs. In consideration of the presentation the Working Group made the following points:

- The importance of progressing the work around citizen engagement in madrassahs;
- Ensuring that, where possible, councillors are provided with an opportunity to be involved in such work, particularly in terms of visits to schools.

**Electoral Services** - focusing on a range of voter registration activities, including workshops within citizenship lessons in schools, the Democracy Ambassador programme, partnership working with career-based organisations and involvement in the NCS and Empower programmes.

Future work would involve the delivery of workshops across schools with a view to integrating voluntary automatic electoral registration, continue partnership working and involvement in publicity campaigns e.g. 50 years since the reduction of the voting age from 21 to 18.

In consideration of the presentation the Working Group made the following points:

- The lack of school interest and buy-in is an issue;

- The extent to which such work can be effectively linked OFSTED framework with a view to increasing the interest of schools;
- Ways in which registration outreach work could be extended to wider cohort of groups (e.g. uniformed organisations);
- Opportunities for linking such work Community Plus;
- Further development of promotional activities such as voter registration linked to New Year's resolutions.

**University of Huddersfield** - focusing on a number of projects including Votes at 16, Town and Gown, University Ward/constituency meetings, Kirklees Council work placement, NCS development and wider partnership working events. In terms of future aspirations work is planned in respect of a Lowering the Voting Age report with the LGA, Civic University project and a Local Democratic Education project.

In consideration of the presentation the Working Group made the following points:

- The overall importance of seeing citizenship as a journey, including transition points that are shaped into one offer;
- The important role to be played by the University in undertaking analysis and evaluation of any wider civic pathways project;
- Opportunities to link such work with the Children's Commissioner and the Cabinet Office as part of developing a wider narrative.

**AGREED: -**

- (1) That all officers be thanked for their excellent contributions sharing the valuable work that is taking place to support the delivery of the commissions priority recommendation in respect of civic pathways for young citizens;
- (2) That further work now take place to ensure that all of the valuable work is developed into one overarching coordinated package that will form the basis of a civic pathways offer for young people;
- (3) That Vina Randhawa pull together a core group of officers to progress (2) above.

### **3 Any Other Business**

Councillor Sheard and Councillor Taylor provided feedback from the last Leading Members meeting where the Question Time events had been raised as an item. There was a wish, in light of 12 months experience, to undertake a stock take with a view to informing how such events should be planned and delivered moving forward.

**AGREED: -**

That officers produce an evaluation report for the next meeting of the Working Group which will be used as a basis for planning next steps.

**4 Date of Next Meeting/Forward Agenda**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Working Group would take place on Thursday 28 February January 2019 at 1.00 pm in Civic Centre 3, Huddersfield.