

SYC Agenda for Scrutiny discussion

Key questions:

- **Is the council still aiming to achieve the goals set out in the Children and Young People's Plan?**
- **What actions are being taken to make sure the cuts don't hit young people harder than other parts of the community?**
- **Does the council genuinely want young people to be involved in decision making in Southwark?**

We want action plans. We think that there should be a broken down version of what you plan to do, as your ideas are currently too vague, that the young people in the borough can see and comment on.

How do you plan to get the young peoples' verdict throughout the 3 years that the plan is carried out in? Youth participation is vital in this respect. We want to be consulted at the beginning, at the end and throughout the 3 year delivery of the plan.

Quarterly reports to the SYC on how the plan is progressing and how it's being run, so that we can report back to the young people in the borough on how Southwark is working for **them**.

We think that one of the best ways to get more input from the young people of Southwark is to take ideas and developments to the schools and colleges. We want you to send the progress information to the key personnel in schools in the borough, the headteachers, deputy heads, heads of citizenship and **directly to the school councils**. That way, you could integrate the plan with school activities and the curriculum. School councils would be updated on the plan and encouraged to consult with the other pupils and give their input on it. This would give the school council a real role and responsibility and therefore strengthen their position in the school as well as promote participation. This could also be a chance to develop proper citizenship regimes in schools. Schools in Southwark do have citizenship courses but it's a known fact that they aren't carried out in a satisfactory way in some schools. There should be a minimum standard as to how they should be carried out. This is a chance to make sure that the Southwark Youth participation strategy is put in place, starting with the decision makers in schools.

We also discussed the idea of workshops and getting people that have experience with the problems in the borough to come into schools and bring the social issues of the borough straight to the young people. We feel that some of the priorities in the plan, would be dealt with more effectively if they were done in workshops run by,

for example, ex gang members and young mothers and young fathers. With these workshops and visits, the young people could decide how they would deal with the problems in the borough as if they were experiencing them for themselves. We hear a lot about the issues in society on a national scale but these issues are happening right around us and need to be brought right to us.

To get more of a community feeling of involvement, we discussed the idea of having incentives for levels of youth participation in the community. If you're heavily involved in your community, you could be rewarded for it or get accreditation. This is bound to get more young people more interested in being more involved in their area. Also, for different organizations such as schools and youth clubs, there could be youth participation ratings for how much the young people there, actually do in the community.

With all of these changes happening in the borough, we had the idea of there being a text service that would alert young people in the borough of new changes and happenings in regards to the plan. This would keep young people 'in the loop' in regards to what is actually being done in the borough that, ultimately, affects them. The text messaging service could also be set up in a way that it is free for the young people to reply to the texts, making it easier for most young people in the borough to give their input. It also gets to people that may not necessarily be in education and wouldn't be able to get this information otherwise from a school or something similar.

In conclusion, we think that the key to making this plan work is to have a **strong emphasis** on young people's involvement. Not only involvement in the programmes and services that will be delivered to young people, but also involvement in monitoring and evaluating the progress of the plan. This will give you rapid feedback on how well things are working and also allow you to make changes and adjustments quickly, so that you don't end up wasting money by pouring money into programmes that don't work because its in the wrong place, at the wrong time and therefore not reaching the right target group.